

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NEW MILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

New Mills

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112597

Headteacher: Mr Des Hoskisson

Lead inspector: Mr Andrew Scott

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267380

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: 196

School address: Meadow Street  
New Mills  
Derbyshire  
Postcode: SK22 4AY

Telephone number: 01663 744453  
Fax number: 01663 744453

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs Lynne Woodward  
governors:

Date of previous 30<sup>th</sup> October 2002  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized school situated close to the centre of the town of New Mills. It has 196 pupils who mainly come from the town. Approximately one quarter of pupils come from an area of social deprivation, but there is a broad mix of family backgrounds. Nearly all pupils come from white British families. At present, pupils have average knowledge and skills when they start school, although previous groups have entered with above average attainment. An increasingly significant number of pupils leave or join school after the age of four. About a fifth of pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly average, and there are four pupils with statements of special educational need. Most of the pupils with special needs have moderate learning difficulties, but a few have social, behavioural or emotional difficulties and several have hearing impairments. The school is currently undergoing extensive refurbishment to improve the classroom facilities.

The school was placed in special measures in May 2001. In October 2002, the school was taken out of special measures after a period of sustained improvement. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2003 and he has recently become a Primary Strategy Consultant Leader.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27545	Mr Andrew Scott	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, geography, music
9348	Mrs Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	
29989	Mrs Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, mathematics, art and design, design and technology
33237	Mrs Christine Haddock	Team inspector	English, religious education, history, physical education, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus Ltd  
BPS Business Centre  
Brake Lane  
Boughton  
Newark  
Nottinghamshire  
NG22 9HQ

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</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>26</b>



## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school.** Pupils achieve well and standards are better than average in English and mathematics. Teaching and learning are good, and pupils have good attitudes to work. The leadership and management are effective and are ensuring that the school is developing well after a difficult period. As a result, the school gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics because teaching is particularly effective in these subjects
- The focused and committed leadership of the school ensures that priorities for development are appropriate and shared by all staff
- Strong relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils have positive attitudes to learning
- Although satisfactory, the everyday curriculum does not motivate pupils as much as it might
- Children benefit from a good start to school because of the good provision in the reception class
- The teaching in some junior classes is not consistently effective
- The good provision for special educational needs ensures that pupils achieve well
- Not all pupils present their work carefully and legibly enough

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection<sup>1</sup>. Standards declined last year but are now improving. Pupils' achievement has remained good. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are better and are now average. Teachers' planning has improved so that lessons are well structured. Some weaknesses in teaching, however, still remain since some teachers do not match work to pupils' abilities enough in all the main subjects. There are now good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and for setting targets for pupils to improve, although the target setting is not yet fully embedded.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A\* - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - very low*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good.** Children begin school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They achieve well in the reception class and most are likely to exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the year. Pupils' achievement remains good by Year 2. Standards are above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing, science, ICT and religious education. Standards for the pupils who are now in Year 6 are better than those reflected in the table above. They are above average in English and well above average in mathematics. Standards in science, ICT and religious education are in line with national expectations. Overall, pupils' achievement is good,

<sup>1</sup> References to the previous report relate to the report in 2002 carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate

including pupils with special educational needs. Compared to the last inspection, standards are very similar.

**There is good provision for pupils' personal development. Their social development is good and their spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory.** Pupils have good attitudes to work and behave satisfactorily. The level of attendance is consistently above average.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall.** Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage (reception class) are good. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good, with some very good teaching in Year 1, although in Years 3 and 5 teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is effective overall because teachers plan work adeptly to build on pupils' existing knowledge and skills in key subjects, especially English and mathematics. In other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory, since this does not happen so successfully.

The curriculum is satisfactory, and is suitably enriched by visits and after-school clubs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory, despite the temporary refurbishment. The school takes good care of its pupils' well-being; pupils know there is always an adult to turn to in case of need. There are satisfactory links with parents, the local community and other schools.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership of the headteacher is good. In his comparatively short time in charge, he has sustained and added to the improvements made by the previous headteacher after a difficult time for the school, and he has a clear focus on raising standards. The good leadership of the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher supports the school development well. The school has good systems for checking its own progress but is not always decisive enough in its judgements. The governance of the school is good. The governing body is very supportive and effective in overseeing the school's development.

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

Parents have a good opinion of the school. They believe that teaching is good and that children make good progress and become mature and responsible individuals. Parents also consider that the school provides a good range of activities and that children are well introduced into the school. A significant minority of parents are concerned that they do not receive enough information about their children's progress and that there are incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are also positive about their school and particularly appreciate their teachers and the friendliness within the school. Their only major concern is the accommodation, which is currently being upgraded. The inspection team agrees with all these views.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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



- Ensure that teaching is consistently effective throughout the school
- Ensure that the everyday curriculum is sufficiently rich to motivate and inspire all pupils regularly

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The achievement of pupils throughout the school is good. Standards are above average in English and well above average in mathematics. Pupils' attainment in science and ICT is average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. Compared to the previous inspection, standards throughout the school are similar.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics throughout the school
- Children benefit from a good start to school and achieve well in the reception class
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good guidance and support that they receive

