

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Parrett & Axe CE Aided Primary School**

Mosterton, Beaminster

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113807

Headteacher: Nigel Evans

Lead inspector: Michael Best

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267479

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 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 100

School address: Fairoak Way  
Mosterton  
Beaminster  
Dorset  
Postcode: DT8 3HJ

Telephone number: 01308 868492  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Peter Hinton

Date of previous inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Parrett and Axe CE (Aided) Primary School draws most of its pupils from mainly owner-occupier and some rented homes in Mosterton and the surrounding villages. About a quarter of pupils live further afield, a number transferring to the school in Year 3 onwards. An above average number of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times. When they enter the reception group, simple assessments show that many children's skills and experiences are average.

There are 100 pupils (56 boys and 44 girls) on roll, 16 of whom currently attend the reception class part time, with the remainder in Years 1 to 6 attending full time. The school is smaller than other primary schools in England. At present, 2 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average, but eligibility fluctuates from year to year and has been as high as 11 per cent in the period since the last inspection.

Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. About 17 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. One pupil has a statement outlining their specific needs, which is average, and there are nine pupils at the higher level of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Pupils' special educational needs include communication and behavioural difficulties.

The school benefits from the Small Schools Fund and participates in the Leading Small Primary Schools Project. All but one of the present teaching staff were in the school at the time of the last inspection.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

<b>Members of the inspection team</b>			<b>Subject responsibilities</b>
10413	Michael Best	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music
9334	Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector	
3751	Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	English Art and design History Geography Physical education Citizenship (personal, social and health education)

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Parrett and Axe CE Primary is a good, inclusive school with many strengths.** Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning. Leadership and management are very good and the school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils are happy in school, work hard and are well cared for by a highly committed staff.
- Standards in English and mathematics are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6<sup>1</sup>.
- Overall, teaching and learning are very good in the junior classes and pupils achieve very well; in the infant class, teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Leaders have a clear vision and strong sense of purpose for the school's development.
- Children in the reception class<sup>2</sup> do not have enough opportunities to make choices or take part in structured play and exploratory activities.
- Very good monitoring and self-assessment procedures are helping to improve the quality of pupils' education and the standards they achieve.
- Expectations in pupils' individual behaviour plans are not consistently applied.
- Although skills and knowledge are well taught, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and extend these through independent work and study.

**Improvement since the last inspection is good.** The school has successfully built upon the firm foundations identified in the last inspection report. Standards over time have been maintained and are rising ahead of the national trend at the end of Year 6. The proportion of good and better teaching has increased and is appreciably above the national average. Improvements to the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school have further improved the quality of governors' work. More able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now better challenged by work in mathematics and science, and the provision for music is more effective. Although there are now effective behaviour policies and procedures in place, and the behaviour of most pupils is very good, sanctions are not consistently applied in the infant class.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

<sup>1</sup> The school refers to Years 1 and 2 as the *infants*, Years 3 and 4 as *lower juniors* and Years 5 and 6 as *top juniors*.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage is based on six areas of learning - communication, language and literary development; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development. Children are expected to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

**Achievement is good.** Pupils achieve very well in the junior classes, well in the infant class and satisfactorily in the reception class. Inspection findings indicate that:

- children in the reception class are on course to meet the national standards in all the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1;
- standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in speaking and listening, above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and average in information and communication technology (ICT);
- standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in speaking and listening and above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT;
- pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the infant classes and very well in the junior classes;
- more able pupils achieve well in their acquisition of skills and knowledge.

**Pupils' personal development is good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in the reception and infant classes and very good in the junior classes. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is above the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a** good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching and learning are particularly effective in English, mathematics and science in the junior classes. Pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are good in the infant classes. In the reception class, basic literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily taught. Overall, assessment procedures are good and successfully highlight the next steps in learning. **The curriculum is good overall.** The school provides a very good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities for its junior pupils and a good range for those in the infant class. In the reception class, all the recommended areas of learning are addressed but children do not have enough opportunity to make choices or take part in structured play and exploratory activities. Opportunities for pupils to participate in enrichment activities are very good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall with very good provision in the junior classes. Learning resources and staffing levels are good and the accommodation is satisfactory overall. **The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good overall** and contributes well to the school's strong and supportive ethos. **The school's partnerships with parents and the community are very good** and **links with other schools and colleges are excellent.**

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The governance of the school is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. His vision for the school's development, based on high quality school self-evaluation and clear forward planning, is spearheading the school's improvement. The headteacher and governors are aware of the school's shortcomings and act decisively to address these. Other staff give good leadership to teaching and the curriculum. A strong, all embracing, team spirit makes a significant contribution to the very effective management of the school. The school meets all statutory requirements.

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

Both pupils and parents express very positive views about their school. Parents are pleased that their children are happy and enjoy school. They feel that the teachers' encouragement and expectations help their children to become mature and responsible, developing confidence and independence. In talking to inspectors, pupils said, *'This is a friendly place and you learn a lot.'* *'Although it's a small school, there's lots going on.'* *'Staff listen to what you have to say – they have really helped me with my work and my behaviour.'* *'I would recommend this school to others.'*

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- provide more opportunities for children in the reception class to make choices and engage in structured play and exploration;
- ensure the consistent application of the expectations outlined in pupils' individual behaviour plans in the infant class;
- identify further opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop and extend their skills and knowledge through personal and original work.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is **good** overall. It is **satisfactory** in the reception class, **good** in Years 1 and 2 and **very good** in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English and mathematics are above average in Years 2 and 6. In science, they are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.

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

- Achievement in English, mathematics and science is very good in Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2.
- Personal research skills are good but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop these through independent work.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- The achievement of more able pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

#### **Commentary**

1. Parrett and Axe is a small primary school where numbers in each year group vary from 10 to 21 pupils. The number of pupils with special educational needs also varies from year to year. As a result, care needs to be taken when interpreting test and assessment results.
2. From an average starting point, children in the reception class achieve satisfactorily and are on target to meet the national standards in communication, language and literacy; personal, social and emotional education; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development by the time they start in Year 1. Staff focus well on the basic skills in literacy and numeracy but do not provide children with sufficient opportunities to make choices or to engage in exploration and structured play. At this particular point in the school year, the provision for some children, particularly the youngest, is too formal because there is not enough opportunity for them to learn and develop through structured play, exploration and by making choices from a range of different activities. They could achieve more if their work was better matched to their present needs.
3. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils achieve well. In science, standards of work are above average and, over time, pupils achieve well. National Curriculum test results for children at the end of Year 2<sup>3</sup> in 2004 show that, compared with all schools, standards were above average in writing and well below average in reading and mathematics. Compared with other Year 2 pupils in similar schools<sup>4</sup>, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. These results are not typical for the school and reflect a higher than usual proportion of pupils with

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<sup>3</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are expected to reach Level 2 at the end of Year 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for his or her age.

