

## INSPECTION REPORT

**MIDDLEHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY  
AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Middleham, Leyburn

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121614

Headteacher: Mrs S Bell

Lead inspector: Mrs L J Traves

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 267316

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: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 69

School address: Park Lane  
Middleham  
Leyburn  
North Yorkshire

Postcode: DL8 4QX

Telephone number: 01969 623592  
Fax number:

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Mrs C West  
governors:

Date of previous March 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Middleham Church of England Primary is a small, rural school situated in the township of Middleham, in the Yorkshire Dales. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and social contexts. When they enter school, pupils' attainments are wide ranging but most demonstrate skills that are as expected for their age. Although some pupils live close to the school, a significant number live in outlying villages and hamlets or on outlying farms, and travel some distance to school. Parents are largely employed in farming, tourism and in supporting the horse racing stables that form an integral part of the community. Some work in professions further afield. The area is suffering from falling school rolls as families are finding employment more difficult to come by and house prices more difficult to afford. There are currently 69 pupils on roll, almost all of white, British heritage and all speaking English as their mother tongue. Pupils are taught in three mixed age classes: reception and Year 1 pupils, Year 2 and 3 pupils and Years 4 to 6. Those in the oldest class are taught by the headteacher and by a part-time member of staff. The percentage of pupils having free school meals (2.6 per cent) is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (10.3 per cent) is also below average; these are mainly related to learning and physical difficulties. An average number of pupils (1.3 per cent) have a statement of special educational needs. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2003 and took over the school after it had suffered a period of turbulence, due to staffing instability and changes in leadership and management. The school achieved the 'Healthy Schools' award in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
24039	Mrs Lesley Traves	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English Geography Physical education
11084	Mrs Jane Hughes	Lay inspector	
30954	Mr Brian Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
33022	Mr Jeffrey McCann	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science History Music

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>3</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>6</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>23</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides a sound standard of education and has some significant strengths.** It takes very good care of its pupils and creates a family environment in which they thrive. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall and enables pupils to reach the standards expected by the age of 11. However, there is much good teaching that is enabling pupils to achieve well in key areas, such as in the reception/Year 1 class and in mathematics. Older pupils could achieve more, particularly in writing. The headteacher, deputy head and governors provide good leadership and management and are moving the school forward. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher, deputy head and governors work effectively as a team to improve the school;
- Pupils get off to a flying start in the reception and Year 1 class;
- Standards in mathematics are above average throughout the school but older pupils could achieve higher standards in writing;
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and enables them to develop as well rounded, confident individuals who behave well, respect others and have good attitudes to learning;
- Relationships at all levels are very strong and underpin the work of the school very well;
- Work is sometimes too hard for some Year 4 pupils and too easy for some in Year 6.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Progress was slower than it might have been because of changes in staffing and leadership. However, the school has now largely addressed the key issues identified last time. For example, there have been improvements in the way the curriculum is planned and pupils are much more independent learners. The role of the subject leaders has been improved and they take greater responsibility for developing their areas. The information collected on pupils' progress is more thorough and used to better effect, although there is still more work to be done in this area.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - in the bottom 5 per cent nationally.*

*Similar schools are those with similar results at Key Stage 1.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** Test results need to be treated with caution, because the small numbers of pupils in each year group skew the picture and make it difficult to identify trends or make reliable comparisons. However, standards dipped in 2003. One of the reasons for this was the instability in staffing the school faced, which affected

pupils' progress. Standards are also affected by the numbers of children in different year groups who have special educational needs, as in 2004. The grades shown above do not tell the full story. For example, in 2004 in reading and science, the majority of pupils reached the higher level (Level 5) in the tests, although the writing results were disappointing, with a significant number of pupils reaching below average standards. Most pupils achieved average results in mathematics, although only a small number did better than this. However, inspection evidence indicates that there has been good improvement in mathematics and the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach above average standards this year. Standards in English and science are likely to be average. Although writing is showing signs of improvement, it is still lagging behind reading by some margin. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, the vast majority are likely to reach average standards but few are on course to do better. Throughout the school, pupils achieve steadily in information and communication technology (ICT) and do as well as expected at the ages of 7 and 11. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because their needs are effectively met. More able pupils in Year 6 could do better in writing and science. In the reception class, children do well in all areas of learning and achieve particularly well in their personal and social development. They are on course to meet or exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall.** It is consistently good or better in the reception/Year 1 class and gets children off to a strong start. Although there are examples of good and very good teaching throughout the school, there is some teaching that is less effective for the wide range of ability within the mixed age classes. Pupils with special educational needs do well because they are provided with high quality, sensitive support. The curriculum is well planned and learning is enriched effectively through visits, visitors and good links with other schools. The school has a successful partnership with its parents. Staff take very good care of the pupils, support them well and have their best interests at heart.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The effective teamwork of the headteacher, deputy head and governors and the strong support and commitment of all other staff is a crucial factor in the school moving forward. Governance is good. Governors use their wide expertise and fulfil their statutory duties well to support school development.

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

Parents and pupils have positive views about the school. Children enjoy coming to school and feel that staff value them and take account of their views. Some parents would like more information about their child's progress and some feel that their views could be sought more regularly.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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



- Improve standards in writing at Key Stage 2;
- Ensure that assessments are used effectively to provide work at the right level of challenge for pupils in Years 4 and 6, particularly in writing and science.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils in the Foundation Stage (reception class) and those in Key Stage 1 are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. The progress of pupils in Year 4 slows and achievement dips for these pupils. The more able pupils in Year 6 could achieve more in some subjects. Boys and girls do equally as well as each other.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils get off to a strong start in reception and Year 1;
- Standards in mathematics are above average at both key stages;
- Standards in writing are not high enough at Key Stage 2;
- A significant number of pupils in Year 4 and the more able pupils in Year 6, in particular, could achieve more.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 - average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.2 (17.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.8 (17.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	19.0 (18.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 - average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (24.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.5 (24.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.4 (25.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

1. This is a small school and the number of pupils taking the national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 fluctuates year-on-year and is always low. Test results can be misleading as one child can often represent a large percentage of the class. In addition, in some year groups the proportion of children with special educational needs distorts the figures. Consequently, it is more difficult to identify trends or make comparisons and caution is needed.
2. In 2003, standards in the national tests for 11-year-olds dipped significantly to well below average in English, mathematics and science. This was partly because instability of staffing led to disruptions in learning for these pupils. In 2004, although there was some overall improvement, standards remained well below average in

English and below average in mathematics and science, when compared to all schools and in the bottom 5 per cent in the country when compared with those in similar circumstances. However, there are several reasons why standards did not rise as much as the school had predicted. Firstly, these pupils had suffered the same disruptions to learning as the 2003 group because they were taught in the same class. Secondly, a significant proportion of the class had severe special educational needs; although these pupils achieved soundly in relation to their abilities, they were unable to reach average standards. However, the results do not tell the full story. Measures that the school put in place to improve standards had only just started to have an impact. For example, a strong focus on reading enabled the majority of pupils to achieve the higher level (Level 5) in the tests. However, writing results were disappointing and lagged behind reading quite considerably, with a significant number of pupils failing to reach the average level and only one child reaching the higher level. In mathematics, the vast majority of pupils reached the average level. However, too few pupils reached the higher level. The science picture was rosier because, despite a significant proportion of pupils who did not reach the average standard, a high percentage achieved above average levels.

3. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards for the current Year 6 pupils are average in English and science, which is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. However, reading standards have improved since then and a good proportion of pupils are on course to achieve the higher level in this years tests. In mathematics, there has been a pleasing improvement and standards are above average. Improvements in mathematics have been brought about by consistently good teaching and the good use of information on pupils' progress to set work at the right level of challenge for them. Junior pupils are now building well on the firm foundations laid down in the infant classes. The school has also put measures in place to improve writing standards. For example, assessments are being used appropriately to identify pupils who need extra support to 'boost' their achievement and staff have received training. These measures are in the early stages and the full impact is yet to be seen. A greater emphasis is being placed on investigative work in science and this is having a beneficial effect on developing pupils' understanding. There are occasions, in both English and science, when the more able pupils in Year 6 could achieve more with a better level of challenge. The school has identified that the achievement of Year 4 pupils dips overall and inspection evidence supports this view. These pupils do not build as rapidly on their previous learning as they could in some subjects, because the tasks and the support they receive are not always at the right level for them. The school is working hard to find ways of addressing this issue.
4. For several years results in the national tests for 7-year-olds have been well above average in reading and writing when compared to schools nationally. They have been in the highest 5 per cent in the country in mathematics, when compared to all schools and those in similar circumstances. This is a direct result of consistently good teaching, which ensures that their skills develop rapidly. In the current Year 2 group, inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average in all three areas, although this years cohort has fewer pupils who are on course to reach above average standards (Level 3) than last year. In science in 2004, teacher assessments showed that although all pupils reached the average level overall, there were none who achieved the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that this picture will improve slightly this year. However, on occasions the more able pupils and those at the higher end of average could be stretched more effectively.

5. In ICT, standards are broadly as expected for children in both key stages. Teachers are confident and make satisfactory use of computers in other subjects. Resources are just about adequate, although there are some technical issues to address which are currently holding the school back in developing the subject further.
6. When pupils start school their skills vary. However, taken over a number of years the indications are that the majority have skills that are broadly as expected for their age. The current Foundation Stage pupils have made a really strong start and are achieving well in all areas of learning. All pupils are on course to reach or exceed the expected levels (Early Learning Goals) in all areas by the end of the year. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which supports their learning well in other areas.
7. There was not enough evidence to judge overall standards in other subjects. However, pupils appear to achieve satisfactorily overall.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Provision for pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is good. Attendance is well above the national average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in reception and Year 1 respond particularly well to their teacher;
- Pupils relate very well to their peers and all adults;
- Staff encourage pupils to become independent members of the community;
- Parents say their children really like school and attendance patterns reflect this;
- The school could be more proactive in widening pupils' multicultural experiences.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils stream into school each morning, chatting happily and eager to embrace the day. They are keen to learn and settle quickly into lessons. Children in Class 1 are particularly hard working. They listen very carefully to explanations and instructions from their class teacher and work industriously during lessons. They approach their work with diligence and are equally happy working independently on practical activities, as they are tackling teacher led tasks. All pupils are conscientious learners; they complete homework as required and are respectful of their teachers.
9. There is a calm, happy atmosphere in school. Pupils take their lead from the very good examples set by adults and everyone is treated well. Visitors are made to feel welcome as pupils sit and chat happily about their school and the many features they enjoy.
10. This is an orderly community where pupils know exactly what is expected of them. All adults have consistently high expectations of how pupils will perform and are quick to point out when any behaviour falls short of the high standards upon which they insist. There are occasional lapses in behaviour but staff are quick to encourage pupils to make things better. The school has clear procedures in place to cope with rare cases of significant bullying or other inappropriate behaviour. Most parents are happy with the way staff respond to any problems, although a few would welcome still more support from the school.

11. Pupils make significant strides in their personal development during their time in school. Local clergy offer regular support to staff and pupils and this is reflected in the effective spiritual dimension the staff create. Adults offer pupils opportunities to marvel at the beauty of the natural world as they appreciate scents and textures found at a local garden centre. Similarly, other visits encourage pupils to develop a sensitive appreciation of differing values and lifestyles; at Jervaulx Abbey, for example, pupils experienced what it would be like to live life as a monk.
12. Close attention is paid to pupils' effective moral and social development. Links are made with a number of charities for which pupils fundraise during the year. Pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong and uphold school and class rules. They queue quietly at lunchtime and treat all the helpers with respect. They enjoy helping one another, quickly running errands for staff and offering support for younger children when they have a problem. There are many opportunities for pupils to become increasingly independent as they make daily choices in school. The school council is an effective body for change within the school and is ably led by some of the older pupils. Meetings are well run and sensible discussions take place within a limited time frame. All pupils feel that their opinions are heard.
13. Pupils' cultural development is also well addressed by the school as it makes use of local resources and artefacts. Staff call on local talent as often as possible to ensure pupils come into contact with artists, sculptors and drama groups. Pupils have a good grasp of what it meant to live in Victorian times and of aspects of life in World War II. However, the school is less successful at introducing pupils to different multicultural experiences beyond what they learn in religious education lessons or when celebrating different festivals such as Diwali.
14. Attendance rates are consistently high and reflect how eager pupils are to attend. Parents confirm that their children really like school. They arrive on time and immediately launch themselves into activities.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

15. There have been no exclusions in the past school year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although much is good. An effective curriculum is in place, which is enriched well.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Although much good teaching was seen during the inspection, the impact over time on pupils' learning is satisfactory. For some older children, instability in staffing in the past has led to disruptions in learning. In addition, the wide spread of ability in the Years 4 to 6 class is difficult to manage. Progress dips overall in Year 4 and the more able pupils in Year 6 are not always challenged as effectively as they could be. Consistently good or better teaching in the reception and Year 1 class ensures that children get off to a strong start.

#### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching in the reception/Year 1 class is consistently good or better;
- Mathematics is taught well throughout the school;
- Very good relationships and positive attitudes underpin learning well;
- Good quality support is provided by the teaching assistants;
- Work could be better matched to the abilities of the pupils in the Year 4 to 6 class, particularly in writing and science;
- Teachers could have higher expectations of handwriting and presentation of work in Years 2 to 6.

## Commentary

16. Children in the reception and Year 1 class achieve well because of the high quality teaching they receive. All staff have very high expectations of the pupils and create an environment which is happy and secure, yet hard working and purposeful. A strength is the very close assessment, which ensures that the 'next steps' in learning for pupils are clearly identified and tasks planned which match their learning needs. Good teamwork between the staff ensures that pupils are well taught, whichever member of staff they are working with. A good balance is achieved between teacher and teaching assistant input for the reception pupils. They benefit from being taught for part of the time alongside the older children, but also from having time as a discreet group to work on activities that meet their particular needs.
17. Throughout the school, pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and with each other and this underpins learning well. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and usually manage pupils well. As a result, there are very few occasions when learning is disrupted. The vast majority of pupils want to please their teachers and are keen and attentive in lessons. Pupils collaborate well with each other when working in pairs or groups and help each other out.
18. Where teaching is particularly good, teachers are confident with the subject they are teaching. Planning and the use of assessment are effective and tasks are closely matched to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers give clear explanations to pupils and recap previous work well, using questioning expertly to draw out what pupils already know. As a result, pupils are well focused on their tasks and progress rapidly. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where pupils in all three classes are effectively engaged and challenged by confident, effective teaching. In a Year 4 to 6 lesson taught by the headteacher, for example, pupils achieved very well because the lesson was carried out at a cracking pace, but nobody was left behind. Previous work was built on very well and new learning was introduced in a way that enabled all to 'cotton on' quickly.
19. In some lessons in the Year 4 to 6 class and in the analysis of pupils' work in Years 2 to 6, there are times when the more able pupils could be challenged more effectively by the tasks provided. Also, on occasions, work is too challenging for some. For example, in the Year 2/3 class science books show that, in some lessons, all pupils had completed exactly the same work. In the science and English lessons observed in the Year 4 to 6 class, although the teaching had many good features, such as the interesting 'hands on' learning tasks prepared, some Year 4 pupils found the pace a little too fast and the expectations too high, whilst some Year 6 pupils marked time by completing work that was well within their capabilities. Although extra work was provided, not many got as far as this. However, the school has started to address this issue to some extent, through providing small group teaching in some English lessons. This is in the early stages but is working well. The school has also carefully considered where best to deploy teaching assistants and this is also proving beneficial. In both the Year 2/3 and Year 4 to 6 classes teachers could have higher expectations of the way in which pupils present their work, and pay closer attention to developing handwriting.
20. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good support they receive. Individual education plans are thorough and give good guidance for staff. Targets are set for the pupils which closely match their individual needs. The

work of the teaching assistants has a significant impact on the learning of these pupils. They have good expertise, work well with the class teachers and provide sensitive support for the children they work with.



21. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall and improving. Appropriate, workable systems are now in place for tracking progress in mathematics and English and predicting pupils' future attainment. These systems are in the early stages of implementation but are already enabling staff to build up a picture of pupils' progress throughout the school, and to target support appropriately and effectively. An area for development is the use of marking to indicate to pupils how they might improve, and also the involvement of pupils in setting their own targets and evaluating their own progress. There are some good examples of these features but they are not consistent throughout the school.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	9	3	0	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The curriculum is of good quality. It provides a good breadth of curriculum opportunities that cater well for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all the pupils. The school provides a good range of enrichment opportunities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

**MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good;
- The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good;
- A good programme of experiences through visits, clubs and other activities effectively enriches the curriculum.

**COMMENTARY**

22. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and all subjects of the National Curriculum are covered effectively. Curriculum planning and guidance, which was identified as a weakness previously, has now been revised and the school provides a better range of experiences for the pupils. The curriculum is now well organised to enable most pupils to build appropriately on what they have already achieved. The nationally recommended guidelines for teaching subjects have been adopted and adapted well to more closely meet the particular needs of the school. Topics are organised on either a two-year or three-year cycle to ensure that work is not repeated. Good links between subjects are being developed, which help pupils to make connections and increases the relevance of their learning. A strength of the curriculum is the provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE). This is very well co-ordinated and is strongly driven by the 'Healthy Schools' initiative. The school recently achieved the 'Healthy Schools' award for its high quality work in this area, which involved all members of the school community. Good links between PSHCE and science, the work of the school council and the extra-curricular activities offered also have a very good impact on the pupils' personal development. The curriculum ensures equality of access and opportunity for most pupils.

23. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. It is planned effectively to cover all the required areas of learning in good depth. Well planned and organised staff deployment ensures that these pupils have just the right balance of time on their own as a group and also benefit from being taught alongside the older pupils in the class. Staff are also adept at creating the right balance between activities which are directed by adults and those that the children can explore for themselves.

24. The provision for special educational needs is good. Thorough systems are in place to identify, monitor and meet pupils' needs. Well trained, experienced teaching assistants provide good quality, sensitive support for groups and individuals. Pupils' individual education plans are well written and targets are specific and manageable. The school does not yet maintain a formal register of gifted and talented pupils but has recognised the need to do so.
25. The curriculum is enriched well by the good use the school makes of visits and visitors to supplement the work done in the classroom. It makes good use of the wealth of historical and geographical sites in its immediate area and further afield. For example, as part of the topic on World War II, pupils talked to people from the village and then visited Eden Camp. Pupils also visit places such as Jervaulx Abbey, Newcastle Life Centre and Thorp Perrow Arboretum. The range of sporting activities offered to the pupils is improving, with input from local coaches and links with other schools, which is helping to develop their skills.
26. Good use is made of individual staff expertise and community support to strengthen the curriculum. A good example of this is in music, where a specialist teacher is employed for one session a week to teach throughout the school. This is having a positive impact on learning. In addition, a local community member takes regular recorder sessions, which broadens the pupils' musical experiences. The building provides good accommodation overall for the delivery of the curriculum, particularly for a small school. There are two dedicated computer areas and an adequately stocked library, in addition to good sized classroom space and a hall, which all have a positive impact on learning. The school is currently working to improve the internal condition of the building and to ensure adequate disabled access; there is a rolling programme in place for this. Outdoor space is good, with plenty of hard-surfaced play space and a good-sized field, which are well used for both work and play. However, there is no dedicated play area for the reception pupils, who would benefit from greater access to outdoor climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Learning resources are satisfactory, with some gaps in ICT which need to be plugged to develop the curriculum further.

