

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Marden, Hereford

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116713

Headteacher: Miss M Newton

Lead inspector: Mr K Williams

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267277

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 89

School address: Marden  
Hereford  
Herefordshire  
Postcode: HR1 3EW

Telephone number: 01432 880208  
Fax number: 01432 880049

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Purnell

Date of previous inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Marden is a community primary school with 89 boys and girls on roll, which is smaller than most other primary schools. Most of the pupils live in the local area, but a significant minority come from further afield. The pupils join the reception class at the beginning of the autumn term. Their attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but, overall, it is average. All of the pupils are of white backgrounds and no pupils are learning English as an additional language. Eighteen pupils have been identified with special educational needs, which is about average. Two of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. A below average proportion of pupils (four per cent) are eligible for free school meals. The headteacher has been in post since September 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21074	Keith Williams	Lead inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, physical education
9146	Mark Brennand	Lay inspector	
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, art and design, history, music, religious education, special educational needs, personal, social and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

As a result of the good leadership, management and teaching, the school provides a **good quality of education**. The pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher has quickly gained an understanding of what the school is doing well and what needs to be done to improve
- The pupils achieve well, particularly in the core subjects, because they are well taught
- The school has a very positive ethos in which all pupils are valued and cared for
- Standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 could be higher, particularly for the more able pupils
- There are too few opportunities for the children in Reception to develop their independent learning
- The pupils enjoy attending school, behave very well and their moral and social development is very good
- The planning for some foundation subjects does not always clearly indicate how the skills are to be developed from year to year
- The school encourages and receives very strong support from parents

Overall, the school has made good progress since it was last inspected. The above average standards in English and mathematics have been maintained and standards in science have risen. The school has responded well to the key issues of the last report. All subjects now have a co-ordinator, the school improvement plan sets a clear agenda for development and details of how it will be achieved and governors have established appropriate ways of checking on the progress of the plan.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those who have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

The results for mathematics and science compare very favourably with other schools nationally and with similar schools. However, because the number of pupils in each year group is usually small, the results should be interpreted cautiously, as they can vary from year to year. This is also reflected in the results in recent years for pupils in Year 2. In 2004, the results in reading, writing and mathematics were average when compared with all schools nationally. A comparison with similar schools shows that they were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics.

Inspection evidence confirms that the pupils, including those with special educational needs, **achieve well**. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies from year to year but, overall, it is average. They make good progress in Reception and most are likely to achieve the goals expected of them by the end of the year and about a quarter are on track to exceed them. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress and achieve well, although the school has rightly identified the need to improve writing standards, especially for the more able. Standards in reading are currently above average at the end of Year 2 and they are average in writing, mathematics and science. The rate of progress made by most pupils increases in Years 5 and 6, and in English and mathematics they achieve very well because these subjects are very well taught. In other subjects, standards in information and communication technology and religious education are in line with what is expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 and they are above those expectations in art and design and physical education.

The pupils' personal development, including their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good**. They have very positive attitudes to school, are punctual and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education. The teaching is good** and contributes to the good start made by the children in the Foundation Stage and the pupils' good learning and achievement in Years 1 to 6. The teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good overall, although an over-use of work sheets and copy-writing limits the opportunities for independent writing. The pupils with special educational needs are well taught across the school, so that they make good progress. They, and indeed pupils of all abilities, benefit from the very good support provided by the teaching assistants. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and, in English and mathematics, it is very good in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils make very good progress in these key areas.

The school provides a good curriculum, enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities. The planning for children in the Foundations Stage contributes to their good start, but provides too few opportunities for them to work independently and make choices and decisions. In some foundation subjects, most noticeably in design and technology, geography, history and music, it is not sufficiently clear how the pupils' skills are developed from year to year. The care and welfare of the pupils are well handled and they are offered good support and guidance. The school benefits from very good links with parents, satisfactory links with the local community and good links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good**. The new headteacher has very quickly gained an insight into the school's strengths and has a clear idea of what needs to be done to improve. Together, the headteacher, staff and governors are committed to raising standards. They have created a very positive ethos in which all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can learn and achieve well. Although all subjects now have an active and dedicated subject co-ordinator, they are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring the teaching and learning. The work of the governing body and the management of the school are good.

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

Most parents have very positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased that their children are well taught, make good progress, are encouraged to be mature, have a good range of activities outside of lessons and that homework arrangements are good. They feel well informed about how their children are getting on. The pupils confirm that they learn new things in lessons and are expected to work hard. They feel that they are treated fairly by the teachers and that other children are friendly.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2
- Increase the opportunities for the children in Reception to make choices and decisions about their work
- Clarify the way in which the pupils' skills can be developed from year to year in design and technology, geography and history



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The evidence of the inspection confirms that the pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.

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

- The pupils achieve well, particularly in the core subjects, because they are well taught
- The school ensures that those pupils with special educational needs are well provided for so that they can achieve their potential
- The school has rightly identified the need to improve writing in Years 1 and 2 and there is still more to be done, particularly for the more able pupils
- Standards in art and design and physical education are above what is expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6

#### **Commentary**

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies from year to year and covers a broad range but, overall, it is average. The good provision in the Reception class enables the children to make a good start to school and the majority are on track to achieve the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. About a quarter of the children are likely to exceed those goals.
2. The number of pupils in each year group is usually small, so the interpretation of test results requires caution, as they can vary from year to year. The results in Year 2 and 6 have been improving at a slower rate than the national picture but the trend of improvement over time is distorted by the yearly variation in results. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2004, the results were average when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was lower than that found in other schools in reading and writing and similar to other schools in mathematics.
3. Inspectors found that the pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. The pupils could achieve more in writing, because an occasional over-reliance of worksheets in subjects such as science and the over-emphasis on copy-writing holds them back. In particular, the more able pupils are capable of setting out their work for themselves. This has been recognised by the school and there are appropriate plans to increase the opportunities for the pupils to write independently.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (14.8)	15.8 (15.7)