#### Commentary

1. Children begin school with skills and knowledge that are broadly average. This is, however, a variable picture and, in some years, attainment on entry has been above average. The good provision in the Foundation Stage enables the children to make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. The majority of the children achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of reception and about half exceed them.
2. In the national tests of 2004, the standards of pupils in Year 2 were average in reading and mathematics compared to the national average and to schools in a similar socio-economic context. In writing, standards were above average compared to all schools. Teachers' assessments showed that standards in science were well above average for most pupils, and above average for higher attaining pupils. Over time, standards have been higher than average and progress has been maintained in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.4 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.2 (15.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.5 (17.8)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Pupils' achievement in the current Year 2 is good. Standards in reading are above average and pupils achieve well in acquiring a good vocabulary. Standards in writing are average; pupils are beginning to write in good sentences although their handwriting is untidy. Standards are above average in mathematics, because pupils have a firm grasp of basic number. Pupils' attainment in science, ICT and religious education is broadly in line with expectations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This overall

picture of achievement is very similar to that at the last inspection, although attainment in ICT has improved.

- Pupils in Year 6 achieved standards in 2004 that were average in English and science compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. Standards in mathematics were below the national average and similar schools. Standards have been mainly above the national average in recent years, although they have begun to decline and test results have fallen below the national trend over time. The fall in standards reflected in the 2004 results is partly because the education of this class was particularly affected by staff turnover and the unsettled period through which the school has passed. In addition, this group of pupils started school with below average ability and has been affected by the number of pupils starting and leaving school after the age of five.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (28.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.5 (27.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.6 (31.0)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Pupils in the current Year 6 have above average standards in English and achieve well. They are especially proficient in reading, because they read fluently and expressively, and enjoy a wide range of reading. The school has good plans to raise standards by the end of the year through a programme of extra preparation for the national tests. In mathematics, pupils’ standards are already well above average and their achievement is good. When compared to their performance in the 2001 national tests in English and mathematics, pupils are sustaining good progress. In science, ICT and religious education, pupils’ attainment is in line with national expectations and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils have competent skills and knowledge but more able pupils are not achieving as well as they might. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

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

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is satisfactory. The school makes good provision for social development and satisfactory provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good. Provision overall is much the same as it was as the time of the last inspection.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good relationships in lessons mean that pupils are keen to learn
- There are sensible reward systems to promote good behaviour, although these are not always successfully applied
- The school could do more to extend pupils’ sense of spirituality and awareness of other cultures
- Pupils like coming to school and so levels of attendance are good

**Commentary**

6. Staff work hard to make sure that relationships with pupils are good. In lessons, teachers mostly insist on sustained concentration, encourage and value all contributions to discussions and clearly acknowledge good effort. As a result, pupils are motivated to work hard for their teachers and are keen to do well. They are proud when they have done well, although they do not take enough care with their presentation and handwriting. Teachers encourage co-operative work and pupils work well with each other in structured situations. Most pupils, including the youngest children, are willing and confident to work with a partner and discuss their ideas.
7. The school has good procedures to encourage pupils to behave well. Pupils are well aware of the card system, for example, which requires a signature from any adult who wishes to praise and reward a particular pupil. The accumulated credits turn into certificates that raise the self-esteem and confidence of pupils. However, behaviour in some lessons is not always acceptable. This is especially true in junior classes because not all teachers are firm enough when pupils' attention begins to wander. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, many pupils were too keen to play with the materials they were supposed to be investigating and the teacher found it hard to re-direct their attention.
8. Although the development of pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is satisfactory, the school does not maximise all opportunities. Assemblies, for example, are appropriate but are not always inspiring or uplifting and do not give pupils time for quiet reflection. Pupils benefit from some multi-cultural input such as a hands-on workshop with an African drummer. However, they are not always given opportunity to draw on the richness and diversity of different cultures in Britain and the wider world. The school has already recognised this as an area for development.

## Attendance

9. Attendance at the school is good. It has remained above average over recent years, improving slightly from the previous inspection. The sustained levels of attendance substantiate pupils' own statements that they enjoy school, a view reinforced by parents. The school keeps a close eye on attendance and is rigorous in its classification of unauthorised absence. Some of the absence is due to pupils taking holiday in term time and this is being closely monitored by the school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	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 quality of education that the school provides for pupils is good. Teaching and learning are good, although they are less effective in Years 3 and 5 where teaching is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal and

social education. The good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that all pupils are well cared for. There are satisfactory links with the parents, the community and other schools.