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

There is very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff provide good support, advice and guidance. The school is good at involving pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff create a very safe and welcoming learning environment;
- Pupils know they can always share any worries with a member of staff;
- School council members are proactive throughout the school.

### **COMMENTARY**

27. Parents and pupils are confident that this is a strong feature of the school. Adults know the children and their backgrounds well and are able to offer suitable advice and support. During lunchtimes, for example, the headteacher and staff dine with the children. They know who needs coaxing to eat a little more, whose parents are

concerned about what they are eating and who needs to be watched for behavioural support. All these interjections are delivered unobtrusively but help to cement the nurturing nature of the school.

28. There are well managed routines within the daily life of the school that ensure pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils know they can ask staff for help if they are worried about anything. Staff and governors are conscientious in their duty of care and all necessary policies are in place. The layout of the building offers practical difficulties and disabled access is limited to the ground floor as a result. In all other areas, the headteacher and staff make sure that this is an inclusive school where different backgrounds, abilities and talents are offered similar levels of support. Health and safety issues are well addressed and carefully documented. Staff show impressive attention to all aspects of safety during their lessons.
29. Clear procedures and regular training ensure that child protection issues are dealt with effectively. The headteacher demonstrates a clear understanding of her responsibilities and is quick to take effective action to ensure the safety of vulnerable children. She establishes firm links with outside support agencies and draws on their expertise as appropriate. All staff receive regular training and update their skills in this area.
30. Induction arrangements work well and children settle quickly into school. Staff foster close links with local early years providers and this helps the transition process. Pupils with special educational needs are offered appropriate levels of support and challenge.
31. The school has developed a number of ways for pupils to make their feelings and views about school known. There are regular discussions during PSHCE sessions and staff chat informally to children throughout the day and take notice of what they say. The school council is the biggest vehicle for change. Feedback from classes is returned via council members at regular meetings. These help to prioritise changes and prove an effective way for pupils to experience democracy in action. A good example of an initiative driven by the council is the provision of air fresheners to improve the environment in the toilets. They manage the funding of this largely by themselves, with a little support from staff.

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

The school maintains good links with parents, other schools and the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Home school links are well established and are at their most effective in Class 1;
- The school welcomes community representatives into school to support pupils' learning;
- Staff encourage worthwhile links with other schools;
- A few parents of older pupils would welcome more regular information about the curriculum and their children's progress.

### **Commentary**

32. Parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire were largely pleased with all aspects of school life. They feel the staff are approachable, that expectations for their children are high and that the induction process is good. They say that their children make good progress in school overall and that their independence is encouraged. A few parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern that the very effective communication they got used to in Class 1 does not continue into the older age groups. As a result, some parents of children in Classes 2 and 3 feel they do not receive enough information about the curriculum their children are following, nor about the progress they are making.
33. Inspection findings indicate that, on balance, information for parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus, governors' annual report to parents and regular newsletters provide parents with a clear overview of what happens in school during the year, although the school accepts that the amount of curriculum information varies between classes. Similarly, the information contained within pupils' individual progress reports is variable in quality. There is quite detailed information for English, mathematics and science but evaluative comments for other subjects are far sparser. However, reports do contain targets for pupils to work towards. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed and are involved in their reviews. The school development plan does not currently identify how the school plans to involve parents more closely with the work of the school. Parents work effectively as part of the successful governing body and help to shape its work in this way.
34. The school and the local community work well together. Local artists, actors and service providers, such as the clergy and police, come into school regularly to support pupils' learning and to show them more of what it means to be an active member of the community. The local vicar is also a school governor and he is often in school, as are other members of the governing body. The school publishes events and successes in the parish magazine and fosters links with the local community centre. Several community bodies donate funds to the school and pupils undertake many visits around the area to support their work in class. Community links make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.
35. Staff forge successful links with local schools and these bring new ideas into classrooms. Teaching assistants are able to visit other schools for cluster training days and this allows them to meet colleagues and to share practice. Close liaison with playgroups and other early years settings, as well as with secondary schools, ensures that pupils move from school to school with the minimum of anxiety and disruption. Pupils participate in arts and sports events and these give them the opportunity to mix with some of the students they will meet at secondary school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership and management of the headteacher is effective. She is well supported by the deputy head and governors in moving the school forward. Governance is also good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has set a clear direction for the work of the school;

- The headteacher, staff and governors work together well as a team to lead the school towards improvement;
- The deputy head plays a strong and effective role in leadership and management;
- The school has good procedures in place for checking its work and deciding on its priorities for the future.

### **Commentary**

36. The headteacher, who has been in post for a year, has effectively set a clear direction for the work of the school. Together, the headteacher, deputy head and governors have forged a strong team, committed to improving the school. Between them, they have astutely evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses and identified the right priorities for action. Sensibly, they have limited the areas they are working on, being mindful of keeping the workload manageable within the context of a small school with few staff. Already, the focus on assessing and analysing pupils' performance has started to pay dividends in helping to accelerate progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. The drive towards school improvement is underpinned well by a workable development plan, which sets clear criteria against which to judge the success of initiatives.

37. A key feature of this strong teamwork is the willingness of people to use their skills and expertise to support each other. For example, the governing body have diligently and effectively shared responsibility for key areas such as finance, which is an area of development for the headteacher, and for health and safety. The deputy head has worked in the school for many years and knows its context, the pupils and their families extremely well. The headteacher values this expertise highly and has made good use of it in maintaining positive links with parents and ensuring continuity. She has brought her previous experience of working in larger schools to bear and has injected fresh ideas and a strong commitment to staff development. This team approach is ensuring that the workload of leading and managing the school is shared effectively and, as a result, much more is starting to be achieved.
38. The deputy head has a strong impact on the work of the school. As acting head, she brought the school through a challenging period of turbulence and instability. As a result, when the new headteacher took over the school was quickly able to build on its strengths and start to address its weaknesses. She has worked very effectively with other staff to develop their leadership and management and teaching skills, for example, in physical education. The other staff who lead and manage aspects of the school's work do a good job, particularly as they have multiple areas of responsibility. As a result, mathematics has improved and other subjects, such as history, art and design and design and technology have been kept 'on the boil', despite not being priority areas. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator (the headteacher) has developed effective systems to ensure pupils receive good support. The Foundation Stage is also led and managed well. The co-ordinator has ensured strong teamwork, which has a significant impact on delivery of the curriculum in this key area.
39. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a wealth of expertise in different areas on which to draw. They take their role as 'critical friends' seriously, questioning decisions and probing, for example, why test results dipped at Key Stage 2. The school finances are managed very prudently and this has ensured a good balance between maintaining staffing levels, refurbishing the building and ensuring that sufficient funds are kept to one side to cushion the falling rolls situation which faces the local area. The school bursar gives good support and advice and provides governors with good quality information to guide their strategic planning and to ensure best value. The long serving school secretary, who is also a governor and teaching assistant, provides a very effective point of contact for visitors to the school. She carries out her daily administrative duties efficiently, which enables other staff to carry out their work without interruption.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	232,451	Balance from previous year	5,220
Total expenditure	227,231	Balance carried forward to the next	22,115
Expenditure per pupil	2,951		