Writing	14.4 (12.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.1 (13.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. In the 2004 national test for Year 6 pupils the results were average in English and well above average in mathematics and science when compared with all schools nationally and with those working in similar circumstances. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The small cohorts mean that the results have varied considerably in recent years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (29.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.8 (26.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.0 (28.1)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 10 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Inspectors found that the pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. The rate of progress made by the pupils, particularly in English and mathematics, increases in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching of these subjects is very good and, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. There are increasingly effective opportunities for the pupils to write at length and make decisions about how their work should be recorded.
6. The school has high expectations that the pupils with special educational needs will achieve well, particularly in literacy and numeracy. It is successfully achieving this aim because it makes good provision for meeting the individual needs of these pupils. In lessons, the teachers and teaching assistants ensure that they are fully involved so that they can make good progress towards their specific targets and achieve well.
7. In other subjects, standards in information and communication technology and religious education are in line with what is expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are above those expectations in art and design and physical education because these subjects are well taught and the pupils have a broad range of experiences in and out of lessons. In physical education, in particular, there are good opportunities for the pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding in clubs in a variety of sports, sometimes enhanced by the expertise of visiting coaches.

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

The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, they behave very well and levels of attendance are very high. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils enjoy school and show increasing maturity and self confidence

- There is a very strong and successful emphasis on the pupils' moral and social development
- Attendance levels are well above average and, well supported by their parents, the pupils are punctual

**Commentary**

8. The school has maintained the strengths identified in its last inspection and has improved its provision for the pupils' moral and social development. They are proud of their school and their own achievements. Recently established class and school councils are providing very good opportunities for the pupils to develop their own codes of behaviour. They respond very positively in lessons, concentrate very well, are very interested in their work and try hard to please their teachers. The pupils' motivation to learn and improve their work has a strong influence on their achievements in areas such as English, mathematics, sport and art. Relationships are very positive and the enthusiasm of most pupils, and their engagement by the staff, promotes this eagerness for learning. Instances of bullying are infrequent and the school takes a firm stance when they do occur, so that difficulties are quickly resolved. Playtimes and lunchtimes are often lively but there are quieter areas and activities for the pupils to use and clear guidelines for action if minor squabbles or accidents happen.
9. The very good provision made for the pupils' moral and social development permeates the whole of the school's work. The school builds well on the pupils' positive attitudes. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural education are good. Each month, there is a special word, which is used to promote values of living in a community - for example during the inspection the focus was on 'care' and in assemblies and class councils this theme was developed and made relevant to the pupils. As the pupils move through the school they show increasingly high levels of confidence and independence. The older pupils act as reading and play partners for the younger pupils and carry out a number of tasks to help in the smooth running of the school. The pupils care deeply that the school and its environment should be respected and enjoyed.
10. All pupils at the school are valued and expected to achieve well. The requirements of those pupils with special educational needs are met effectively and they are active participants in many of the school's activities. The school works hard to help those pupils with emotional and behavioural special needs to meet their targets; these pupils are supported by a range of strategies. These include setting clear boundaries for standards of behaviour and very effective support by teaching assistants to enable the pupils to participate in lessons.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	88	3	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

11. In the reception class, all of the adults have high expectations that the children will behave, play and learn well, both alongside one another and together. Consequently, the children develop very good relationships with the adults and with each other. They come into school happily and confidently, enjoy learning, concentrate well and persevere to complete a task before they move to a new activity. On occasions, the activities are over-directed by adults and this can have a limiting effect on the development of the children's independence in learning.
12. The rate of attendance is well above average. Parents are keen for their children to attend and, as a consequence, there are few pupils whose attendance is having a detrimental impact on their education. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The school follows up unreported absences swiftly and there are incentives in the form of attendance certificates and prizes.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality of education. The teaching, learning and curriculum are good and there are good arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. The school has established very good links with parents, satisfactory links with the community and good links with other schools.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching English and mathematics is very good in Years 5 and 6, which contributes to the above average standards at the end of Year 6
- The staff have very high expectations of how the pupils should behave and they manage challenging behaviour well
- The teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs

**Commentary**

13. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This makes a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to school and their progress, learning and achievement. The teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often very good, particularly in English and mathematics.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	18	3	0	0	0

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

14. The teaching in the Reception class is good overall; it has a number of strengths ensuring that the children make a good start to school, make good progress and achieve well. The teacher plans to ensure that there are opportunities for the children to have access to all six areas of learning and to the literacy and numeracy strategies. The teaching assistants support individual and group activities very effectively and make a significant contribution to helping the children to behave well and concentrate on the carefully planned tasks. All of the adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and develop good speaking and listening skills. There are effective arrangements to check on what the children know, understand and can do and the information is well used to plan the next steps that the children need to take. Although, on some occasions, the activities are over-directed by the adults, which limits the opportunities for independent learning, the teaching of the basic skills is well planned and carried out and this results in the good progress seen in reading and number.
15. A particular strength across the school is the teaching of English, mathematics and science and this has a positive impact on the standards attained by the pupils and their achievement. The lessons are well planned using the guidelines of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The planning for these subjects is clear about what the pupils are expected to learn and how this will be achieved. This learning is reviewed effectively in the discussion sessions at the end of lessons. The programmes for teaching reading, writing and number are carefully structured and build well on the good start made in Reception, although the subsequent opportunities for the pupils to write independently are limited by the occasional over-use of copy-writing and work sheets. Across the school, the teachers promote a love of reading so that, by Year 6, the pupils of all abilities are enthusiastic, accurate and knowledgeable readers. Speaking and listening is well promoted through the discussions and question and answer sessions in a wide range of subjects.
16. The teachers and teaching assistants share very high expectations of how the pupils should behave and this contributes positively to the school's very good ethos. Behaviour is consistently very good, so that lessons run smoothly. On the occasions when a very small number of pupils present challenging behaviour, these are well managed. The range of sanctions available is clear to the pupils and, should they need 'time out', they are soon reintegrated into the lesson. The teachers and well trained and highly committed teaching assistants contribute strongly to the provision for pupils with special educational needs, providing extra support that focuses on meeting the individual needs of these pupils. This helps them to play a full part in lessons and achieve their particular targets. On the occasions when the pupils' needs are best met by working individually or in small groups withdrawn from the classroom this, too, is successful.