<sup>4</sup> On the basis of free school meal entitlement.

special educational needs. In earlier years, standards have been consistently above the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (18.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.6 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.8 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

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

4. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and science because of the strong practical approach to teaching and learning which is successfully developing their skills and knowledge. In English, achievement is very good, particularly in speaking and listening and in reading. Pupils are successfully gaining effective writing skills but there are not sufficient opportunities for them to develop these through shaping, editing and improving longer pieces of work. The latest National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 6<sup>5</sup> in 2004 show that, compared with all schools, standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Compared with other Year 6 pupils in similar schools<sup>6</sup>, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. The school exceeded its targets previously agreed with the local education authority for Year 6 pupils to reach in English and mathematics. Staff have correctly identified that to improve results in English writing needs to be stronger and are effectively addressing the issue.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004<sup>7</sup>***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (26.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.8 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	31.2 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Numbers in each group are very small and comparisons between year groups have to be made with caution. This is why there are differences between the results achieved in the 2004 tests and inspection findings. Over time, the standards achieved by pupils in the National Curriculum tests are keeping abreast of the national trend and in some years they exceed it. Good analysis of test results and other assessment information is making an important contribution to maintaining and improving pupils' achievement. Over time, there is a satisfactory correlation between teacher assessment and test results. Test results do not reveal any significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls and this is borne out by inspection findings.

<sup>5</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are expected to reach Level 4 at the end of Year 6. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for his or her age.

<sup>6</sup> On the basis of free school meal entitlement.

<sup>7</sup> See previous footnote.

6. In ICT standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well because skills are well taught and older pupils are challenged by the work set for them. Standards are above average in history, art and design, design and technology and music. They are average in geography. Standards are above average in physical education at the end of Year 6 and satisfactory in art and design and in physical education are average at the end of Year 2. As this is a voluntary aided school, religious education is reported upon separately.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the infant classes, with group work in literacy and numeracy sessions successfully meeting pupils' differing learning needs. In the junior classes, pupils make very good progress due to the skilful and regular support of staff and work in lessons which is tailored to meet the pupils' specific needs.
8. Setting by ability for English and mathematics across Years 3 to 6 is working well for pupils. Working in smaller groups provides greater access to the teacher and work in lessons is planned to meet their specific needs. More able pupils are, overall, effectively challenged by the work set for them but do not have enough opportunities to develop and extend their work through independent, extended writing and investigation.

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

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are **good** overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development is **very well promoted**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are highly motivated and eager to learn.
- The very good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves promote a positive learning environment.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and contributes very effectively to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes get even better as they get older, in response to teachers' high expectations.
- Pupils willingly undertake responsibility.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils work hard to achieve their best and make good progress. They are very enthusiastic and like the fact that this is a small school where *'everybody is kind and friendly'* and *'the teachers are helpful and nice'*. The children in the reception class develop positive attitudes to their work and learning. They show confidence and concentrate well on their different activities and lessons, and are learning to share resources.
10. Most pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school. The school has developed a good range of strategies to manage and help pupils improve their behaviour. The success of these is particularly evident in the junior classes. In a small minority of lessons in the infant class the behaviour of a few individuals is

unsatisfactory and this sometimes causes disruption for the rest of the class. This was identified as a concern during the previous inspection.

11. Social harmony is a strong feature of the school. The school has good systems in place to deal with any incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils do not have concerns and are keen to stress that if they do have a problem they know who to go to and feel confident it will be resolved.
12. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and reflects the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own and other religions. The opportunity to develop pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is consistently promoted each week during assemblies and in the personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils show great respect for the values and beliefs of others.
13. Moral development is very good overall. Pupils respect the code of conduct which they have helped to devise, know right from wrong and are fully aware of how their actions affect others. The weekly celebration assembly encourages pupils to recognise and celebrate others' achievements. Pupils gain an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves through their support of charities both at home and overseas. The very good behaviour of most pupils in and around the school is a result of their developing self-discipline. As a result, no pupil was excluded from the school in the last reporting period.
14. Social development is particularly good and results in constructive relationships being forged both between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This promotes a good working environment and makes a positive impact on achievement. The older pupils are very caring of the younger ones. Pupils accept responsibility readily where it is given and complete any tasks they have been given conscientiously. The school council engenders a good awareness of others and how they can meet the needs of pupils in the school.
15. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to explore and learn about their own cultural heritage and the diversity of cultures and faiths represented in society. There is a rich provision offered through music, art and dance and with involvement in various local festivals and competitions. Very strong links have been forged with schools in Italy, Sweden and Northern Ireland through the British Council's Comenius scheme. This has fostered an increasing awareness of cultural differences in these countries through various projects and exchange visitors.

### **Attendance**

16. Pupils are happy to come to school and are eager to learn. Attendance is above the national average with very few unauthorised absences. Most parents are conscientious in contacting the school when their children are away and bring their children to school punctually in the mornings. The school monitors attendance rigorously and has appropriate systems to follow up absences and lateness.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils.**

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. It is **satisfactory** in reception, **good** in Years 1 and 2 and **very good** in Years 3 to 6. The use of assessment is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong working relationships between staff and pupils successfully promote learning.
- High quality teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science are effectively promoting pupils' very good achievement in the junior classes.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in literacy and numeracy as the result of good support in group work.
- Teachers' management of pupils with behavioural difficulties is not always consistent.
- Teaching and learning in the reception class, and in some lessons in Years 1 and 2, is too directed.
- Teaching and learning for special educational needs pupils is good with some very good practice evident.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	10 (31%)	15 (47%)	7 (22%)	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 overall quality of teaching and learning has been successfully maintained since the last inspection and the proportion of very good teaching has increased. Positive working relationships are the hallmark of teaching and learning in this school. Pupils are keen to learn, behave well and make good gains in their confidence and self-esteem as learners. Teachers question pupils effectively and positively promote plenty of interesting discussion. They successfully challenge pupils' thinking and stimulate their desire to improve their understanding.
- In English, teachers successfully promote the correct use of vocabulary and provide pupils with access to a broad range of reading and writing styles. They make good use of resources, particularly the interactive whiteboard. In numeracy, teachers effectively encourage pupils to explain their strategies for calculations and make learning relevant to everyday life. In science, practical activities focus pupils' interests

well. Work in ICT is effectively used to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Teachers make good use of homework to support and extend pupils' learning.