## **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, as it was at the last inspection. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' planning ensures that lessons are well structured and well prepared
- The teaching of English and mathematics is good, but teachers do not plan work skilfully enough in every subject to meet the needs of all pupils
- The good relationships between teachers and pupils produce a positive working atmosphere in most lessons
- Teachers do not all have high enough expectations of pupils; as a result, pupils' behaviour and presentation of work are not as good as they should be
- The good support by teaching assistants enables less able pupils and those who have special educational needs to achieve well

## **Commentary**

10. Teachers prepare lessons well. They plan their everyday teaching closely to national guidelines so that there is a solid framework to pupils' learning, and pupils' learning develops in logical steps. In ICT, for example, basic word-processing in Year 2 develops well over time so that, by Year 6, it can be well deployed in a multi-media presentation. Teachers make sure that pupils have learning objectives that are clear and achievable. In this way, pupils know precisely what they have to learn and whether they have achieved this by the end of the lesson. In the reception class, teachers plan the learning activities carefully to ensure children progress through the areas of learning with small, logical, achievable steps.

11. Pupils achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics, because teachers provide work which challenges pupils of all abilities. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils made good progress in developing skills in multiplication because they had to work with numbers which challenged them all individually. In English lessons, most teachers carefully pitch the level of reading to suit each pupil, in order to promote confidence in developing vocabulary. However, teachers are not so effective in all subjects, especially science and ICT, where work that is often too similar inhibits the progress of more able pupils, in particular. In science, for instance, these pupils have too little scope to develop their own investigations or select their own apparatus.

12. Pupils enjoy their work and there is a purposeful atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers not only encourage pupils to participate fully but also show that they value all contributions. Pupils appreciate this and, therefore, are motivated to be active in lessons and develop personal and social skills. At the end of one lesson, the teacher purposely selected one pupil to talk about his findings, precisely because he needed to build his confidence in speaking publicly.

13. In some classes, especially in Years 3 and 5, teaching is not as good as elsewhere. Here, teachers are not skilful enough at gaining the respect of pupils and so the atmosphere in some lessons tends to be too noisy and restless, which results in satisfactory learning at best. Pupils often engage in conversations which do not relate to the focus of the lesson and so their pace of work is modest. In these and most other classes, teachers do not insist on high enough standards of presentation. Consequently, pupils' handwriting is untidy, illustrations are casual and their layout of work is often sloppy.
14. The contribution of teaching assistants has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In whole-class activities, teaching assistants are not as effective as they might be, because they remain on the fringe and do not always advise or encourage individual pupils sufficiently. However, when working individually or with groups of less able pupils or pupils with special educational needs, their sensitive support and guidance consistently ensure that the pupils learn well, especially in the reception class. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, two teaching assistants explained the procedures for multiplication skilfully and successfully to individual pupils with special educational needs.

***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	10 (33%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	0

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

**The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. A satisfactory range of extra activities boosts pupils' skills in sports, arts and personal development. The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The broad and relevant curriculum for children in the reception class helps them to achieve well
- The school does not do enough to enrich the curriculum
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well
- The school's accommodation is adequate but is in the process of becoming much better

## **Commentary**

15. Although the overall curriculum is satisfactory, aspects of it are good. The literacy and numeracy strategies, for example, are deployed well and have a strong impact on the good standards in English and mathematics. The thoughtful provision for the children in the Foundation Stage means that children have access to a wide range of well-planned and challenging learning activities, such as inventing movements to 'rainbow' music and 'researching' facts about elephants. Although the classroom has been temporarily housed in the hall, it is well organised and provides a vibrant and interesting environment that encourages the children to become involved in the learning opportunities provided. The school has rightly recognised the need to develop further the outdoor learning area for the reception children and it has good plans in place to do so.
16. The structure of the curriculum is based on good guidelines, although the school does not give enough emphasis to all areas. The time devoted to subjects like religious education, art and design and geography is only just satisfactory and this reduces the variety of experiences. Everyday lessons sometimes have too many mundane activities such as completing work-sheets or routine exercises, or are simply not stimulating enough. In addition, teachers do not develop key subjects like English, mathematics and ICT enough through other subjects, to make learning more relevant and more colourful.
17. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, because of good provision. They have clearly defined targets in their individual learning plans, which enable them to improve their learning step by step. They receive good support from teaching assistants in class, especially when working in small groups or individually. In a Year 1 English lesson on handwriting, skilful advice helped pupils to improve the formation of their letters.
18. At the time of the inspection, the school was in the middle of much needed refurbishments. The reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms were constrained by building work and they had less space than normal. By now, pupils will be already benefiting from the new, larger classrooms with space for activities and group work. Similar plans are well advanced for Years 5 and 6, and new classrooms should be completed within a year. The school has already established a new and spacious ICT facility and created a bright, welcoming and well-stocked library that provides good facilities for personal study and group work.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school has good arrangements for the well-being of its pupils. Staff know pupils well and provide effective support and advice when required. The school is good at seeking, valuing and acting upon pupils' views.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good relationships throughout the school enable pupils to develop well.
- There are good systems for checking how well pupils are learning but the resultant data is not used consistently effectively

- Involvement of pupils in the development of the school is good
- There are good procedures for children when they begin school in the reception class ...
- ... however, arrangements for pupils entering the school part-way through their education are too informal