17. There are good arrangements for assessing the pupils' work. Particularly in the core subjects, a combination of daily on-going assessments, regular tests and more formal assessments provides clear information about how the pupils are doing. Of particular note are the tracking booklets built up over time by the teachers. These gather together a very clear picture of the pupils' progress in wide range of subjects and this information is shared effectively with the parents. The marking of the pupils' work is good and contributes well to the overall picture built up about each pupil.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well
- The pupils' learning is enhanced by visits, visitors and a good range of activities outside of lessons
- There are too few opportunities for independent writing in Years 1 and 2 and for the children in Reception to make choices and decisions about their work
- The planning for some foundation subjects does not always clearly indicate how the skills are to be developed from year to year

## **Commentary**

18. The curriculum meets all requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school values pupils of all backgrounds and abilities and places a high priority on ensuring that all pupils can play a full part in lessons and are able to fulfil their potential. The planning for those pupils with special educational needs takes good account of their particular needs and they are well supported by the teachers and the teaching assistants. As a result, they are able to sustain their attention and concentration and participate in lessons and other activities. The children in the Foundation Stage have access to a broad and interesting curriculum that includes all six areas of learning although, on occasions, opportunities are too limited for them to develop independence in learning. For example, the outside area is under-used for the children to investigate and discover for themselves.

19. Visits and visitors are well used to create an interesting curriculum and many pupils benefit from the good range of out-of-school activities. These promotes the pupils' enthusiasm for learning, provide opportunities for them to practise and extend the skills they have learned in lessons and contributes strongly to their personal development. The pupils are encouraged to be aware of culture and society beyond their immediate experience. They enjoy the work they carry out to promote the school as an 'eco-friendly' community and have already reached the second level of the national scheme. The school's accommodation and grounds are attractive and well cared for and they provide good opportunities for teaching and learning. Alongside the good level of resources the needs of the curriculum are met well. The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, for example by the recent introduction of the interactive whiteboards in the majority of the classrooms.

20. The planning for literacy and numeracy is solidly based on the national strategies and there is a consistent approach from class to class. The programmes for teaching reading and writing are carefully structured and build well on the good start made in Reception. However, in Years 1 and 2, the opportunities for the pupils to write independently in other subjects are limited by the over-use of work sheets. In science for example, the pupils are often asked to record their investigations on sheets provided by the teacher. While some pupils benefit from this support, others, particularly the more able, are capable of developing these skills for themselves and consequently they achieve less than they might.
21. The staff ensure that the pupils experience activities from the full range of subjects. They plan interesting and enjoyable work, often linking more than one subject together in a meaningful way. However, in some subjects, notably design and technology, geography and history, it is not sufficiently clear how the work builds on the pupils' previous experiences and how the skills are developed progressively from year to year.

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

The school provides effectively for the care, safety and welfare of the pupils and the pupils receive good support, advice and guidance. There is good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The arrangements for ensuring that the pupils settle in well when they first join the school are good
- The staff know the pupils well and ensure that they feel secure and valued
- The new class, school and eco councils are ensuring that the pupils views are heard

### **Commentary**

22. This is a school which looks after its pupils well. The close proximity of the pre-school group, which is attended by many of the pupils, ensures that they are familiar with their environment before they enter the Reception class. The Reception teacher spends time with children in the playgroup and they, in turn, spend time in their new classroom on taster days getting to know one another. Parents and their children attend Open Days and Evenings as part of their induction and, once their children start school, the parents are encouraged to accompany their children into the class at the start of the day to help them settle. As a result, the children are happy and confident and the start to each day is very calm and positive. There are good arrangements for the day-to-day exchange of information between parents, carers and the school staff, and for the children to leave school safely in the care of a known adult. The adults throughout the school quickly get to know the children and establish good relationships with them. This encourages the children to try hard and to behave well and promotes their good progress and achievement.
23. This close attention to pastoral care is continued throughout the school. As a small school, the staff know the pupils well and this knowledge is enhanced because children spend up to two years with the same teacher. Consequently, teachers have a good

understanding of the pupils' capabilities and what is required to help them develop. The assessment procedures used to monitor the pupils' learning are good and are used well. The pupils confirm that there is a good level of care, citing as particular strengths, the friendly atmosphere and the fact that they feel comfortable approaching staff when they have a concern. Good quality support is available for the pupils with special educational needs. This includes good use of outside agencies to advise and provide additional help for those pupils with specific needs. In particular, the pupils with medical, behavioural or emotional problems are given assistance to cope with their challenges and to be fully integrated into the life of the school. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the local high school. The pupils in Year 6 attend taster days in music and sport and the staff from the high school visit the school to get to know them. Particular care is taken to ensure that, before they leave, the pupils are paired with a friend.

24. Through the recently established class, school and eco councils, the school provides good opportunities for pupils to have a say in the running of their school. Although still in its early stages the members of the school council are beginning to understand the process of conducting meetings, taking minutes and feeding back issues to their class. Younger children are encouraged to make a contribution and they do. This reflects well on the work of the council endorsing its role in providing a voice for all pupils.