19. Teaching is strongest in the junior classes and is particularly effective in English, mathematics and science. Staff have a very good command of the subjects they teach. Their management of pupils is very good and pupils respond very positively to their enthusiastic delivery and well-prepared lessons. A very effective ploy is the use of a '*cliff hanger*' to mark the conclusion of whole-class teaching and the start of pupils' independent work. Pupils' application and productivity are very good. Teachers clearly explain what pupils are going to learn in lessons and ask probing questions to test understanding and stimulate thinking. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are very high and pupils respond very well. Teachers challenge pupils very well in mathematics and science. In English, skills are expertly taught and pupils gain a good experience of many different writing styles and authors.
20. In the infant class, lessons are well planned and reflect a secure subject knowledge. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is good. Effective support for pupils of differing abilities helps them to achieve well in lessons. Resources are used well and support staff well deployed to support pupils' learning. Pupils' concentration is well maintained through interesting and purposeful activities and teaching time used effectively. The pace of lessons is generally good and, overall, pupils are managed well. However, on occasions, staff are not consistent in their application of the targets in pupils' individual behaviour plans and this sometimes disrupts other pupils' learning. In some lessons, pupils are too closely directed and this reduces their capacity to develop independent working skills.
21. Staff in the reception class promote a warm and welcoming atmosphere and children settle promptly into routines at the start of each day. Adults know the children well even though they have only been in school a short time. Planning in the six areas of learning leading to the early goals is thorough and effectively identifies activities for children at different stages of development. Support staff and adult helpers are carefully briefed about the activity they are leading, with good emphasis on key learning points and specific vocabulary. However, although children gain a good grounding in the basic skills in literacy and numeracy by the end of the reception year, teaching and learning are often over-directed and there is not sufficient time for all planned activities to be fully achieved. Relative to their age and learning needs, some children spend too long sitting on the carpet or at their tables. They do not have sufficient opportunities to make choices or engage in structured play and other exploratory activities. Overall, the use of learning resources is unsatisfactory.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, with some very good one-to-one and small group teaching evident. Support staff work purposefully with pupils, individually and in groups, and support them well when they join whole class lessons. Their skilful contribution to group sessions in literacy and numeracy lessons helps pupils to achieve their best. Pupils' individual learning plans are clear, well focused and effectively linked to lesson plans. High quality staff expertise is positively influencing provision in Years 3 to 6. Spot-on assessment is helping to guide very specific work at an individual level. This in turn is enabling pupils to make very good progress. The school makes very good use of experts from outside the school, such

as staff from the Behaviour Support Service, to help pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties improve their concentration and application.

23. Assessment and its use are good overall, being satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, good in the infant class and very good in the juniors. The school effectively gathers information about pupils' attainment and achievement from statutory and non-statutory tests, end of topic assessments and the marking of work undertaken both in school and at home. Staff make good use of this to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils and to inform the next steps in their learning. Briefings for classroom helpers in the reception and infant class include objectives for pupils to achieve and space for adults to record what individuals have achieved. This is good practice. In Years 5 and 6, staff actively encourage pupils to assess their own work and identify where they need to reinforce and improve their understanding and skills. In ICT, staff are successfully using a simple but effective assessment scheme that focuses on skill development. In English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, teachers make very good use of assessment information to place pupils in groups and to help guide any discussions about moving pupils from one group to another.

### **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is **good** overall. Enrichment opportunities are **very good**. Resources are **good** and the accommodation is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do not have enough opportunities to explore and learn through play.
- Enrichment opportunities in sport and the arts very successfully enliven pupils' learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, shortcomings in the layout adversely affect the provision in the Foundation Stage.

### **Commentary**

24. The school has successfully maintained and developed its curricular provision since the last inspection. All statutory requirements in respect of the curriculum and collective worship are met. Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. Specialist input supports the school's work on drugs and sex education effectively.
25. The strengths of the school's curriculum lie in the provision of an exciting range of experiences, which enrich and motivate learning. For instance, teachers in the junior classes forge successful links with learning in English, drama and art, and through visits to places of historical interest, such as a Roman site and Kingston Lacey Hall. Links with schools in Italy, Sweden and Ireland provide breadth to learning and widen pupils' knowledge of other cultures and places in the wider world. Nearer to home, residential visits to the Isle of Wight provide exciting first-hand learning experiences to build upon in lessons.

26. Pupils' participation in sport and in the arts is very good. The expertise of a specialist teacher for cricket, the opportunity for pupils to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments and the skills of a visiting artist together provide a wealth of skills and expertise that enhance pupils' learning. Activities are open to all pupils and their participation is most enthusiastic.
27. Since the last inspection, improved provision in information and communication technology is helping to improve standards in this subject and its use across the curriculum. In a similar way, better planning and resources for design and technology enable pupils to make better progress with their learning. The school has successfully adopted and adapted nationally available curriculum plans to its particular circumstances and developed an effective rolling programme to ensure that pupils do not repeat the same work year on year. Long, medium and short-term planning is effectively established in the infant and junior classes and provides an effective structure for pupils to successfully develop skills and knowledge as they move through the school.
28. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, a stronger focus on teacher-directed activities takes away the opportunity for children to make choices, explore and learn through structured play. Planning focuses satisfactorily on the six recommended areas of learning but it does not focus closely enough upon the small steps in children's learning in independently chosen and structured play activities. Space in the classroom is at a premium and this inhibits the free-flow of learning in and out of doors.
29. All groups are successfully included in the work and life of the school. Pupils of all abilities are very well prepared for their transfer to secondary school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively tailored to meet their specific needs, is good overall and enables pupils to achieve well. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is very good.
30. In numeracy and literacy lessons, setting by ability across Years 3 to 6 works well and the effective management of groups in Years 1 and 2 promotes good achievement. This ensures that work is planned with the right level of challenge for the different ability groups. However, higher attaining pupils still have insufficient opportunities to undertake longer pieces of independent writing.
31. The school is keen to develop its curriculum in line with recent national initiatives to promote *Excellence and Enjoyment*<sup>8</sup> in learning. The headteacher is effectively working towards this in his own teaching by identifying opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for developing their skills and knowledge through independent research and original work in science. The use of the school's website to provide information for pupils and parents about the homework set throughout the school is good practice.
32. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. The support and guidance from experts outside the school, such as the Behaviour Support Service, help pupils to achieve their best. Learning resources are good. The school was built

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<sup>8</sup> *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, May 2003) sets out HM Government's vision for the future of primary education. In this, high standards are obtained through a rich, varied and exciting curriculum which develops children in a range of ways.

over thirty years ago and, although there is sufficient floorspace, the layout and design is not readily adaptable to present day demands. That said, staff make the best of what is available and the accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum in the infant and junior classes. Plans to extend the hall to provide another teaching area are progressing well and these will provide better facilities for small group work and instrumental lessons. The school is well cared for. The grounds are spacious and recent improvements successfully enhance the facilities.

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

Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are **very good** and pupils receive **good** support and guidance during their time at school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment where pupils can grow into happy confident individuals.
- The inclusive nature of the school ensures it provides well for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, gifted and talented.
- Good induction arrangements help pupils settle quickly into school.
- Pupils feel they are consulted and have a voice in decision-making processes of the school.