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. Teaching is good overall. It is sometimes very good. There are 10 children in the Foundation Stage, who are taught in a class alongside the Year 1 pupils. On entry to school, their skills are broadly typical of children of a similar age. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and they do very well in their personal, social and emotional development. A good range of practical, 'hands on' experiences is provided in each area of learning. Activities are well planned to ensure an appropriate balance between those that children choose for themselves and those that are directed by adults. Children's progress is checked on very effectively and as a result, staff know exactly the next learning steps for each individual. Work is then carefully tailored to meet their needs. Good leadership and management ensure strong teamwork between staff.

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

- Teaching is consistently good or better and, as a result, children achieve well in all areas of learning;
- Personal and social development are promoted very well in all areas of learning;
- Teaching assistants support children's learning very effectively;
- Staff are very good role models and have high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes to learning;
- High quality planning and assessment ensure that children's learning needs are fully met;
- Children benefit from being taught alongside the older children as well as being taught as a separate group.

#### **Commentary**

40. Staff give a high priority to children's **personal, social and emotional development**. They provide excellent role models for them and have high expectations of their behaviour and their involvement in learning. Good opportunities for development are threaded through all areas of learning. The current reception pupils are likely to exceed the goals set for them in this area. Children are very happy and secure in the classroom and comfortable with all staff who work with them. As a result, they take to learning like 'ducks to water' and have a real enthusiasm for the tasks they undertake. Already they know the targets set for them and, in their own way, evaluate their own and others' success in achieving these. They show very good listening skills for their age, for example when taking part in the shared parts of lessons with the older children. This has a really good impact on their learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy sessions. Children show good levels of concentration, for example when studying an exciting range of instruments provided by a visitor. They remain on task and collaborate well, both with and without direct supervision. Children benefit very well from the very good examples set by the older children in the class.
41. Good teaching in **communication, language and literacy** ensures that pupils achieve well. Most of the current group are likely to exceed the goals set for them by



the end of the reception year. This is because early reading and writing skills are taught systematically and well. There is a strong emphasis on learning letter sounds and using a variety of 'clues' to work out unfamiliar words. Plenty of opportunities are also provided for children to share books and listen to stories. As a result, pupils are already becoming confident readers, recognising a good range of everyday words. They are becoming adept at predicting what might come next in a story and working out words from the pictures, for example when sharing a 'big book' together. Children are at different stages of learning to write but all are willing to 'have a go', because staff support them well and provide a good range of opportunities for them, including making their own 'Baby' books. In all areas of learning, staff make good use of questions to draw out what the children already know and develop this further. They listen carefully to the children and value their responses. As a result, children are very confident in explaining their ideas in small and large group situations and in using talk to reason and negotiate with others, for example when building with construction materials. There is a good balance achieved between children working with their older classmates and undertaking activities separately. All children are stretched and challenged effectively and benefit from working alongside the older children in the shared part of literacy lessons.

42. Children achieve well in **mathematical development** as a result of good teaching. They are on course to meet, and in some cases exceed, the goals set for them. Children are provided with a good range of interesting, practical activities and are encouraged to find out for themselves, for example through counting and sorting objects and exploring sand and water. They benefit a great deal from being taught alongside the Year 1 children in the shared part of numeracy lessons, because although the teacher carefully tailors questions and explanations to meet their needs, they are stretched and challenged by being able to have a go at answering questions posed primarily for the older pupils. This ensures that they learn at a fast pace. The teacher has high expectations of their involvement in these sessions and they rise to this challenge. The staff teach the correct mathematical vocabulary well, so they are becoming familiar with the terms 'longer' and 'shorter' when measuring, for instance. Some are already beginning to understand that measurements cannot always be arbitrary and recognise that we need to use implements, such as tape measures and metre sticks. Computer programs are used effectively to reinforce basic skills. Role play is also used to reinforce mathematical understanding, as when, for example, children weigh the 'babies' in the 'clinic'.
43. Children are strongly encouraged to explore and develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world** through the wide range of experiences provided for them. Staff make really good links between different areas of learning, which helps children make connections and reinforces their understanding. As a result, children achieve well and are on course to meet the goals set for them by the end of the reception year. For example, in one lesson seen children were learning about sound. They explored a rich and varied range of musical instruments, past and present, from Western cultures and from far away places such as Africa, which they found on a map. Children were encouraged to play the instruments and listen to the sounds, and were also subtly guided into classifying them into sets of those which could be blown, plucked, scraped or hit. Very effective use was made of the expertise of a parent helper in this session. Outdoors, they take part in activities such as planting bulbs to watch them grow and to enhance the school environment. There is a good range of activities available for children to choose for themselves. For example, they act out scenes using 'small world' equipment and use the

construction materials to create houses for the characters they have read about. Computer skills are developing well and most children are adept at using the mouse to click on screen objects and to choose from menu options.

44. Children achieve steadily in their **physical development** and are on course to meet the goals set for them. They have daily opportunities to develop their large movement skills outdoors, through running about and using equipment such as balls and skipping ropes. However, they do not have so many opportunities to use wheeled toys, such as bikes, or to use outdoor climbing and balancing equipment. This is compensated for, to some extent, through well planned and executed games and gymnastics sessions in the hall and outdoors, in which pupils are able to develop and refine a wide range of physical skills. In these sessions, they benefit greatly from the good examples set by the older children and the chance to stretch themselves to the limit. Pupils' manipulative skills are developed well through opportunities to use pencils, scissors and paintbrushes and to do jigsaws. Pupils' skills in this aspect are good.
45. Children achieve well and are on course to reach or exceed the standards expected in **creative development**. Teaching is good and a rich range of opportunities is provided for them to work with a range of tools, materials and media. For example, pupils have worked with clay to make three-dimensional faces, which they later painted. During the inspection, pupils created some stunning work using natural materials, in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. They captured these for posterity by taking pictures with the digital camera. The pupils have also used the computer to create colourful abstract designs with a 'paint and draw' program. Children's imaginations are well developed through regular opportunities to take on roles, such as looking after the babies in the clinic and acting out familiar Bible stories.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at Key Stage 1 are above average in both reading and writing;
- Pupils achieve well in reading, but standards in writing at Key Stage 2 are not as high as they should be;
- Good leadership and management have ensured that key areas for improvement have been identified;
- Work is not always matched well enough to the different abilities of pupils, particularly in Years 4 and 6;
- Handwriting is below average at Key Stage 2 and presentation of work could be better.