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

The school has established very good links with parents and good links with other schools. Links with the community are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school encourages and receives very strong support from parents, which benefits all pupils, including those with special educational needs
- Parents receive very good quality information about their children's progress
- The school is actively involved with other schools and teacher-training establishments

### **Commentary**

25. A significant majority of parents are very satisfied with the school and indicate that they are encouraged to be fully involved in their children's education. The headteacher is keen to make herself available to parents at every opportunity and this is confirmed by those parents who took part in the consultation before the inspection. In the Reception class, the staff are readily available on a day-to-day basis to discuss with parents and carers any problems affecting their children. Some parents help regularly in school with information and communication technology, with activities such as cookery and at the weekly topic afternoons or on outside visits. A very active Friends Association (FOMPS) organises numerous social and fund raising events.
26. The school works closely with the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs. The parents are invited to contribute to and attend the reviews of the progress their children are making. They are made aware of the targets set for their children in their individual education plans. Suggestions are made about support that can be given



at home to extend the work being done in school and the good support and assistance given by parents helps to promote the good progress and achievement of these pupils.

27. The school provides wide-ranging information through the termly curriculum sheets, regular newsletters and guidance on supporting homework. The parents are kept very well informed on how their children are progressing. Almost all parents attend the three parents evenings offered each year and they speak highly of the 'tracker books', taken home each term, which contain examples of the pupils' work, indications of their progress and a comment on their personal development. In addition, the annual reports on the pupils' progress are of good quality, providing a very clear summary of the appropriateness of the pupils' progress and clear targets for improvement. The pupils contribute to this progress by identifying and commenting on what they have achieved.
28. The school is keen to play its part in developing the next generation of teachers and, to that end, it has established good links with the University College of Worcester, for whom they provide teacher training placements. The Foundation Stage teacher is a leading teacher in her field and she regularly visits other schools to pass on her knowledge. Good links have been forged with the local high school to which most pupils transfer after Year 6. The co-ordinator for physical education leads the schools involvement in a sports confederation, which enhances the links with local schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new headteacher has been quick to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses and has established clear priorities for improvement
- The headteacher, staff and governors have created a very positive ethos in which all pupils, whatever their background or ability, are valued and encouraged to fulfil their potential
- The governors have improved their awareness of how well the school is doing and have a clear understanding of their strategic role
- The role of subject co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection but their role in monitoring the teaching and learning is still under-developed

### **Commentary**

29. Since taking up her appointment at the beginning of term, the headteacher has placed continuing school improvement at the top of her agenda. She has quickly gained an insight into what the school is doing well, has a clear vision for addressing the areas for development and has built effective partnerships with the deputy headteacher, other staff and governors, so that they, too, share this vision. The school believes very strongly in providing equal opportunities for its pupils and this is shown in the way that all of them, including those with special educational needs, have access to a wide and varied curriculum. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) makes a strong contribution to this ethos, working well with the teachers and teaching assistants and ensuring that the procedures and documentation for these pupils are thorough and

well organised. The governors are supportive of this work and provide extra resources for teaching and support, which contributes effectively to the good overall progress and achievement of these pupils.

30. School improvement planning has been enhanced since the last inspection. It is now much more evident how the targets outlined in the plan will be achieved, who will lead the developments, at what cost and how long they will take. The headteacher has added her own priorities, following a full and frank audit of the school's performance. As a result, the headteacher, staff and governors are well placed to secure further improvement. For example, the school has rightly identified the need to improve the pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 and, although there is still more work to be done, is moving steadily to secure the necessary improvement. The governors have successfully introduced strategies to improve their awareness of the progress being made towards the targets in the school improvement plan, including establishing effective links with the co-ordinators of each subject. Some governors are regular visitors to school although, for many, opportunities to visit lessons are limited. The governors are very supportive of the headteacher, are very aware of their statutory responsibilities and have a significant impact on the school's direction. The governors keep a close check on the management of finance and they are well supported in day-to-day administration by the efficient new secretary. The balance carried forward in the table below has been accrued to enable the governors to maintain staffing levels and to fund modifications to the building, including the provision of a new toilet area.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	307,867	Balance from previous year	61,175
Total expenditure	329,934	Balance carried forward to the next	48,703
Expenditure per pupil	3,836		

31. The small staff work together effectively to ensure that all subjects have their place in the curriculum, to keep abreast of changes and to manage the resources. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teacher in charge is working well to promote and develop the curriculum for these youngest children. She has a clear vision of good practice to promote the progress of the children and provides a good role model for other schools in her role as a teacher-mentor for the Foundation Stage. Through the school's involvement in the Primary Leadership Programme, the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy are becoming more aware of the work across the school in these important areas. However, in many other subjects, there have been too few opportunities for the co-ordinators to monitor and influence the teaching and learning. One consequence is that it is not always clear how the long-term planning in the subjects builds on the skills that the pupils have learned in previous years.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well in the reception class and make very good progress in their speaking and listening, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development
- The basic skills of reading, speaking, listening and number are well taught
- The teaching assistants are very well used to support learning
- The careful planning provides a range of interesting activities but fewer opportunities for independent learning are available

#### Commentary

32. The children join the reception class at the start of the autumn term; at present there are 14 children in the class, attending full time. The children enjoy coming to school and get a good start to their education. The very good relationships that exist between parents and the school, combined with a good induction programme, mean that the children settle quickly into the class routines. The attainment of the children when they start school varies from year to year and covers a broad range but, overall, it is average. They achieve well in each of the areas of learning, because of the good teaching. Most are likely to reach the goals expected of them by the end of Reception and about a quarter are on course to exceed them, which is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. The class teacher leads the Foundation Stage well and has very high expectations of herself, the support staff, and the children. Planning of the work for the children is thorough and provides good opportunities for the children to access all the areas of learning and the literacy and numeracy strategies. Occasionally, the adults over direct the activities and the children lose opportunities to learn and explore independently. The way that the children's progress is assessed and recorded has improved since the last inspection and the information gained is well used to plan the next steps in the children's learning. The school benefits from the involvement of the Reception teacher in the local education authority's teacher-mentoring programme, in which the teacher shares her good practice with other schools.
33. The children achieve well in their **personal, social and emotional development**. The majority come mainly from the community playgroup held at the school but others have a varying experience of working and playing alongside other children. They settle quickly and happily into school life and the teacher and other adults make sure that all of the children have a clear idea of what is expected of them. The children develop very positive attitudes to learning and soon begin to share equipment, take turns and follow instructions. The teacher and teaching assistants have very high expectations of how the children should behave and, as a result, they benefit from the very orderly and secure environment. Relationships are very positive and the children behave very well, co-operate, concentrate, and persevere well to complete tasks. The staff make sure that all of the children, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all activities and are able to achieve well. There is a strong emphasis on developing the children's learning through structured activities. Occasionally, however, opportunities to develop their independence through making choices and decisions are missed.