### **Commentary**

33. This is a very caring school. The provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is very good and parents are very pleased that their children are well nurtured and supported during their time at school. The school has successfully maintained this effective provision since the last inspection. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health, safety and security are well thought through, with the governors taking their responsibility for health and safety issues conscientiously. Lunchtime supervision is of a high standard.
34. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are good. Class teachers know their pupils very well. Pupils are involved in target setting in academic subjects and there are formal tracking systems in place to monitor and promote pupils' personal development. The school has good systems in place offering support and guidance for those pupils with special educational needs and involves the various outside agencies as necessary. Workshops are run in conjunction with other local primary schools and the receiving secondary school to provide additional challenge for the more able pupils.
35. The school has good policies and procedures for managing behaviour (including bullying) and attendance. It works closely with the behaviour support services to provide guidance and focused support to manage the disruptive behaviour of a small number of individuals. The school has established good links with parents and involves them in discussions about their children's progress. Parents speak very positively about the school and feel it treats pupils fairly. The school has effective procedures to record and deal with incidents of racial harassment. None were recorded in the last reporting period.

36. The induction process into the school is effectively implemented and there are good links with pre-school playgroups. The transition to secondary schools is very well managed through regular visits and joint projects with secondary school staff. This ensures pupils' progression to the next stage of education is as smooth as possible.
37. Pupils are very happy in school and feel it is a safe and secure place. They are confident that there is *'always somebody you can talk to if you need help'*. Opportunities to consult with pupils and to consider their views are very effectively developed through the school council and pupils feel that their views are valued. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the different things that have been implemented as a result of such discussions. They feel this has encouraged them to be more responsible and given them a greater voice and involvement in the decision-making processes in the school.

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

The school's partnership with parents and the local community is **very good**. The links with partner institutions are **outstanding**.

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

- The school has developed a strong, supportive parent body and parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school has forged very good links with the local community which help to enrich pupils' learning experiences.
- The excellent links with partner institutions promote curriculum development and learning opportunities for pupils.

#### **Commentary**

38. The school's links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges have developed well since the last inspection. Close liaison keeps parents regularly informed about events and provides them with many opportunities to become involved in their children's education both at home and in school. This has a very good effect on pupils' learning and their levels of achievement. Learning targets for pupils with special educational needs are regularly shared with both pupils and parents and forge successful links with learning. Staff keep parents fully informed of their children's progress and fully involve them in reviews.
39. Parents have very positive views about the school. Most express high levels of satisfaction about its work. They think the school is well managed, they like the open door policy and find the headteacher and staff highly approachable.
40. General information for parents is good. Regular newsletters keep parents updated and well informed on different school activities and events. Curriculum information is circulated termly and enables parents to see what their children are learning at school so they can help them at home. Parents' consultation meetings are well attended and information evenings are popular as they keep parents updated on new developments and important events. The school effectively consults with parents about different issues via questionnaires, provides feedback and acts on the responses. The annual reports to parents are good, clearly stating what pupils know, can do and understand and identifying targets for improvement.

41. Parents are invited to help in the school and a number volunteer their support on a regular basis, by listening to reading, helping out in the classroom or on trips. Parents also undertake various tasks around school such as preparing resources, helping out with the garden projects or running extra-curricular clubs. Parents are very supportive of the school and involved in their children's learning. School productions, sports days and events are very well attended. The parents, teachers and friends association (PTFA) is run by an enthusiastic group of parents and staff who organise a number of social and fund raising activities each year, which raise significant funds for the school. This money has been effectively used to buy additional resources and will help to fund some of the costs of the new hall extension.
42. The school is central to village life although many pupils come from neighbouring villages. Links with the local community are very good with many local people, including grandparents, involved in school events and attending functions and activities run by the school. The school has benefited from a number of local initiatives and received grants to help construct gardens and the outside wildlife areas.
43. Links with other schools are excellent and demonstrate the very best practice in relation to management and academic issues. The Beaminster cluster has been very successful in forging productive links between neighbouring primary schools. This has resulted in many different initiatives including subject development, enrichment opportunities, sporting activities and joint staff development sessions. Links with Beaminster Technology College are excellent. The college provides a number of activities for its feeder primary schools, aiming to improve pupils' knowledge and skills whilst raising attainment. This has been very effectively developed through visits and visitors and is clearly affecting pupils' levels of achievement. Pupils undertake cross-phase projects in design and technology, English and mathematics, develop their computer skills and use of new technology, and the more able pupils study forensic science. A good system of visits from the Year 7 teachers and tracking of pupils' progress help to ease their transition to the next stage of education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The school is **very effectively** governed. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and the leadership of other staff is **good**. The school is **very well** managed.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the school.
- The staff team works very well together.
- The school makes very good use of performance data and self-evaluation to inform and guide its improvement planning.
- The management of the school is very effective overall; shortcomings in the Foundation Stage have been identified and are being addressed.

## **Commentary**

44. The school has successfully maintained and developed the high standard of leadership and management reported at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher gives a strong lead to the school's welcoming, positive and purposeful atmosphere. He gives clear direction to the school and works very well with staff and governors to systematically plan and achieve its goals. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and fulfil these enthusiastically and well. Subject leaders are effective in their roles, providing good support for colleagues and successfully monitoring pupils' performance. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Improvements in planning and assessment are being satisfactorily developed as staff work with the local education authority to improve the provision. Communication within the school is very good and this enhances the school's effectiveness.
45. A strength is the use of school self-evaluation to pinpoint specific and achievable areas for development. The school makes very good use of the information it collects about how well pupils are doing. The school's excellent links with the main receiving high school add significantly to the drive to improve performance. Performance management for teachers is well established and the arrangements for continuing professional development very good.
46. The school's mission statement and its aims and values are very appropriate and well demonstrated in the daily life and work of the school. Governors review the school's aims on a regular basis. Links with local churches are well established. This a highly inclusive school where there is a strong commitment to enabling every pupil to take a full part in the life and work of the school. The leadership has acted positively to improve the provision for more able pupils and this has improved since the last inspection. The school is strongly committed to providing well for pupils with special educational needs. The provision is well managed and the governing body monitors it effectively. Pupils benefit from the high quality support of outside agencies. Support staff are well trained, have good expertise and know their pupils well.
47. The school improvement plan includes a good, evaluative analysis of the school's present position and the progress made in the last year with the support of the local education authority. The school has correctly identified shortcomings in the Foundation Stage provision and the local education authority is helping to address these. Current priorities are accurate, well focused on standards and clearly planned with clear success criteria and costings. Alongside, there are a number of rolling initiatives and reviews that successfully complement, rather than detract from, these priorities. Through regular visits to classrooms and their links with subject leaders, as well as through written and oral reports, governors are much involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating the impact of these priorities.
48. A good example of the effective way in which staff and governors have worked together to bring about improvement in standards and the quality of education is the introduction of ability groups for teaching literacy and numeracy in Years 3 to 6:
- the governing body has found the additional resources needed to employ additional staff to run three teaching groups;
  - staff plan work together, ensuring that pupils can readily move between groups;
  - subject leaders observe lessons, scrutinise pupils' work and teachers' planning and hold discussions with pupils;