## **Commentary**

19. Pupils clearly appreciate and benefit from their rapport with the adults in the school. Adults are patient, kind and supportive which means pupils feel secure and willing to contribute ideas in lessons. This has a positive effect on pupils' feelings of self-worth, their attitudes to their learning and school life in general. Pupils say that there is always an adult they can turn to when they feel the need to confide in someone. The consistent, supportive way in which the pupils are dealt with helps them make good progress.
20. Teachers are mostly well aware of the capabilities of their pupils. There is good, systematic monitoring of pupils' progress through regular testing. From this, teachers agree appropriate targets with pupils in English and mathematics. Such target setting is quite new and, as such, not fully operational. Not all pupils, for example, know precisely what they have to do to improve in mathematics. There is no formal system in the school, other than in the Foundation Stage, to monitor the personal development of pupils. As a result, where behaviour or personal development targets are agreed with a pupil, they tend to address inappropriate behaviour, rather than improve their attitudes towards their learning, or extend co-operative and collaborative skills.
21. The school works hard to seek and take account of the views of its pupils. All adults in the school listen to pupils, valuing and supporting their ideas wherever possible. There is a vibrant, well-established school council which meets regularly and discusses all aspects of the life of the school. Over time, the council has had significant influence on the development of the school, including the development of the playground, the relocation of coat areas into classrooms and the development of wet playtime activities. All pupils have been surveyed for their views and have contributed to the re-wording and prioritising of the school's aims.
22. The school has good arrangements in place for when children start school. There is close liaison with the nursery attended by most of the children, for example. Children visit their classes in advance along with their parents and there are additional meetings for parents to advise them about how well their child is settling in. In the half-term before they start school, children spend one afternoon each week in school, so that when they start school full-time, they arrive happily and confidently.
23. Pupils who join the school part-way through their education are carefully watched and assessed to ensure they are settling well socially and coping with their work. However, the school could do more to make sure that they, and their parents, are fully aware of key information in, for example, a starter pack of information. This would help them get to know the school staff, class routines, forthcoming events or class topics, and ease their settling in further.

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



The school has satisfactory links with parents, other schools and the local community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school values the views of parents and responds positively to them
- Parents receive insufficient information about what is being taught, although ...
- ... there is a good partnership with parents to ensure that the children in reception have a good start to school life

### **Commentary**

24. All parents who expressed a view during the inspection process are very supportive of the school. They find it very open and approachable, and they feel valued. The school is responsive to parents who express concerns over their children and works with parents to resolve them. Parents are happy and reassured by instances of prompt action by the school's leadership. Where the school raises concerns, it involves parents sensitively so that they can work together for the benefit of the pupil. There is a very active Primary School Association which raises significant funds for the school each year and contributes to the social life of the school.

25. At present, opportunities for parents to be fully involved in their children's learning at home are limited, even though parents are keen to do so. The school does inform the parents each term as to what their children will be taught, especially in mathematics and English, but this information is variable. Not all class newsletters tell parents, for instance, precisely what homework their children should be bringing home on a daily basis nor does the school supply enough guidance as to how parents can help.

26. The practice in the Foundation Stage differs from this. The good partnership between the parents and teachers underpins and encourages parental involvement. The teachers of reception children are readily available to discuss with parents and carers any problems affecting their children and to celebrate their successes. The parents are given clear guidelines on areas to help their children with any work at home and this they do with commitment and consistency.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good. The management of the school is satisfactory. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is a firm, thoughtful leader who is developing the school well
- The deputy headteacher and the senior teacher support the headteacher well and carry out their own responsibilities energetically
- There is effective leadership and management by teachers who have responsibility for key subjects and aspects of the school
- The governing body is very supportive of the school and is fully involved in its development
- The school does not always evaluate its own progress with sufficient rigour

### **Commentary**

27. The headteacher has succeeded in maintaining a positive ethos in the school. The school has recently come through a difficult period of staff turnover and rapid change. In his comparatively short time at the school, the headteacher has done well to continue to raise staff morale and put further systems in place to raise pupils' achievement. For instance, the new target-setting process is beginning to have a positive impact in English and mathematics. He has also established strong links with the governing body, introduced stringent methods of stock control, established many after-school activities and finalised the building projects.
28. The deputy headteacher and the senior teacher are an effective team and work productively alongside the headteacher. The deputy headteacher and the headteacher in particular, meet regularly, share the same vision and goals, yet are suitably challenging of one another. The deputy headteacher has a strong influence on staff development, because she monitors teaching and supports new staff sensitively. The other senior teacher is responsible for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. She ensures that pupils' early experiences of school are fruitful and successful. She has a clear vision as to how provision can be further improved through, for example, the development of the outdoor learning area. All members of the senior management team are respected by pupils and parents alike.
29. Teachers lead and manage their areas of responsibility well. This is especially the case in English, mathematics, ICT, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage. These subject leaders have a clear overview of their areas and know how they need to develop them. For example, the subject leader in science is in the process of trialling much-needed assessment systems. Subject leaders use their time out of the classroom wisely in such activities as assessing teaching, learning and the quality of resources. Overall, the leadership of the school has remained good since the last inspection.
30. The governing body is robustly and positively involved in the school's development. Several governors have remained in post during recent years, because they were determined to improve the school's provision. They have patently succeeded. They have helped to make some shrewd appointments and kept a close eye on all school decisions, such as financial planning and building progress. Governors have very good links with the subjects in the school and bring their own skills to bear. Teachers appreciate and benefit from this shared expertise in areas such as literacy and ICT.
31. Management is satisfactory and several aspects are good. These include financial systems and the recruitment of staff. However, the school is not rigorous enough in dealing with its own progress. For example, although the school leadership is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and has improved some aspects, it has not yet managed to ensure that it is consistently good within all classes and subjects. Its self-evaluation, in areas like behaviour and curriculum, tends to be too generous, and does not take into account all the component factors.