34. The teaching of **communication, language and literacy** is good and builds well on the wide range of skills that the children bring from home and other pre-school settings. They make particularly good progress in learning to speak and listen through the many opportunities to discuss their work, respond to events in stories, answer questions and take part in discussions. They are encouraged to take part in role-play activities and join in songs and rhymes and the adults frequently make good quality interventions to promote the children's progress. The children are good listeners, learn to take turns to speak and respond positively to the adults. The teaching of early reading skills is good. The children soon learn to recognise and sound letters and they enjoy sharing books with adults and each other. By the end of the reception year, many of the children read simple books fluently and are able to retell stories they have read. They are well supported through the home-school reading partnership and have very positive attitudes to books and reading. The children are provided with good opportunities to write for different purposes, for example retelling stories, sequencing events and writing captions to go with pictures. Writing skills are carefully taught so that the children learn to form letters correctly as well as learning to write and spell a basic vocabulary of key words. In some cases, however there is an overuse of copy-writing that limits the children's development of independent writing skills when trying to spell words for themselves.
35. The children are making good progress in their **mathematical development**. Most are able to count to 20 and beyond, and they are developing a good understanding of mathematical language. The planning for this area of learning is good with an emphasis on practical activity and making effective use of the children's enthusiasm for counting and using numbers. Songs and rhymes play an important part in the children's early mathematical development and the children enjoy joining in with these. The teacher uses a variety of activities and resources to make the learning fun such as sorting teddy bears into different sets and playing counting games. When snack time arrives the children take it in turns to be the shopkeeper and 'buy' their drinks and fruit using different combinations of coins. These activities all have a positive impact on the children's achievement.
36. There is particularly strong provision made to develop the children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** and they achieve very well in this area of learning. The children have regular opportunities to explore the properties of sand and water and use construction toys. Volunteers and staff augment the curriculum through real-life tasks such as working with the children to build walls and sow seeds and tend the garden. They learn about the local area and their environment through visits to the butcher's shop and regular walks to the woods. The children have good opportunities to use computers and other information and communication technology. They know how to use a program to 'dress teddy' and use the mouse confidently to point, click and drag objects into position. Together with the pupils in Years 1 and 2, the children enjoy the visit by the local museum education service, when they learn about toys from bygone times and compare them with their toys today. The children have good opportunities to learn about their own culture and traditions and also to participate in whole school topics, finding out about the customs and beliefs of religions such as Hinduism as they celebrate Diwali.
37. The provision for the children's **physical development** enables them to make very good progress because the teacher works hard to provide suitable opportunities for them to develop good fine and gross motor skills. The children use paintbrushes, pencils and scissors with care and precision and have good opportunities to develop good physical control through joining together pieces when completing jigsaws, using construction sets and sewing. There are sufficient numbers of wheeled toys for the

children to use in the outdoor area and they ride them with care and precision. The small size of the space limits the opportunities for more exciting use of outdoor equipment. At present the adventure playground is awaiting the fitting of a safety surface but the school hall has facilities for the children to climb and balance and regular lessons promote the children's physical development indoors.

38. The children enjoy art, story and imaginative play and music and are achieving well in their **creative development**. Good use is made of a visiting music teacher to extend the opportunities for the children to sing and do actions to music. The children know a good range of colours and they paint with enjoyment, confidence and skill. They enjoy making hats for their teddies as they are helped to measure and construct cones before decorating them with shiny paper. Materials such as water and sand are available for children to use and explore regularly. The children act out stories imaginatively in the toyshop and dressing up areas. However there are fewer opportunities for them to use the outdoor area independently, where the equipment is more limited and there are difficulties with the space if the wheeled vehicles are being used.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- The pupils achieve well because they are well taught
- Reading is well organised, standards are above average and the pupils develop a love of books
- The school has rightly identified the need to improve writing in Years 1 and 2 and there is still more to be done, particularly for the more able pupils
- The teaching assistants provide very good support
- Assessment arrangements are thorough and a close check is kept on the pupils' progress

#### **Commentary**

39. By the end of Year 2, the pupils attain standards that are above average in reading, speaking and listening and they are average in writing. By the end of Year 6, the inspection confirms that standards in English are above average. This is higher than the performance of eleven year olds in the 2004 tests, which was average but, in recent years, the results, have been consistently above or well above average. Across the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Standards are similar to those found in the last inspection.
40. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement. Very good teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6 and, as a result, the rate of progress made by most pupils increases in the oldest class. One lesson observed was particularly successful because of the way that the teacher focused on what she expected the pupils to learn and presented the material in an interesting and challenging way. Consequently, the pupils made rapid gains in their understanding of

complex sentences and were able to identify and use main and subordinate clauses. Across the school, lessons are well planned, brisk and enjoyable. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils and ensure that there is a high level of involvement in lessons. The pupils respond well to the many opportunities for them to ask and answer questions, offer opinions and listen to others in the discussions in literacy sessions and lessons in other subjects.