- results from statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed and used to develop planning;
  - governors regularly visit classes, observe lessons and discuss reports and recommendations for future development.
49. The governing body fulfils its role very well and ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements. The quality of its monitoring has improved since the last inspection, with governors knowledgeably discussing the impact of spending decisions on raising standards. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths, shortcomings and priorities. The governors are very well led. The chairman meets with the headteacher weekly and maintains good links with the local education authority. Governors are conscious of the dangers of complacency and use their wide experience in business and other professions effectively to support and challenge the headteacher and staff and to guide the school's work. Regular visits to the school to observe pupils at work and informal discussions with staff, parents and pupils ensure that debates and decisions are well informed.
50. The school secretary provides very effective and efficient support, enabling teaching staff to focus on their classroom duties. Routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. The school has very effective financial procedures systems in place and actively seeks *best value* in its purchases. The school has responded positively to the recommendations in the latest audit report.

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

<b><i>Income and expenditure (£)</i></b>		<b><i>Balances (£)</i></b>	
Total income	284,886	Balance from previous year	42,501
Total expenditure	281,078	Balance carried forward to the next	46,309
Expenditure per pupil	2,959		

51. Although the above table indicates that the school's reserves are much higher than the recommended level, the governing body has effective plans for their use in the current financial period. During the summer, contractors fitted interactive whiteboards and associated equipment in four classrooms. Funds have accrued in the budget from grants and other sources to pay the school's contribution to the forthcoming construction and equipping of a fifth classroom.
52. The school's income and expenditure per pupil are similar to the national average. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is well applied. Overall, standards and the quality of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and good features maintained. The school continues to provide good value for money.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

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

- Children have positive attitudes to school and work, and behave well.
- By the end of the reception year, children's basic skills in literacy and numeracy are secure.
- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to make choices and participate in structured play and exploration.
- The teaching of small groups, particularly in language and literacy, is effective but opportunities are missed to pursue and develop children's own ideas and thoughts.
- Shortcomings in the accommodation constrain some aspects of children's learning.
- Induction arrangements are effective.
- Procedures to track children's progress in group work are good but planning does not closely enough reflect the next steps in learning in independently chosen and practical activities.

#### **Commentary**

53. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 children in the reception class, attending for the morning session and lunchtime. Children start school in the September following their fourth birthday. They initially stay for the morning session and then for lunch during the autumn term, becoming full-time at the start of the spring term.
54. Inspectors were able to reach secure judgements about provision in children's personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. There was insufficient opportunity to judge teaching and learning in other areas of learning during the inspection. Inspectors sampled children's knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development through observing them at work and looking at teachers' planning and records.
55. Children's attainment when they start school spans the full ability range and is average overall. Their skills in speaking and listening, reading and personal, social and emotional development are stronger than those in writing and mathematics. Children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and their achievement is satisfactory.
56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good where children work in small groups with an adult on activities that are well matched to their abilities. The work for these groups is well planned and small steps in learning are systematically developed. Observation of pupils now in Year 1 indicates that children get a good grounding in literacy and numeracy in the reception class. However, at this particular point in the school year, the provision for some children, particularly the youngest, is too formal because there is not enough opportunity for them to learn and develop through structured play, exploration and by making choices from a range of different activities. Children try hard to concentrate on their work but, by the end of the

session, some are very tired. They could achieve more if their work was better matched to their present needs. Procedures for adults to record children's attainment and progress in lessons are good and help to shape planning for subsequent lessons. However, assessment is satisfactory overall because there are not enough opportunities for children to independently develop their skills and knowledge.

57. Shortcomings in the accommodation also contribute to this imbalance in learning. The children's indoor play area is not visible from the main classroom and the outdoor area, although ample for large play equipment, is not fenced from the main playground and field. As a result, access to painting, sand and water activities and large play equipment is not continuously available to the children.
58. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The provision is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. The reception teacher is experienced and, with other staff and helpers, promotes a very caring and supportive environment. Staff know their children well. The school works closely with parents to ensure that the reception children have a smooth start to their education and many parents regularly assist with class activities. Parents give considerable support to their children at home through reading activities.
59. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development**, provision is satisfactory. Children are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning. Children achieve satisfactorily and teaching is satisfactory. Children are comfortable with the routines of the classroom. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. They mix well with older pupils in the playground, at lunchtimes and in assemblies and respond well to their good models of care and behaviour. In the classroom, most behave well and are keen to work but, although they try hard, some younger children find difficulty maintaining their concentration during lessons. When they have the opportunity, children successfully make choices and decisions about their work but there is often not sufficient time for them to do so. Most work well together in a group and they are successfully developing skills in listening to others, taking turns and sharing resources.
60. Provision in **communication, language and literacy** is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall and children achieve soundly. They are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning. There is good emphasis on speaking and staff effectively develop and extend children's vocabulary. Listening skills are also well promoted but, on occasions, staff allow children to carry on talking when adults or other children are speaking to the whole class. Children understand that writing conveys meaning and they join in well with familiar stories such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Some children confidently suggest what happens next and quickly draw their teacher's attention to the fact that she has turned over two pages at once. Children are successfully developing a sight vocabulary and their knowledge of letter sounds is developing satisfactorily. Staff promote early writing skills systematically and many children write their names without help. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to choose to 'write' in a variety of contexts.
61. In terms of pupils' **mathematical development**, provision is satisfactory. Children are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory and children achieve satisfactorily. Most count confidently to 10 or more

and many confidently add *one more* when, for example, checking the number of children present at the start of the session. Children are familiar with vocabulary such as *more, less, above, below, beside* and *next to* and they discuss the relative sizes of the *Three Bears* with confidence. Many write numbers correctly and participate well in well-taught number rhymes, games and stories. However, staff do not consistently expand and develop children's ideas because they over-direct learning. On occasions, work can be too challenging for some children at this stage of their development. There are missed opportunities for children to explore mathematical concepts through sand and water play and for them to learn through first-hand experience and exploration.