#### Commentary

46. Standards in English are above average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. Children achieve satisfactorily over their time in the school. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. However, there have been improvements in reading standards since last time.

47. The very small numbers of pupils taking the national tests each year make it difficult to draw reliable conclusions from the results. In some years, one pupil has represented as much as 15 per cent of the class. In addition, the numbers of pupils with special educational needs has an impact on results from year-to-year. In the national tests for 7-year-olds, results over the last 4 years in reading and writing have been well above average when compared to all schools and average or better when compared to schools with similar free school meal numbers. Pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, in relation to their starting points. Results in the tests for 11-year-olds dipped dramatically in 2003 and were well below average in relation to all schools, and in the bottom 5 per cent in the country when compared to similar schools. This picture was the same in 2004 and pupils did not do as well as they should have, when compared to their performance at Key Stage 1.
48. There are several reasons to explain the dip in standards and the gap in achievement between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school suffered from a period of staffing instability, which significantly affected the performance of the 2003 Year 6 pupils in particular. In the 2004 group, a high percentage of pupils had significant special needs and although they did well in relation to their abilities, they were unable to reach average levels. In addition, although reading results were impressive with almost two thirds of the class achieving the higher level (Level 5), writing results were disappointing. Only one child achieved the higher level and a significant number did not reach average standards. The school has carefully analysed pupils' progress in all classes and has identified that pupils' performance dips markedly at Year 4. Inspection evidence confirms this and also indicates that the oldest, most able pupils in the mixed Year 4 to 6 class are not always stretched and challenged as effectively as they could be. Until recently, the school's assessment systems were not detailed enough to enable teachers to identify those pupils who needed extra support or challenge. The school has worked hard to improve assessment in English and staff now have a much clearer picture of where children are up to. As a result, specific individuals have been targeted for extra help. This is in its early stages of development but the impact is starting to be seen in the pupils' increased confidence in writing.
49. Standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen attentively in most lessons and this has a good impact on their learning, particularly in Year 1, where expectations in this area are very high. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for children to answer questions, reason things out, talk together and explain their ideas. They give children time to reflect and value their responses. However, role play could be used more extensively throughout the school, particularly as a stimulus for writing.
50. Pupils build very well on their early reading skills in Year 1 because the next steps in learning for each child are carefully identified by staff and they are challenged and supported very effectively. This really good start is built on well in Year 2. The majority of Year 2 pupils read fluently and with good expression. They have a wide range of strategies to draw on in order to work out unfamiliar words, and can confidently discuss events and characters in their stories. By Year 6, pupils are confident, competent and expressive readers. They report that they enjoy books and they feel that staff help them improve their skills. They readily discuss their favourite authors and the types of books they like best. Pupils have the skills they need to search for and obtain information for their topics and use dictionaries and thesauri

with ease, for example when searching for alliterative words or finding definitions and spellings.

51. Year 1 pupils build well on their early writing skills and this is carried through into Year 2. As a result, the majority of Year 2 pupils have a secure understanding of story structure and are beginning to write imaginatively at length. They recognise the need to make their stories interesting for their readers and use 'story language', such as 'Once upon a time...' appropriately. Punctuation and spelling develop well and by Year 6, writing is usually grammatically correct. A strength in writing is the range of opportunities provided for children to write for different audiences and purposes. For example, throughout the school pupils write reports of visits to places of interest, letters, poems and plays. They are given opportunities to plan and edit their work. However, by Year 6, although most pupils work hard to make their writing interesting through well chosen vocabulary, they do not always organise their writing well or develop characters effectively. Handwriting and presentation of work are average at Key Stage 1 but below average at Key Stage 2. Not enough attention is paid to teaching handwriting systematically in the junior classes and staff do not have high enough expectations of how children will present their work.
52. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good for Key Stage 1 pupils, because teachers have good expertise and confidence and use assessment effectively to provide work at the right level of challenge. More able Year 2 pupils benefit from being taught alongside the Year 3 pupils, rising to the challenge provided. Where teaching is good, expectations of pupils' involvement and work rate are high and pupils take part in lessons with energy and enthusiasm. In all lessons observed, planning was thorough and clear objectives were shared with the pupils. Teaching assistants have a significant impact on learning, particularly for the children with special educational needs, who make good progress as a result. Teaching is less effective overall for the less able and average Year 4 pupils and the oldest, more able pupils in the Year 4 to 6 class. During the shared parts of lessons, Year 4 pupils sometimes lose the thread as explanations and questions are too challenging for them. As a result, they 'switch off' and then need a lot of adult support to undertake their tasks successfully. The progress of a significant number slows when they are unsupported. More able Year 6 pupils could sometimes be given tasks which stretch them from the outset, rather than being given the same work as others and then extra work if they complete this. Expectations of the amount of work these pupils produce in lessons are not always high enough. An examination of the pupils' books shows that, on occasions, the two teachers taking the class have different expectations. Teachers' marking could also be more useful and evaluative in identifying the next learning steps for pupils.
53. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has effectively analysed the key strengths and prioritised the right areas for development. She has put effective measures into place to bring about improvements, such as developing staff confidence and expertise through training, developing assessment systems and arranging extra support for pupils. These are in the early stages and need time to 'bed in' before the full impact is seen. Good use has been made of support and guidance from the local education authority, for example, in monitoring teaching and learning.

## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

54. Appropriate use is made of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. Visits to places of interest, for example to Eden Camp to learn about the history of World War II, generate some good quality written work. Pupils also write reports in science and evaluations in design and technology. Sound opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT and books for research in history and geography, for example.

## Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved and are now above average at the ages of both 7 and 11;
- Good leadership and management has helped to bring about improvements;
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the good teaching.