41. The teachers have a good knowledge of how pupils develop their literacy skills and implement the National Literacy Strategy well. The lesson planning, particularly in the older classes, ensures that the more able pupils are stretched and there are many examples of good quality, thoughtful and analytical writing amongst the older pupils. Those who need more support with their work get it and the pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants across the school, which contributes to their good progress and achievement. Procedures for assessing the pupils' work and tracking their progress are good and this information is shared usefully with parents. Day-to-day assessment, including the marking of the pupils' work, is good and the pupils receive clear information about how they can improve. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who ensures that there is a consistency of approach from class to class. The newly introduced interactive whiteboards are already being used to good effect to enhance the presentation of information and to capture the pupils' interest.
42. The teaching of reading builds upon the good start made by the children in the Foundation Stage. The reading programme is well organised across the school and the teachers keep a close eye on how well the pupils are doing. Reading diaries provide a useful link between home and school and the support provided by parents at home plays a major part in the good progress made by the pupils. Parents report their appreciation for the school's approach to teaching reading, particularly the way in which individual needs and interests are taken into account. Consequently, the pupils read accurately and confidently and have positive attitudes to reading. Older pupils, in particular, enjoy talking about their wide-ranging tastes.
43. The school has identified the improvement of writing in Years 1 and 2 as a priority and, with the support of the local educational authority, is reviewing its approach. Spelling and handwriting are taught systematically so that, by the end of Year 6, most pupils develop a cursive and fluent style of writing and the standard of spelling is above that usually found. There are many opportunities for the pupils to write in a variety of forms, including stories, poems, reports and personal recounts. In the early stages, however, there is an occasional over-emphasis on copy-writing that limits the opportunities for the pupils to write independently. Similarly, in some lessons, too much is done by the adults to provide spellings for the pupils as they write, again limiting their independence. This weakness has been recognised by the school and there are appropriate plans in hand to review and improve its approach. At present, the approach limits the progress made by the more able pupils and this is reflected in the below average proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 in the national assessments in 2004 and in the school's forecasts for the current year group.

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

44. Good use is made of the pupils' language and literacy skills in other subjects, which has a positive impact on their achievement in English and on the progress they make in other subjects. The pupils' speaking and listening are promoted well through the many discussions at the beginning and end of lessons. There are many opportunities for them to read a variety of texts, non-fiction books and to search for information on the Internet. Older pupils write at length but, amongst the younger pupils, there is an occasional over-reliance on using work sheets and copy-writing that limits the progress of the pupils' independent writing, particularly when reporting their findings in science.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the national average by the time the pupils leave the school
- The pupils achieve well throughout the school, and very well in Years 5 and 6, because of the good teaching
- The teachers are using the new interactive whiteboards imaginatively
- The subject is well led and managed

### **Commentary**

45. Most pupils join the school with mathematical skills that are broadly average. They achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, standards are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. The rate of progress increases in Years 5 and 6 and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. The number of pupils in each year group is usually small. In most years, there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs receiving good quality support to achieve well against the targets that are set for them. More able pupils are well provided for and a good proportion of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
46. The good start made by the pupils in the Reception class is built on effectively as the pupils move through the school because the teaching of mathematics is well organised. The pupils have impressively enthusiastic and positive attitudes to mathematics and the teachers foster these very well during the lessons because the activities they provide are generally well matched to the pupils' needs. Occasionally the mental and oral starter lacks the brisk pace necessary to sharpen the pupils' mathematical thinking and prepare them for new work to be taught during the main part of the lesson. Despite this, the quality of teaching is consistently good with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. The teachers present their lessons in competent and interesting ways, for example by making increasingly good use of the interactive whiteboards. There is a strong commitment to the achievement of all ability groups and very good use is made of the teaching assistants to support individuals and group activities. There is a good balance between whole-class, group and individual teaching. However, on a few occasions the pace of learning slows when too long is spent on practising skills already learned. Information from regular assessments and the national tests is used to group pupils and match the work to their needs. As the pupils mature they become more aware of the targets they are aiming for and what they have to do to achieve them.

47. The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher and this has a positive effect on the quality of the provision. She sets high standards in her own teaching and provides a very good example for her colleagues. She has good knowledge and understanding of how information and communication technology can be used to support and extend the teaching and learning in mathematics, including the way that the teachers are confidently using the recently installed interactive whiteboards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

48. Mathematics is used well in other subjects and, consequently, the pupils are developing an appreciation of the practical uses of the skills they have learned. For instance, the pupils use graphs and tables to record data in science and in geography they learn to use different scales in map work. They measure materials in design and technology to construct Anderson shelters as part of their history topic on World War II. A time-line is displayed to help pupils appreciate the events that have happened during different eras and how they themselves fit into a historical context. Throughout the school, the pupils take part in cookery activities using weighing and measuring skills. An increasing use of information and communication technology is being made to enhance learning in mathematics - particularly exciting are the 'voting pods' used by the older pupils to answer questions individually. The results are graphically shown on the interactive whiteboard and the answers are stored electronically so that the teacher can check the pupils' understanding and progress.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- The pupils achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 6
- There is a good emphasis on practical work and investigations
- There is an occasional over-use of work sheets which limits the opportunities for younger pupils to select the most appropriate way of recording their work

#### **Commentary**

49. Standards are average at the end of Year 2, reflecting the teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2004. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average. The results for eleven year olds were well above average in 2004 although, due largely to the small number of pupils in each year group, they have varied from year to year in recent times. Standards at the end of Year 6 are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection.

50. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The use of first-hand experience and investigational work is a central feature of the lessons and this successfully develops the pupils' scientific knowledge, skills and understanding. In a successful lesson in Years 1 and 2, the pupils were observed identifying and selecting properties so that they could sort a variety of materials into groups. They co-operated well and were well supported by the teacher and teaching assistant so that, by the end of the lesson, they



were able to describe the similarities and differences of everyday objects, make generalisations and sort them accordingly. On a similar theme, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 evaluated a range of gloves, determining why the materials they were made of rendered them fit for their purpose. The pupils show an increasing ability to organise their investigations that enabled them to answer a range of questions posed by the teacher. Further evidence of the pupils' increasing awareness of carrying out a fair test was seen in Years 5 and 6 as the pupils explored the factors that affect how well sugar dissolves. The teaching was good in each of the lessons seen: there was a clear emphasis on guiding the pupils through what they were expected to learn and the teachers were ably assisted by the teaching assistants. The planning takes good account of the needs of pupils of different abilities. As a result, the pupils make good progress and achieve well.