62. Inspectors sampled children's **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Children achieve satisfactorily and are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning. Teachers make effective use of the registration period to talk about events during the day and children observe and record the weather on a daily basis. Children have a keen awareness of what is going on around them but there are not always sufficient opportunities for them to pursue their own ideas and thoughts in class discussions. Many talk confidently about their homes and the different members of their families. They are successfully developing an understanding of the passage of time and recall specific events from *yesterday* or at the *weekend*. They successfully distinguish between *high* and *low* sounds and *light* and *dark* when talking about day and night.
63. Children recognise *People who help us* and know that some parents work in offices whilst others work on farms. From visitors and in lessons, children gain a suitable understanding of key characters and events from the Bible. Their information and communication technology skills are satisfactory. Children effectively respond to adults who help them learn particular skills, such as controlling the mouse. When using a painting program independently, children successfully select different colours and brushes. However, they do not have free access to the computers throughout the day.
64. Inspectors sampled children's **physical development**. Achievement is satisfactory and children are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning. Children demonstrate suitable control of pencils, crayons and brushes and most handle scissors, glue sticks and other small equipment effectively. They successfully manipulate small objects, such as building bricks, and many follow a sequence of different movements well. Children's throwing and catching skills are average and most have a sound sense of space. However, the lack of ready and easy access to a specific play area to work with large pieces of apparatus and equipment is having an adverse impact upon the achievement of higher standards.
65. Inspectors also sampled children's **creative development**. Achievement is satisfactory. Children are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning. Planning shows that there is provision for children to engage in role-play and work with modelling materials, paint and collage materials. Children join in enthusiastically with action songs, maintaining a steady rhythm. They effectively adopt angry and sad voices and faces when taking the roles of *Daddy Bear* and *Baby Bear* and enthusiastically act out the scene where the bears discover that Goldilocks has eaten their porridge. However, children do not have enough opportunities to

engage in daily free-choice music making activities where they could, for example, explore the properties of different instruments.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Grouping by ability in literacy lessons is successfully raising standards in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to shape and edit longer pieces of original writing.
- Provision for pupils with reading and writing difficulties is very good.
- Pupils make good progress with the basic skills in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.

#### Commentary

66. In most years, results in National Curriculum assessments at age seven are generally better than average in reading and writing. In 2004, results at the end of Year 2 were below the national average in reading and above the national average in writing. Compared with similar schools, these results were well below average in reading and average in writing. The dip in reading was due to a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in a small cohort and is not indicative of a downward trend. At the end of Year 6, results have usually been above average in English but in 2003 they were average. The school has taken effective steps to address this and the 2004 results were above the national average and average compared with similar schools. The school has successfully maintained the good standards and progress identified in the last inspection report.
67. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average in speaking and listening and above average in reading and writing. Achievement is good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils gain a good grasp of the basic skills in reading and writing and make good headway with their learning. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good because grouping by ability in literacy lessons works well for pupils. Work is well matched to meet the differing needs of average attaining pupils and for those pupils with particular difficulties with their reading and writing. More able pupils benefit from experiencing a wide range of different styles in literature and learning good skills in writing but there is not always enough time in English lessons for them to independently create, read through and improve longer pieces of original work.
68. Pupils are confident and competent speakers who are eager to ask and answer questions. In discussions, pupils talk to adults and to each other in a mature way. Teachers' skilful use of questioning in lessons encourages pupils to discuss their ideas and to put over their own points of view.
69. At all levels of ability, pupils see themselves as good readers and many choose to read in their free time. In Years 1 and 2, reading skills are taught well and pupils recall words by sight and link letters with their sounds to find out unknown words. Few pupils, as yet, use the whole sentence to make good guesses at unknown words. Despite their good progress, pupils capable of reaching the highest levels are not

always given hard enough work because the range and challenge of reading books in Year 2 is not wide enough. As a consequence, these pupils do not always develop the skills needed to attain the higher levels.

70. The school provides good support for pupils who have reading difficulties. This is particularly evident in Years 3 and 4, where teachers accurately assess pupils' individual starting points and plan work specifically to meet their needs. Year 5 and 6 pupils welcome the chance to read quietly on their own in school and have preferred choices of author. By Year 6, more able readers read in an expressive way and with deeper understanding. They *'enjoy going into the library just to browse around'* and can skim and scan for information about topics of study. Average readers read with understanding, but find it hard to use more complex skills.
71. Evidence from past work shows some very good achievement in writing in Years 1 and 2. Younger pupils make convincing attempts at spelling words by themselves: *'the fere good muther gspd'* is a typical example. By Year 2, pupils organise their stories successfully and punctuate and present their work well. Their very good speaking skills benefit the quality of their written work and so sentences are well constructed and vocabulary used precisely.
72. In Years 3 to 6, a developing strength is the range of purposeful writing undertaken in English and in other subjects. Pupils keep the reader in mind as they structure narrative and non-fictional writing. Teachers' effective use of the interactive white board is adding zest to lessons. A poetry lesson in Years 5 and 6 was well enhanced by linking images, texts and sound, which in turn added to the good quality of the pupils' own written work.
73. Teaching and learning are good overall, with very good teaching evident in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have strong subject expertise and manage their lessons well. Pupils' work is marked regularly and clearly shows what needs to be done to improve. Most pupils are challenged effectively by the writing tasks and exercises their teachers give them. Older junior pupils say they would like to work more independently and have more choice about the subjects they are to write about. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and are encouraging to all groups. Learning is relevant but fun and so behaviour, apart from a very small minority of pupils in Years 1 and 2, is good in lessons.
74. Leadership is good and the subject manager has the expertise to move the subject forward. The school successfully uses test results and ongoing monitoring to make sure that pupils are making effective progress. Effective joint planning across the junior year groups allows pupils to move between groups when necessary.

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

75. Standards are good overall. Opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in other subjects are good, such as in art, when Years 5 and 6 pupils explore the narrative story behind famous paintings. Pupils make effective use of texts about life in Victorian days to promote autobiographical writing and poetry in English. There are some good examples of different forms of writing in history. At times, the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not fully stretched by the written work they are set

because they do not have enough opportunities to develop their independent writing at length.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Lessons are well structured and effectively promote pupils' high achievement.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are working well and helping to improve standards.
- The recent focus on mathematics has successfully identified strengths and shortcomings.
- There are some missed chances for pupils to develop their investigative skills independently.

### **Commentary**

76. The 2004 National Curriculum test results for Year 2 pupils were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. These results were disappointing for the school as they are significantly lower than those achieved in earlier years and were below those expected. That said, the ability range in this group of pupils is wide and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs higher than in other years. Given the small number of pupils in the year group, these 2004 results are more of a dip rather than a decline in standards. The 2004 National Curriculum test results for Year 6 were well above the national average and well above the average for pupils in similar schools. This was an improvement on the results achieved in earlier years and the school highlights the positive contribution of the setting arrangements introduced in September 2003.
77. Inspection findings indicate that standards are currently above average in Year 2 and Year 6. The difference between this judgement and the latest test results reflects differences between the abilities of pupils in the different, very small year groups. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and those in Years 3 achieve very well. The school has successfully built on the good foundations reported at the time of the last inspection. The high quality of teaching has been maintained as teachers have adapted well to the introduction of new technologies, including the interactive whiteboards and computer-based support packages, to focus and develop pupils' learning.
78. The recently introduced setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 are working well, enabling pupils of all abilities to achieve very well. Teachers successfully plan work together on similar topics at different levels of challenge. This ensures that the work is at the right level for all pupils, that they keep up with others and that, when advisable, pupils can move from one group to another. Groupings in Years 1 and 2 have successfully addressed the shortcomings in teaching identified in the previous report for the more able in Year 2. Achievement is boosted by the effective contribution of support staff who work very well with pupils, particularly those who

have difficulty with their learning or need extra practice to consolidate their understanding. Boys and girls achieve equally well in mathematics.

79. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and successfully contribute to whole class discussions. Very good provision, often in one-to-one or small group situations, following specific learning programmes, enables pupils to make very good progress. More able pupils benefit from working together and they rise well to challenges in mental mathematics and whole class teaching sessions to think quickly and suggest alternative methods.
80. Lessons are well structured and a good pace maintained throughout. In the Years 1 and 2 class, the pace is sometimes slowed by the need to deal with the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of pupils but sanctions are used effectively and the learning of others is not adversely affected. In the junior classes, pupils are most attentive and keen to learn. They show a high level of application and concentration, particularly when faced with challenging problems such as designing *magic squares*.
81. Teachers use questions well to develop pupils' thinking. Good emphasis on mental calculations at the start of lessons, often involving the successful use of the interactive whiteboard, effectively whets pupils' interest in the subject and positively sharpens their thinking as they explain how they calculated their answers. A strength of learning in one junior lesson was the way in which pupils openly asked questions of each other, such as *'I don't see how you got that answer – can you explain it again?'*. It was clear that this is normal practice and that no-one is afraid of speaking up if they need help or guidance.
82. Teachers effectively make pupils aware of what they will learn and often remind them of this during the course of their lessons. This was particularly important in a lesson where pupils had to sort out relevant facts from problems in order to have enough information to make a solution. There is a good balance of whole class and group teaching and teachers encourage effective use of practical equipment to support pupils' learning. The concluding part of each lesson is generally used well to draw together pupils' learning and check how successfully the learning objectives have been met. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and effectively follow up any shortcomings with pupils. Standards of presentation are good overall but some pupils are more reticent than others at showing their working out. On occasions, there is evidence of additional practice rather than independent investigative work to challenge and extend pupils' thinking and learning.
83. Leadership and management are good. Mathematics was a priority in last year's improvement plan and all staff were fully involved in planning and development. The co-ordinator, headteacher and governors have undertaken regular observations of lessons and information from test results has been used effectively to steer improvements in provision.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

84. Standards are good. Teachers successfully reinforce numeracy skills across the curriculum. There are good links developing with ICT through the use of programs to consolidate learning in lessons and the use of programmable toys to solve problems

with angles and turns. Pupils make effective use of graphs in science and successfully utilise number skills in design and technology, history and geography.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- A strong emphasis on investigative work is enabling pupils to achieve very well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils use resources well for investigative and research work.
- Pupils would like more opportunities to independently extend and pursue their work.

### Commentary

85. Standards in Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve well. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils now in Year 3 indicate that, over time, teaching and learning are good. It was only possible to see part of a lesson in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. In this, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Staff were effectively working with pupils in ability groups recording information about the animals and plants observed in the school grounds. This lesson was effectively planned with good regard for the deployment of other adults, the use of assessment and the provision of resources, including reference books. Most of the time, pupils achieved well but the pace of the lesson slowed when the teacher did not effectively apply the recommended sanctions in a pupil's individual behaviour plan.
86. Scrutiny of Year 2 pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy science and are keen to share and explore ideas. Teachers encourage pupils to be curious, to make suggestions and to think of the best way of testing out their ideas. At the time of the last inspection, more able pupils in Year 2 were not sufficiently challenged by work in science. Inspection evidence indicates that this shortcoming has been satisfactorily addressed and that the needs of pupils of different abilities are more suitably met. However, teacher assessments suggest that there is still scope to improve the investigative and experimental skills of the more able pupils and inspection evidence confirms this, particularly in the way in which pupils record and interpret their findings.
87. Standards in Year 6 are above average. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils' results were well above the national average. They have improved during the past three years and are now well above the average for similar schools. This has restored the school to the position reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good. The strong emphasis on investigative work is successfully interwoven with the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Searching questions challenge and extend pupils' thinking, building most effectively on previous learning and experience. Teachers' explanations are stimulating and very successfully engage and motivate pupils in their introductions and direct teaching and by setting them a challenge to investigate. Pupils respond very well to this style of teaching. They collaborate well with each other in sharing and pursuing ideas and then pose logical and thoughtful questions as they synthesise their ideas and develop their hypotheses.

88. Teachers provide a good range of learning resources and pupils use them well. The provision of a planning proforma ensures that pupils maximise the time they spend on practical work. Special educational needs pupils are very well supported and take a full part in all aspects of the subject. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic about their work and there are no significant differences in the standards they achieve. Pupils successfully use the Internet to research information in science and use ICT effectively to support recording and handling data in charts, tables and graphs. More able pupils are challenged well in lessons in the junior classes and say they welcome recent opportunities to pursue and develop their own ideas and interests. The school is further developing this initiative with plans for more practically based homework.
89. The subject is well led. Resources are well managed, carefully organised and readily accessible. Although science has not recently been a focus in the school improvement plan, test results are regularly analysed and pupils' work and teachers' planning scrutinised.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are confident in their use of a wide range of computer applications.
- Assessment procedures are very good and effectively support pupils' next steps in learning.
- Pupils in the junior classes make good use of websites for research and to support their learning in other subjects.
- Good technical support minimises interruptions to pupils' learning and helps individuals to develop their skills and understanding to the full.

### **Commentary**

90. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. The school has successfully maintained its provision since the last inspection by keeping well abreast of developments and improvements in hardware and software. Although many pupils have the use of computers at home, the school makes good provision to ensure that all pupils have full access to a range of applications. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
91. Teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Support staff have good expertise in this subject and give knowledgeable guidance and help to both individuals and groups of pupils. In the infant class, skills are well taught in small groups. Instructions are clear and learning moves on at a good pace because staff systematically build on prior learning. In one session, Year 1 pupils quickly typed in a short phrase, changed the font and the font size and then saved and printed their work.
92. By Year 6, the use of ICT to support their learning is second nature to pupils. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop and extend pupils' ICT skills. With this, pupils rise well to the challenge presented and tackle their work with confidence. They design multi-media presentations, import files to add pictures to text, word process and use control technology effectively to support work in other

subjects. When researching information, pupils make effective use of search engines to refine and focus their enquiry. Their homework is posted on the school's website together with supporting information and they make good use of this facility. Regular use of programs linked to the school's numeracy scheme helps pupils to successfully develop dexterity in the use of the mouse and keyboard and to follow different types of instructions.