### **Commentary**

55. Since the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics have improved. Over recent years, the pattern of test results in Key Stage 1 suggests that pupils attain standards that are high when compared to the national average. In Key Stage 2, the pattern is very different and pupils have been attaining standards that are well below the national average. However, the school has a relatively small cohort of pupils taking the tests each year, which means that the attainment of individual pupils has a large effect on the overall picture. The results alone, therefore, do not give a reliable basis on which to judge pupils' attainment. Inspection findings indicate that standards in mathematics are now above average throughout the school.
56. The National Numeracy Strategy is now firmly embedded into the school and this has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum is planned well and work is well matched to the needs of the pupils in the different age groups within the mixed age classes. There is a strong focus on number and calculation skills and pupils are developing a secure knowledge and understanding of number that they then apply when solving problems.

57. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls and all pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and lower ability groups achieve well in relation to their abilities, because work is planned at the right level for them and they receive good support from the teaching assistants. The main teaching points of the lesson are reinforced well during group sessions and this helps to boost pupils' confidence.
58. Pupils enjoy mathematics and join in the lessons enthusiastically. This is seen nowhere better than in the mental part at the beginning of the lesson. Everyone is involved, for example, when pupils use their own number lines to work out answers before showing their answer on a number fan. This also happens when Key Stage 2 pupils use whiteboards to record and show their answers, when fitting their own five digit numbers between numbers the teacher had given to them. These sessions are effective because, even though there are at least two different age groups and a wide spread of ability in the classes, teachers get the pitch of the work right for all the pupils. This is because they have really good subject expertise and are confident with what they are teaching. As a result, they carefully vary their questions and set different tasks which closely match pupils' differing ability levels.
59. The teaching of mathematics is good overall and a very good lesson was observed in the Year 4 to 6 class. In this lesson, the challenging and interesting activities involving positive and negative numbers meant that all the pupils were involved throughout and stretched to the limit. Time was used very well and not a moment was wasted. The session at the end of the lesson was used very effectively to help the pupils reflect on what they had learned. Very thorough questioning kept each year group 'on their toes' and took the learning a stage further. All lessons observed were well planned and organised. A weakness is that in some lessons ICT could be used more extensively. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use mathematical programs that would help to reinforce the learning.
60. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator has put in place effective systems for assessing, analysing and tracking pupils' progress. Work and test results are carefully monitored to see where improvements can be made. The quality of teaching has been checked and because the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what constitutes good teaching, she is in a very good position to support her colleagues.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. This is satisfactory. Pupils are given sound opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects. In science and geography, pupils collect data and produce graphs and charts. They use their measuring skills in design and technology. ICT could be used on more occasions to support learning in mathematics. Opportunities are not always identified for pupils to use selected programs to develop and extend their number skills.

### Science

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Investigative skills are now a key part of lessons but, as yet, older children do not always have a clear grasp of how to carry out scientific experiments;
- Older pupils, and more able pupils in Year 2, could achieve more with a better match of work to ability;
- There is good teacher assistant support for special needs pupils;
- Health and safety issues are well addressed.

## Commentary

62. Standards for the present Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Throughout the school the majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the effective support by the teaching assistants and specialist support staff who work with them. The majority of the Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve average levels in the tests (Level 4) with fewer than last year achieving the higher level (Level 5). This is in part because of the changing profile of the class and also because, on occasions, the more able pupils could be challenged more effectively. All pupils in Year 2 are on course to achieve average levels and a very small number are likely to reach the higher level (Level 3) this year but this, again, could be improved with a greater level of challenge for the more able pupils.
63. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features, particularly in the planning and delivery of practical, 'hands on' investigative work in all the lessons observed. For example, in the Year 4 to 6 lesson on the topic of sound, the teacher gave the children really good opportunities to explore the way sound is produced. There were lots of short tasks which excited and enthused the pupils, as well as developing their investigative skills. However, because work was not 'fine tuned' effectively enough to match the very wide spread of abilities in this class, the less able Year 4 children had too many tasks to undertake, with too little chance to evaluate and consolidate their learning. The more able Year 6 pupils were given too few opportunities to apply and extend their learning. In contrast, because of good planning for match of tasks to ability in a Class 1 lesson, more able Year 1 children extended their learning very effectively by linking their sorting of instruments into groups with recording them on a Venn diagram. This provided a good opportunity for them to apply their knowledge practically, making a good link with their work in mathematics. Although pupils are keen to carry out experiments, older pupils are not always sure of the order in which tasks are best carried out. For example, when questioned most thought that how to perform the experiment came before why they were doing it. This is because they are still catching up from the period when their learning was disrupted through staffing issues.
64. Overall, pupils study a good range of topics and the curriculum is well planned to ensure that work is not repeated year-on-year in the mixed age classes. There are some good examples of the use of ICT for recording work, for example the digital photos taken of an experiment with snails choosing their favourite food. However, there is scope for further development in this area. In all lessons, health and safety issues are addressed at the outset and this was evident in discussions with the pupils, as well as from observations and children's work. One Year 4 child remembered that it was important to 'check for any dangers' at the start of experiments and the Year 6 teacher reminded pupils not to 'put the whole balloon' into their mouths when blowing them up!
65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post for only a few months but has already made a good start. She has good knowledge of the subject and has identified some of the strengths and weaknesses. She has formulated an appropriate action plan to guide future developments.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management are good and are firmly leading the subject towards improvement;
- Pupils achieve average standards at the ages of 7 and 11;
- Resources have improved recently but there is still more to do in this area;
- There are missed opportunities to use ICT in some other areas of the curriculum.

### **COMMENTARY**

66. Pupils' standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally at the ages of 7 and 11. Similar standards were reported at the last inspection. However, national expectations for the subject have greatly increased and the school is just about keeping pace with requirements. This is in spite of the problems with resourcing and maintaining equipment, which is inhibiting further progress to some degree. New computers have been purchased and installed recently, greatly improving the provision, and firm plans are in hand to further increase the resources and develop the learning experiences on offer.
67. Pupils receive a good start in learning ICT skills in the Foundation Stage and, by the time they are in Key Stage 1, are confident in using computers and have a range of basic skills. They can operate the keyboard accurately, using alphabet and command keys to use the different functions on the screen. They confidently use a range of programs such as 'Dazzle' to create pictures. Their use of control technology is developed appropriately, for example, when they use a programmable toy to perform different functions.
68. Older pupils have a sound range of ICT skills. Word processing skills have developed appropriately and they are able to make changes to their work and make it more attractive and interesting by altering the font size and colour of their text. Year 6 pupils demonstrate their skills confidently and talk knowledgeably about what they do. They use computers for independent research and easily locate information from the Internet and present and share their ideas in a variety of different ways.
69. In the lesson observed, teaching was good and work was planned to make the best use of the resources available. The pupils were well motivated, behaved sensibly and showed much enjoyment of the tasks. They were using a 'super' program to control events on the screen and were competent in programming different instructions to construct different shapes. As a result, the pupils developed good skills over a short period of time.
70. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has good expertise and is having a positive influence on the work in the school. She has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses and how the subject needs to develop further, and is driving improvements well.