51. For their part, the pupils are very interested in the work they cover. They concentrate well, persevere when faced with difficulty, co-operate with the staff and their classmates and take pride in the way that they set out their work. Occasionally, however, there is an over-use of recording sheets provided by the teacher, which limits opportunities for the pupils to decide the best way of recording their findings and, for the younger pupils, reduces their opportunities for independent writing.
52. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and has a secure understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The school recognises that the role needs to be developed by creating further opportunities for monitoring the teaching and learning. Science is often the central subject in a topic or theme that includes work in other subjects. This is effective as the planning is clear about how the skills are to be taught progressively as the pupils move through the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision is improving because of the good leadership of the co-ordinator
- The pupils enjoy using computers and they make good use of them in other subjects
- There are some gaps in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding

### **Commentary**

53. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the pupils attain standards that are in line with the expectations of pupils of this age and their achievement is satisfactory. The headteacher, in her role as subject co-ordinator has identified what needs to be done to improve the provision and has a clear plan of action to achieve it. The computers in the suite have been updated and interactive whiteboards have been introduced into the classrooms for Years 1 to 6. Staff training has improved their knowledge and confidence and this is having a positive impact on standards. The staff are quickly embracing the potential of the interactive whiteboards and they are a regular, and positive, feature of lessons in many subjects. There are plans to review the resources for whole class teaching as the suite is small and it is difficult for the whole class to work simultaneously at a computer. The staff adopt two preferred methods of

organisation to compensate for this: by using additional computers situated elsewhere in classrooms, the library or staffroom, or by having half of the class working in the suite while the remaining pupils work at other, often related activities. Both methods are effective, due to the presence of support staff in most lessons and to the pupils' impressive behaviour when not being directly supervised, but it is difficult for the teacher to maintain an overview of all of the pupils' progress.

54. No direct teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 and two lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6. In a sound lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils created a newspaper front page to tell the story of the conquest of Everest. The pupils were able to use word processing skills to manipulate the text, altering the size and style of the typeface confidently. While the pupils consolidated and reinforced their skills, the planning for the lesson was not sufficiently precise about the new learning that was expected to take place. In a very good lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils made very good progress in their understanding of how sound, words and pictures can be used to present information about hot and cold climates. The pupils worked confidently to import pictures from the Internet and they used animation to enhance the visual appeal of their work. The teaching was very effective because the teacher has a very secure subject knowledge that enables her to present the work in an interesting and challenging way. She was very well supported by the teaching assistants.
55. From the lessons observed, discussions with the pupils and a scrutiny of their previous work, the pupils have positive attitudes to using computers and other technology. They have a good recall and understanding of the work they cover and acquire good skills, for example, in word processing. However, there are some gaps in the pupils' knowledge, for example in control and modelling, due largely to a shortage of relevant resources. Some areas, including the use of spreadsheets, are not yet covered in sufficient depth for the pupils to reach the expected levels. This has been recognised by the co-ordinator who has suitable plans for ensuring that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught in sufficient detail and at the appropriate levels.

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

56. This is a strength of the school's provision for ICT. During the inspection, computers were in regular use and the pupils' previous work contains many examples of them using computers in other subjects. This has a positive impact on their learning and achievement in ICT and on the progress they make in those subjects. Word processing is evident in the many examples of stories, poems and other form of writing in books and on display. ICT is increasingly used in mathematics and science, for example when collecting data from investigations, or when pupils in Year 3 learn about angles of turn when controlling a programmable floor robot. In a Year 5 and 6 geography lesson, the pupils took great delight in using video cameras to produce a television interview about the hottest and coldest places on Earth, complementing the multi-media presentations they made in an ICT lesson. The Internet is used regularly for research purposes in history and, in art and design, computers were used to create portraits inspired by Andy Warhol.

## **HUMANITIES**

57. No lessons were seen in **history** and one in **geography**. So no overall judgements about provision can be made. From a scrutiny of the teachers' planning, the work in the pupils' books and on display and from discussions with teachers and pupils, it is evident that both subjects have a secure place in the curriculum of the school and that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Although the subject co-ordinators work hard to guide developments and support colleagues with their planning, there are few opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. The work is often planned as part of a broader topic containing other subjects. While this is successful, it is not always clear how the skills learned by the pupils are developed progressively as they move through the school.
58. In a successful geography lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils used video cameras to create a television programme about the key features of a cold climate, demonstrating a good understanding of the extremes of temperature and how they influence the lives of people who experience them. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 identified local features on a map and plotted their journey to school. Those in Years 3 and 4 looked further afield to identify continents, the poles and some of the world's major cities.
59. In history, the school plans a rolling programme of topics in order to ensure that pupils do not repeat areas, however there is insufficient attention paid to planning for the progressive development of skills such as historical enquiry. The pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have learned. The teachers seek to make the lessons interesting by linking learning in different subjects. For example, the older pupils have constructed models of Anderson shelters as part of their work on World War II and particularly enjoyed finding pictures of wartime leaders from the Internet. Writing letters from evacuees to their families left behind gives good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and imaginative skills. Visits and visitors are also used well to support and enhance learning in history. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 have recently been visited by the local museum service from Hereford who brought a number of artefacts from Victorian times for the pupils to observe and contrast with present day items. An understanding of chronology is developed well throughout the school and is supported by time lines showing important events in history.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is having a good impact on the provision
- The pupils achieve well in gaining knowledge of a range of religions and religious traditions
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

## Commentary

60. Standards are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. The pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of pupils in Years 2 and 6 as outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. By the time they leave the school the pupils have achieved

well in gaining knowledge of Christianity and a range of other world faiths. Talking with pupils, it is clear that they have a good recall of what they have learnt from their religious education lessons. They find it interesting to discuss what they have learned, for example, about Hinduism and how and why Diwali is celebrated. The religious education lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although one very good lesson was seen in Years 5 and 6. The school's planning covers the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils learn about a range of religions: they hear stories from the different traditions and discover facts about features such as celebrations and sacred books. The teachers encourage and engage the pupils well and those with special needs are well supported and achieve as well as their classmates. In a lesson on 'aids to prayer', the teacher provides an excellent range of experiences for the pupils to encounter. These range from music, through the use of rosary beads and prayer wheels to candles and quietness. The pupils respond with impressive maturity as they move around the various artefacts and discuss with one another their opinions on the effectiveness of each one. The pupils are so engrossed in the assignment that they wish to complete all the experiences rather than move onto a different task.
62. An enthusiastic and experienced teacher co-ordinates the subject well. She tries hard to ensure that available resources are well matched to the pupils' needs and is constantly alert to finding opportunities to extend and enhance learning in religious education. However, there have been few opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in order to maintain an overview of strengths and weaknesses.