93. The subject is well led. Staff receive good support and training and benefit significantly from the expertise within the school. The ratio of computers to pupils is favourable and the layout of the mini-suites in the infant and junior classrooms makes the best use of the available space. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are simple but very effective and make an important contribution to maintaining and raising standards.

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

94. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good overall. It is satisfactory in the infant class and good in the junior classes. In the infant class, standards are average. Scrutiny of pupils' ICT files show some sound use of suitable programs in art with the effective development of line and colour. In the junior classes, standards are above average, particularly in developing pupils' research skills and using programs to reinforce and extend learning in mathematics. Throughout the school, there is good use of the interactive whiteboard in literacy and numeracy lessons. However, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to use their word-processing skills for independently drafting, editing and shaping longer pieces of writing in English and in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements about provision in history and geography. Pupils' work was sampled in both subjects and two lessons were observed in history. As this is a voluntary aided school, religious education is reported upon separately.

95. In **history**, standards of work seen in Years 3 to 6 are above average and pupils achieve well. In Years 3 and 4, pupils gain good knowledge about the Romans from their visit to a Roman site and by handling primary sources from a local dig. Effective links with work in design and technology enable pupils to draw from their study in history to create replicas of Roman armour. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good sense of specific periods in time and are knowledgeable about Victorian society. Participating in role-play during a visit to Kingston Lacey Hall allows pupils to make meaningful comparisons between the rich and poor of that period. Pupils' writing is of a good standard and reflects focused research and a good depth of knowledge. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of first-hand experiences to enliven lessons. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard to enhance learning, by linking together images and texts about the past. The subject is well led. There is good curriculum coverage in the mixed-age classes.
96. No lessons were observed in geography. Scrutiny of planning shows that the subject is taught specifically and there is sound, planned coverage of the curriculum. Standards of pupils' previous work are average and they achieve satisfactorily. In

Years 1 and 2, pupils make effective comparisons between different places and widen their geographical study through the travels of Polly Parrot. They draw from their own holiday visits and begin to locate places on large-scale maps. Successful links with schools in Italy, Sweden and Ireland provide pupils with knowledge about the wider world. The subject is managed soundly.

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

### **Art and design, design and technology and music**

There was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision in art and design, design and technology and music. Inspectors sampled work and planning and held discussions with pupils. No lessons were observed in art and design or music and one lesson was seen in design and technology.

97. In **art and design**, the quality of work found on display and in pupils' sketchbooks is average by the end of Year 2. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Some good examples of imaginative work enable pupils to recreate the story behind famous Victorian paintings and to experiment with different painting styles and techniques. Visiting artists enhance provision in three-dimensional work in school: sculptures of wild boar made by Year 6 pupils are of particularly good quality. The subject is well led and resources are satisfactory.
98. In **design and technology**, standards are above average. Overall, achievement is good. In both the infant and junior classes, there is effective coverage of the curriculum, including food technology, which often focuses on recipes from countries represented by Comenius partner schools. Pupils' design and evaluation skills are stronger than their making skills. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have successfully designed and made body armour, using card, as part of their studies of the Romans. Through teachers' careful preparation and planning, pupils have a clear understanding of each project's purpose. Pupils' sketches are purposeful and they evaluate their finished product honestly. In Years 5 and 6, pupils design and make Victorian wall hangings and samplers. Pupils are keen and focused and they respond well to the good quality support and guidance they receive. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection but, with good leadership, the school has successfully improved the range of resources available.
99. In **music**, pupils achieve well and standards are above average. The subject leader has responded well to the minor shortcomings identified in the previous report and standards have risen. The school's new curriculum plans are well resourced and provide a good level of skill development as pupils move through the school. Pupils regularly compose and perform using a good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The school has a good repertoire of recorded music representing a wide range of different periods and styles. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show a good recognition and recall of familiar pieces. Singing is good. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and demonstrations and learn new songs quickly. They maintain a good rhythm and, when singing rounds, preserve pitch and melody with a good degree of accuracy.

100. The school provides well for pupils to learn the recorder, woodwind and stringed instruments. These lessons are well supported by boys and girls alike and pupils particularly appreciate the opportunity to have a series of taster lessons before committing themselves to a particular instrument. Visiting teachers demonstrate a high level of expertise and enthusiasm that successfully spurs pupils on to achieve well. An annual concert provides good opportunities for pupils to perform to a wider audience of parents and members of the community.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are enthusiastic and work well together in team games.
- The expertise of visiting teachers and coaches helps pupils achieve well.
- The school's broad curriculum is well complemented by extra-curricular activities.

### **Commentary**

101. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Most pupils successfully swim 25 metres unaided by the end of Year 6. The school has successfully improved its provision since the time of the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school have good access to games, gymnastics, dance and athletics. Pupils in the junior classes swim at a nearby pool. The provision is well complemented by a good range of sporting activities, which are open to all pupils. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in lessons and, in the junior classes, make very good progress in the development of skills due to well-focused teaching, encouragement and support.

102. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. The skills of experts from outside school enhance learning. In a very good lesson in Years 5 and 6, the high expectations and expertise of a visiting cricket coach most successfully developed the pupils' confidence and skills with throwing and catching. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and effectively develop their individual techniques within the context of different team games and activities. In Years 1 and 2, gymnastic skills are systematically developed and teachers pay good regard to helping pupils become aware of their own space and that of others. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to reflect upon, and improve, their sequences and performances.

103. The subject is well managed. Staff have successfully addressed the shortcomings in resources identified in the previous inspection report. Learning resources are of good quality, well maintained and readily available. Staff make very good use of the school's indoor and outdoor facilities.

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

Inspectors sampled the school's provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship through attending assemblies and discussions with pupils and staff.

104. The school's programme for personal, social and health education is good. In the reception class children settle in happily and learn to work and play together. Provision in *circle time*<sup>9</sup> is good. It is carefully planned and staff successfully enable pupils to discuss and reflect on important issues maturely, both at a personal and wider level. This was evident in a Years 3 and 4 lesson when pupils identified what made them feel happy and suggested ways of improving their classroom environment.
105. Good links with the local community and with schools in Northern Ireland, Italy and Sweden help foster a sense of citizenship and effectively support social and cultural development. The school organises a number of talks and visitors, which enhance work in citizenship. A talk in assembly by a member of the county branch of the British Legion about the annual Poppy Appeal successfully contributed to pupils' deeper insights into the contribution of past and present generations to present day life
106. Pupils learn about democracy and have a say in what happens in school through the School Council. They have enjoyed planning the school garden. They also meet with governors to discuss plans for future developments.

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<sup>9</sup> During *circle time* pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from others.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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