## **Financial information**

32. The school's income is considerably lower than average. Therefore, the headteacher and governing body scrutinise every expenditure and do particularly well to achieve the best value when spending their money. They ensure that the school's accounts are well

maintained and that there is a small surplus each year. Money is well spent on current needs, such as providing time for subject leaders to monitor their subjects and on improving learning resources. The surplus this year has already been earmarked to help fund the fitting and stocking of the new classrooms.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	445,578
Total expenditure	426,396
Expenditure per pupil	2,080

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19,032
Balance carried forward to the next	19,182

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

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

33. Provision is good, as it was at the last inspection. Children enter the reception class in the September or January before they are five, most having attended nursery school. At the time of the inspection, there were 22 pupils in the reception class. Children enter the school with broadly average attainment, although there is a wide range of attainment. Most children achieve all of the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year, and about half of the children exceed them.
34. The teaching of reception children is consistently good. As a result, the children make a positive start to school and achieve well. The teachers and their assistant plan carefully to provide children with a broad curriculum. The effective teaching of basic skills produces good progress in reading and number work. The classroom assistant supports individual and group activities very effectively, and makes a significant contribution by helping children to behave very well and concentrate. All the adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate well with others. There are good arrangements to check what children know, understand and can do, and the information is well used to plan the next steps children need to take in their learning.
35. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teacher in charge works closely with her colleagues to improve the provision and has a clear vision as to how it can be further improved through, for example, the further development of the outdoor learning area. The reception class teachers have ensured that the children have had an appropriate education during the recent building alterations.

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

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

- Children develop a very good understanding of how to behave and look after themselves
- There are high expectations that the children will concentrate, persevere and try hard to complete challenging tasks

#### **Commentary**

36. Children settle quickly and happily when they come into school because the adults make sure that the children are clear about what is expected of them. As a result, the children develop positive attitudes to taking care of themselves and to learning. They are already familiar with the routines on entering the classroom, such as putting their reading folders away and organising their dinner boxes. They have coped especially well with having their classroom temporarily in the hall.
37. The staff work successfully on promoting interpersonal skills. Consequently, children behave very well, are thoughtful towards each other and speak confidently to adults and each other. They benefit from good opportunities to work and play together, and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. Teachers' encouragement and consistent

expectations mean that children persevere well with tasks and try hard to think things through for themselves. Good relationships quickly develop between the adults who work in the school and the reception children. Overall, teaching and learning are good.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in learning the basic skills of listening, speaking and reading
- There is not enough scope for children to write independently

### **Commentary**

38. Children love stories and listen intently in lessons. Teaching is good because teachers select interesting stories, such as Elmer the Elephant, to stimulate the children's interest and they extend children's vocabulary skilfully through question and answer techniques. Children's early reading skills are built on systematically through the sharing of stories and the clear teaching of the sounds that letters make. By the end of the reception year, the majority of the children are on course to read simple books fluently and to re-tell stories they have read. Teachers guide role-play opportunities sensitively so that children develop good speaking and listening skills.

39. Writing skills are taught carefully so that children learn to form letters correctly as well as write and spell a basic vocabulary of key words. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for children to develop independent writing skills, such as trying to spell words for themselves. Children have good opportunities to write for different purposes, such as re-telling stories, sequencing events, and writing captions to go with pictures. However, on some occasions, there is too much copy writing. Nevertheless, children are on course to achieve their writing goals by the end of the year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in learning the basic skills of counting and using numbers

### **Commentary**

40. Children acquire good basic numeracy skills because teachers are good at generating enthusiasm for counting and using numbers. Teaching is good because teachers provide a good range of practical activities and resources to make learning interesting, such as singing and acting out rhymes that reinforce, for example, the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Insistence on the correct use of language enables children to acquire the right vocabulary to use in number activities. The majority of children can count and order numbers confidently to 20 and some can go beyond. More able children add and subtract with assurance and are beginning to record their work accurately.