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

63. No lessons were seen in **design and technology** or **music**, so judgements about the quality of provision are not possible.
64. The work in design and technology is often planned to support the learning in other subjects. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 have designed wheeled vehicles, which they recorded on carefully labelled diagrams and created paper-plate puppets. Those in Years 3 and 4 have evaluated the effectiveness of different types of scissors. Although the pupils receive a worthwhile range of experiences, the planning is not sufficiently precise about how the pupils learn new skills as they move from class to class.
65. The school employs a specialist teacher and he is using the national guidelines to plan work in music. From the evidence of assemblies, group and individual instrumental tuition and recorded work, it is clear that the pupils have opportunities to listen to music, sing, play a range of instruments and to compose and perform. Music is well used to promote the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural education and it contributes well to their personal development. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to listen to and appraise music from a range of traditions and cultures, including concerts given by the local education authority music service. The pupils enjoy taking part in performances for parents, carers, and friends of the school. They know a good range of songs and hymns. Opportunities to learn to play the recorder are open to all pupils and they are making good progress. The most advanced recorder group of six pupils play confidently and competently to accompany the singing in assemblies. Many

individual and small group instrumental sessions are offered, for which the parents pay, and many children take advantage of these lessons.

## **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils produce work of a high standard and achieve very well
- The teaching is consistently good
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development

### **Commentary**

66. Standards in art and design are above the expectations of pupils of this age and they achieve very well. This is a similar situation to that found at the time of the last inspection. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils and to their personal development. The pupils enjoy their lessons, concentrate well and take pride in their efforts. They have good opportunities to explore and use a good range of techniques and media. They consider the work of different artists and begin to evaluate their own work in a mature and developmental way. The pupils approach their work confidently and are not discouraged if they do not fully succeed at the first attempt.

67. The teaching and learning are good because the teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are confident about teaching different techniques. They manage the pupils well, have high expectations of their behaviour and diligence. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants to extend the support given to less able or confident pupils and this enables them to fully participate in the good quality activities.

68. The leadership and management of the subject are good. This is because the co-ordinator, who plans the various topics that the classes are going to cover, shares her enthusiasm and expertise well with other members of staff. At present, the whole school is engaged in working on creating images that emulate the artistic style of Andy Warhol. The pupils are given good opportunities to use and develop their painting, drawing and ICT techniques. The resources are very well prepared and the project is enhanced by a vibrant display of the artist's work to act as a catalyst.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education (PE) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils enjoy lessons and work hard
- The curriculum is enriched by a broad range of activities outside of lessons

### **Commentary**

69. Four lessons were observed, covering games, dance and gymnastics. The evidence of these lessons, the teachers' planning and discussions with the pupils indicate that pupils achieve well and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are generally above what is expected of pupils of this age.
70. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and take good account of those pupils with specific physical needs. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' skills and, for their part, the pupils take part enthusiastically, work hard to improve and attain standards above those usually found. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in gymnastics. They move with good control and a good attention to detail and awareness of the shapes they are trying to make. They work hard when warming up and know why it is important to do so. In both of the good lessons, the teacher ensured that all pupils were actively involved and there were good opportunities for them to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates. The teaching assistant ensured that those with special educational needs were able to take full part in the lesson. In another successful lesson, in Years 3 and 4, the teacher had high expectations that the pupils could learn and perform a new dance. They rose to the challenge enthusiastically. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed well developed throwing and catching skills and worked with accuracy and precision in their netball lesson.
71. The pupils' work is enhanced by a good range of activities outside of the normal curriculum. There is a good number of clubs, including netball, volleyball and football, which utilise the interests and expertise of the staff and are supplemented well by visiting coaches. The school takes part successfully in competition with other local schools and the provision is enhanced further by the school's involvement in a local sports confederation.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

72. No dedicated personal, social and health education lessons were seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make overall judgements on the provision. The school has a carefully planned and well established programme of work, including sex and drug awareness, and the topics are often integrated into the science curriculum. The school aims to promote respect, confidence and self-esteem in the pupils. The very positive attitudes that the pupils have towards each other and the adults in school indicate that this aim is achieved. Discussions with the co-ordinator show that the work is continuing to evolve as it is regularly reviewed to take account of new developments such as the class and school councils.
73. The establishment of the class councils has been built on gradually to give the pupils an outlet for their views on a range of school issues. During the inspection the impressive class council of Years 5 and 6 was seen in action. It was very well conducted along formal meeting lines with a chairperson and secretary. The pupils, giving a number of people congratulations for a wide range of achievements, opened the proceedings. Minutes of the previous meeting were read out and matters arising dealt with. The main business to be dealt with was a question and answer session with the local Parish

Officer on the important issue of the care and use of school grounds by people out of school hours. The class and school councils are giving pupils experience of open discussion, how decisions are made in a democratic society and how to resist peer pressures.

74. The school strongly promotes the care of the natural environment and has already achieved national status in the Eco-school awards. The delightfully natural school grounds are well appreciated and cared for by the pupils in a range of practical ways. For example, all of the waste from the daily fruit allocation is collected up and composted for use in the school garden.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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