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

71. ICT links across other areas of the curriculum are developing slowly, as new software and equipment are introduced. The school has not yet fully exploited the value of using ICT as a learning tool in the different subjects. Resourcing issues have hampered this development. However, some pleasing examples were seen,

which bode well for the future. In art and design pupils use a 'paint and draw' program to produce abstract pictures, and research information in history and geography. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use computers to reinforce and extend work in English and mathematics.

## Humanities

72. These subjects were sampled, but not inspected fully. Pupils' work was analysed and discussions were held with teachers and pupils. One lesson each was seen in **geography** and **history**, the latter of which was combined with literacy. There is, therefore, not enough evidence to judge overall provision or standards. However, the evidence suggests that pupils are achieving as expected for their age.

73. In, geography and history the pupils cover a suitably broad selection of national curriculum topics. For example, in history Years 4 to 6 have studied World War II and the lives of monks in the past. In geography, they are currently studying the effects of litter and pollution on the environment, making appropriate use of their mathematics skills as they record information on litter around the school in graph form. In Years 2/3, pupils have studied Florence Nightingale, the Crimean War and the Life of Henry VIII. In geography, they have completed maps of their journey from home to school and have considered the effects of climate on peoples' lives, comparing life in Italy with that in Northern England. These subjects have been brought to life by many interesting visits into the immediate local area and beyond. The display of a visit to Eden Camp is a very good example of how these stimulate the pupils' interest, fire their imaginations and provide a vehicle for work across a range of curriculum areas. This included examples of three-dimensional art, digital photography and report writing. The pupils are learning to record their work in a number of ways, including time lines, diagrams, charts, maps and photographs. Sound use is made of ICT for research and word processing. The co-ordinator leads and manages both subjects effectively and has developed an array of interesting artefacts and strategies to enliven teaching, particularly of history. She supports her colleagues well and together they have reviewed the policy and programmes of study.

#### Creative, aesthetic and practical subjects

74. These subjects were sampled but not examined in detail. Pupils' work was analysed, discussions took place with staff and pupils and teachers' plans were scrutinised. Only one lesson was seen in **art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education**. It is, therefore, not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or to judge standards. However, the curriculum is satisfactory and pupils' achievement is as expected for pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
75. In art and design, pupils cover a good range of work and are able to build upon and develop their skills in key areas, such as painting and drawing. They use a good variety of media and techniques. Many examples of pupils' work can be seen in school. The perspective pencil drawings of fruit, flowers and plants show great attention to detail, whilst the tree sculptures using wool form an attractive display. Class 1 pupils have, for example, used coloured tissue paper to make pictures in the style of Patricia Mullins, when she illustrated the book 'Crocodile Seat'. In the good lesson observed in the Year 2/3 class, tasks were interesting and practical. Pupils were fully involved and worked conscientiously throughout the lesson and produced some detailed drawings from digital photographs of the buildings.
76. In design and technology, pupils are also gaining good experience of working with a range of materials and techniques to design and make a variety of products. They understand how to design for a purpose, evaluate their products and make them better. Key Stage 2 pupils write thoughtfully about how they tackled a design, making good links with literacy. They are clear about the difficulties they faced and the options open to them to make things better. For example, Class 3 pupils had been designing cars; one child wrote 'To improve our super car we probably should not have had a great big spoiler on the back to weigh it down.' Younger pupils become confident in cutting, attaching and decorating materials, for example when designing 'Joseph's Coat'. They understand the techniques of stitching or gluing

materials together. In the good lesson seen in Key Stage 2, pupils were using a variety of materials to design and make a musical instrument, linking well with science work on sound.

77. Pupils are provided with an appropriate range of experiences in music. This is currently enhanced through the planning and teaching undertaken by a specialist teacher, who is employed to teach music throughout the school. In the good lesson observed in the Year 4 to 6 class, the pupils achieved well. They were quickly engaged in the activities and concentrated well, due to the interesting and achievable tasks they were given. For example, the teacher had provided a variety of notation cards and the children enjoyed sorting and classifying these. More able pupils were able to extend their knowledge through the tasks given, whilst less able pupils concentrated on and consolidated basic notation. An adequate range of tuned percussion instruments was provided for the children to extend this work into performance. The subject is led and managed soundly. The co-ordinator has recently adapted the latest national subject guidance to suit the school and is evaluating its success. There are growing opportunities for the children to learn instruments. For example a member of the local community takes a weekly recorder group for which there is a good uptake, and the school is working to develop this area. Resources are just adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.
78. The school has worked hard to develop provision in physical education since the last inspection. The latest national guidance has been implemented effectively and adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the mixed age classes and the small school situation. Staff have had training, for example, in gymnastics and dance. The co-ordinator has demonstrated good leadership and management as she has worked alongside staff to develop their individual expertise, monitored lessons and provided examples of good practice from her own teaching. As a result, teachers are more confident and this rubs off on the pupils. The good gymnastics lesson seen in the reception/Year 1 class taught by the co-ordinator was characterised by high expectations, good pace and clear organisation, which encouraged development of skills. The school is currently developing its extra-curricular programme to include football, rugby and cricket coaching. Good use is being made of links with other schools to extend opportunities further. The requirements for swimming are fully met.

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

79. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and senior staff show a firm commitment to this area of the curriculum. The deputy head has made a huge investment in time to promote and develop the 'Healthy Schools' initiative and the school has successfully achieved its award. Much of the PSHCE programme centres around aspects of the 'Healthy Schools' agenda and this is used effectively by the school to ensure pupils learn what it means to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy healthy lunchtime options provided by the cook and her assistants and the school council is currently planning the new 'fruit tuck shop'. This agenda has provoked several interesting lines of enquiry as pupils wrestle with the problems of supporting local shops, versus the convenience of buying at the supermarket as they source their fruit.
80. Suitable time is given to sex and relationships education and drugs education within the curriculum. Pupils learn to value themselves, others and the world around them.

Older pupils are keen to help younger children at lunchtime during wet playtimes and they also enjoy positions of responsibility in school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	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).*