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop a good understanding of the world around them and their place in it
- Children are making good progress in learning to use computers and other ICT

## **Commentary**

41. Good teaching successfully opens children's eyes to the outside world. For example, children are encouraged to think about features that they pass on their way to school and have helped to make a class collage showing houses and shops. They gain a sense of history by examining artefacts such as teddies of different ages and learn to describe them in degrees of 'oldness'. Children begin to learn about the faith and customs of Christianity. The children explore different materials such as metal and wood; they learn to name them and recognise some of their properties. They have a good sense of their own identity as part of a family, a class and a school, and have regular opportunities to reflect and think about things, such as times that are special, happy or sad.
42. Teachers give children good opportunities to use computers and the digital camera. As part of their topic on shapes, children take photographs of different shapes featured around the school. They confidently use the mouse to draw, point and click and fill areas. They know how to use a computer program to choose colours, characters and objects. Children's overall achievement is good and they are on target to exceed their goals in this area of learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities to develop physical co-ordination
- The outdoor area is small but is well used to provide physical activities

## **Commentary**

43. Children make good progress and achieve well because teachers teach basic skills well. As a result, children are likely to exceed their expected goals, by the end of the year. Teachers enable children to strengthen hand-eye co-ordination and dexterity in activities such as jigsaws, construction sets and building models. Teachers insist that children use paintbrushes, pencils and scissors with care and precision. Through a variety of music, teachers ensure that children explore movement and body shapes with care and imagination. Children enjoy these sessions and show a good awareness of space. The children know how to dress and undress, with a little help.
44. Teachers make the best of the accommodation available. The restricted space in the school hall does not limit the scope for children's physical development. Although the outdoor area is small, there are suitable facilities for the children to climb and balance and use wheeled toys. There are good plans to further extend the opportunities and equipment for the children to use outdoors.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of activities to develop creativity is provided and resources are of high quality

## **Commentary**

45. Teaching and learning are good because teachers provide exciting activities that stimulate children's interest. There are good opportunities for role-play, for example. Children relished acting out parts in the house of the Three Bears, although there is less scope for them to develop independent scenarios in outdoor play. Painting is actively encouraged and supported, so that children know a good range of colours and paint with great enjoyment, confidence and developing skill. In music, children learn to sing and join in songs with actions competently and enthusiastically. Overall, children achieve well and should exceed their learning goals.



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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Teaching is effective, especially the teaching of basic skills
- The curriculum is well structured but could be more stimulating
- The subject is well led and managed
- Teaching assistants are good at supporting pupils with special educational needs
- Teachers do not insist enough on pupils producing accurate handwriting and neat presentation

#### **Commentary**

46. The quality of teaching is good overall. As a result, pupils achieve well and have above average standards throughout the school in reading, speaking and listening. Their extensive range of reading enables pupils to reach well above average standards in reading by Year 6. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations, plan effectively for all abilities and challenge pupils effectively. Relationships are good and this motivates the pupils to work well. Day-to-day assessment is used effectively to identify what pupils know and understand, and to guide the target setting for individual pupils.

47. Teachers are confident in their use of the literacy strategy and, as a result, there is good coverage of all aspects of English. Teachers also make good use of new concepts, like 'hot seating', a drama technique used to broaden vocabulary and promote writing. They also take care to support those pupils who require it through extra group activities. However, lessons are sometimes too formal and concentrate too heavily on grammar work and spelling, without sufficient work that is inspiring.

48. Occasionally, teaching is not effective. This is when teachers do not have a firm grip on pupils' behaviour and so do not induce the mutual respect needed for successful lessons. The inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils has a detrimental affect on learning, because groups are easily distracted. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, many pupils scoured the football and problem pages of a newspaper they were given, instead of looking for different connectives, as requested. In addition, teachers often accept untidy and poorly presented work from pupils, which undermines the quality of their handwriting.

49. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, especially because of the close support of teaching assistants. Teachers carefully plan suitable activities, which encourage these pupils to work hard and to think carefully about their learning. Teaching assistants ensure that the pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and work well together and on their own.

50. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and has a good overview of the subject. She gives good support to staff in the monitoring of standards and is taking appropriate steps to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Literacy has a high priority in the

school and challenging targets are set for classes, groups and some individual pupils. The subject leader has maintained the quality of provision since the last inspection.

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

51. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities to develop literacy across the curriculum in subjects such as ICT and history. Pupils word-process their stories sometimes and develop reading skills by researching history topics, like ancient Egypt. However, teachers do not exploit all opportunities. Often, pupils do not have the chance to write independently, or develop their speaking skills fully because discussions in lessons are not comprehensive enough. This was evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, when pupils were asked to suggest the properties of diagonals, and only a few did.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well, especially in Year 6
- Lessons benefit from brisk starts and a positive working environment
- There are good systems to monitor and guide pupils' progress but not all pupils are clear enough about how they can improve
- Teachers do not all have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour and presentation
- The subject leader is developing the subject effectively

### **Commentary**

52. Most pupils enter Year 1 with above average abilities. As they move through the school, this good foundation is well built on and they continue to acquire good, basic numeracy skills. Standards are well above average and similar to those of the last inspection, and the achievement of more able pupils in Year 6 is better. This is mainly because the subject leader teaches this year group and her strong teaching skills and subject knowledge are very influential. In addition, during the last two terms of the school year, all pupils in Year 6 are given good opportunities, at least once a week, to be taught in three ability groups, which plays a significant part in boosting their standards in the national tests.

53. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers ensure that lessons begin briskly. Teachers encourage pupils to develop their mental agility through quick-fire problem solving. Pupils achieve well because they have to use their number skills and are required to explain the thinking behind their answers. Occasionally, teachers do not develop all such opportunities. Teachers introduce new material clearly and explain, for example, methods of computation so that pupils are readily able to work things out for themselves. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and the pupils respond by working well and trying hard to complete work set. Teaching assistants often effectively support the lower ability groups and pupils who have special educational needs. They ensure that the pupils understand the work that is planned, maintain their interest and help to build their self-confidence.

54. The school has done well to put in place clear systems to assess and track the progress of pupils. Teachers are already beginning to make good use of the information gained. For example, pupils are grouped by ability in their classes; the work is generally challenging and matched to the needs of the whole range of abilities and attainment. Pupils now have rigorous targets for improvement and older pupils know what they have to do to move to the next level, although this is not yet the case throughout the school.
55. Sometimes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils and this limits progress, especially in Years 3 and 5. For instance, teachers do not always match the work well to the needs of the pupils or insist on high standards of behaviour throughout the lesson. As a result, pupils do not stay focused on their tasks, or they distract other pupils. Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly and praise good efforts, they are too accepting of untidy layout and presentation.
56. Mathematics is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and hard working, and provides a good role model for other staff. She has regular opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in lessons and has ensured that teaching has remained effective overall. She makes good use of all the information that she gathers to set new and appropriate priorities for development.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematics in other subjects. Pupils make good use of ICT skills to display and interpret data. In some classrooms, there are time-lines connected with history topics and these give pupils good opportunities to understand the passage of time. Mathematical skills are used in science to measure and record data from experiments in different forms. Nevertheless, such activity is not yet systematic and other similar opportunities are not developed.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' planning ensures a strong framework for the science curriculum
- Teachers do not challenge all pupils sufficiently, especially more able pupils
- Practical activities ensure that pupils enjoy science, although they do not always have enough self-discipline to learn fully from investigation activities

### **Commentary**

58. Standards throughout the school are average, much as they were at the last inspection. Pupils benefit from a suitable curriculum which systematically builds up pupils' learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils learn which foods are healthy or not so healthy. By Year 5, pupils know about the values of proteins and carbohydrates in diet. The satisfactory leadership and management ensure a consistency of approach in the teaching and curricular provision. The subject co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject

through regular monitoring but does not yet sample pupils' work to be aware of how well pupils achieve over time.

59. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and, therefore, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge and explain new processes and information well so that pupils clearly understand them. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils quickly realised that the activities required them to analyse how pushing and pulling objects influenced speed and direction. Teachers produce good resources for their lessons so that pupils benefit from a hands-on approach. In a similar way, pupils in a Year 3 lesson soon appreciated the different textures of materials like fabric and tinfoil. However, teachers do not adapt their planning enough to cater for the different needs of pupils. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs receive extra adult support to help understanding but more able pupils are not given enough opportunities to carry out their own ideas.
60. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the practical opportunities in science. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the casual interest initially shown by the pupils swiftly changed into a keener interest when they had to consider different ways of setting up an experiment to test the rate of decay in bread. Subsequent conversation was sharply focused and creative, and some good ideas flowed. However, in some lessons, teachers do not have good enough control of pupils, so practical work is less effective. This was especially true in a Year 3 lesson where the teacher did not succeed in curbing the pupils' over-excitement and learning was limited. Similarly, teachers do not all insist on good presentation of work, with the result that diagrams can be inaccurate and writing is often untidy.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and management mean that the subject is developing well
- The spacious and well-equipped computer suite is inspiring for pupils
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils always have sufficient opportunities to work at their own level

### **Commentary**

61. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards are higher and the computers and software have been upgraded to ensure that pupils have up-to-date and reliable equipment. Teachers have received training to develop their skills, for example in the use of websites as areas for research. The subject co-ordinator has the time to work alongside colleagues which gives her a clear picture of how the subject is being taught and she provides effective support where appropriate. As a result, teaching has improved. In addition, the link governor frequently offers his own expertise in ICT to provide valuable practical support.

62. The improved facilities are having a distinct impact on standards. The computers are sufficient to enable pupils to have ample hands-on access in lessons, and there is a good range of software to give pupils a broad experience. Consequently, pupils look forward to their lessons and are eager, sometimes over-eager, to apply themselves. Each class benefits from two lessons each week in the computer room when pupils can acquire basic skills and also use ICT in other subject activities. However, the computer room is an open area through which other pupils pass from time to time and this can, on occasions, be distracting.

63. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some that is good, especially in Years 4 and 6. Teachers are confident when presenting new learning and use the interactive whiteboard skilfully to demonstrate new skills, and so pupils understand readily. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils rapidly learned how to link pages in their multi-media presentation. However, teachers tend to give identical work to all pupils in the same classes. Less able pupils are well supported by the adults present, but more able pupils lack the scope to proceed at their own pace and so do not achieve as well as they might.

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

64. ICT is developed satisfactorily through other subjects. Pupils have some good opportunities to apply their skills through, for example, art and design and science. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils used a graphics program to create a symmetrical carpet pattern. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils researched a database to locate information about the solar system. However, such activity is not sufficiently established in the everyday curriculum, and teachers do not maximise all such opportunities.

## **HUMANITIES**

65. Only one lesson was seen in history during the inspection, and there was too little work available in geography and history on which to base judgements about attainment. Therefore, it is not possible to make judgements on provision in either subject.
66. In **geography**, pupils follow a suitable curriculum so that pupils build systematically on their learning as they pass through the school. In mapping, for example, pupils in Year 1 have a satisfactory awareness of their school layout and journey to school. By Year 6, pupils draw, with some precision, an illustration of a river's passage to the sea. Pupils gain knowledge at first hand through visiting different locations. Year 5 pupils became aware of the environmental issues, such as litter and derelict buildings, following a study of the town.
67. It was evident from discussions with pupils that they enjoy **history**. Pupils from Year 2 have a good knowledge of the story of Florence Nightingale, and pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastic about their recent work on the life of John Lennon. Teachers are beginning to make links with literacy and use research on the Internet to support the teaching of history.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils gain a good understanding of the different faiths in a multi-cultural society
- Although the curriculum is satisfactory, there are missed opportunities for pupils to record their own work in writing

## **Commentary**

68. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the major world faiths of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. By Year 2, for example, pupils know a range of stories from the Bible and know about significant events in the life of Jesus. Pupils are beginning to understand the similarities and differences between faiths and that each faith has its own festivals, special places of worship and holy writings. Pupils in Year 6 worked co-operatively to compile a book simplifying the story of how the Qur'an was revealed to Mohammed. This book was to be used for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
69. Teaching and pupils' achievement are satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and prepare lessons carefully, following a good curriculum. Themes and issues explored in the daily act of worship reinforce what pupils learn in lessons and, at the same time, contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Much use, however, is made of photocopied worksheets and, as a result, there are missed opportunities for pupils to extend their written work through recording their ideas and findings. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader checks teachers' planning on a regular basis and offers useful help and advice to her

colleagues. The local vicar is a regular visitor to the school and good use is made of visits to places of worship.

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

70. Few lessons were seen in these subjects during the inspection, and so it is not possible to make judgements on the provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

71. **Art and design** make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural education. The provision is enhanced by occasional arts days and by the weekly art club run by members of staff. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and remark that they would like to do more art. The overall standard of the work on display is satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils produce pictures in the style of famous artists like Matisse. Drawing skills have been fostered by projects such as the designs for new buildings for the 'New Mills Competition'. Throughout the school the pupils draw and paint portraits of themselves and one another using different media, and the results are often of good quality, showing good attention to the detail of facial features. In Year 5, good links are made to literacy by designing book covers.

72. The subject of **design and technology** does not have a very high profile in the school. Evidence suggests that some year groups do more than others. For example, Year 4 pupils have been engaged in a topic to design and make chairs and Year 6 pupils recalled how they designed and made lighthouses with lights that shine intermittently and turn. The work seen indicates that pupils are generally working at the level expected for their age. However, few other classes have completed much work by this stage of the year. The school accepts that the provision for design and technology has sometimes been patchy and has clear intentions to rectify this situation.

73. There is a satisfactory curriculum in **music**, and the school offers a good range of extra lessons in strings, brass, woodwind and guitar. The curriculum is enriched at times by visits from professional musicians; an African drummer was apparently a great success earlier in the year. The school's singing group has sung at a concert with other local schools. However, singing in assemblies is not very tuneful or expressive, and pupils find it hard to perform without accompaniment. The school is well aware of the need to develop the provision for music further and has sensibly just appointed a music specialist to take charge of this.

74. Pupils say that **physical education** is one of their favourite subjects. Aside from everyday lessons, the school encourages competitive sport and several teams did well last year in swimming, football and netball. There is also a suitable number of after-school activities for pupils to develop a range of skills, for example in gymnastics, cross-country and badminton. The school is particularly fortunate to have the services of a well-qualified coach who comes weekly to train pupils in games and dance. The school has done well to maintain the high profile of physical education despite the temporary reduction in the size of the hall and lack of playing field.

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

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

75. It is not possible to judge the provision for this subject, as no lessons were observed during the inspection. All pupils benefit from a weekly lesson which often involves a circle activity, when they can discuss and contemplate personal concerns and wider issues. Themes in assemblies support this and give pupils valuable opportunities to consider major aspects of life, such as war and the impact on soldiers and their families. In and outside class, teachers encourage pupils to be considerate, and to be useful members of the school community. For example, the running of lunchtime clubs, the idea for which stemmed from pupils in last year's Year 6, gives pupils a sense of responsibility. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils take enough responsibility for their own work. This is apparent in the untidy presentation and slipshod handwriting in many pupils' books.



## 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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>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	4

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