

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PAULERSPURY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Paulerspury, Towcester

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121986

Headteacher: Mrs G. Tween

Lead inspector: Mrs V.Davies

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 267484

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 controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 116

School address: High Street  
Paulerspury  
Towcester  
Northamptonshire

Postcode: NN12 7NA

Telephone number: 01327 811674  
Fax number: 01327811674

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr. A. Wood

Date of previous inspection: 12 July 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small Church of England voluntary controlled primary school for 116 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 11 situated in the village of Paulerspury. The school was founded on this site in 1819. There are five classes in the school taught by six teachers, including the headteacher. The pupils travel to the school from a wide area surrounding the village and are almost all are of white British heritage. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds and free school meals eligibility is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the reception class varies from year to year but is broadly average. There has been extensive building work since the last inspection including a community facility, small group room, new offices, reception, staffroom, library and ICT suite. Classrooms, including the reception class, have been remodelled and made larger.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20350	Vivien Davies	Lead inspector	English; Information and communication technology; Art and design; Design and technology; religious education; Personal, social health education and citizenship; Foundation Stage
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics; Science; Music; Physical education; Special educational needs; History; Geography

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a very good school with a very good ethos. Pupils are happy and develop confidence, maturity and independence. Standards are above or well above average in almost all areas of the curriculum. The school is very well led by the headteacher who is given very good support by the governing body and parents. Teaching and learning are very good. The school offers very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils of varying abilities in mixed age classes achieve very well because teachers plan very thoughtfully, make very good use of assessments to set targets and work very effectively with very good teaching assistants
- The headteacher is very clear sighted and communicates well. She is very well supported by a very effective governing body and very hardworking co-ordinators
- The curriculum is very rich so that basic skills are used purposefully in well taught, imaginative lessons often rooted in first hand experience
- Attitudes are very good and behaviour is excellent. Relationships are very good; pupils' views are valued and there is a clear and effective focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents support their children very well. They enjoy excellent relationships with the school and the teaching staff. Partnerships with other schools are very good
- In the Foundation Stage the two practitioners have an excellent understanding of the best way to motivate children and present the curriculum so children make a very good start

The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection. In Year 6 the high standards achieved in English are maintained. In mathematics and science results are higher than previously. Most of the weaknesses identified in the last report - the monitoring of the curriculum, special educational needs and staffing in the Foundation Stage - are now strengths.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, **achievement is very good** throughout the school. Pupils reach well above average standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science because of good teaching and a very rich curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. In the reception class children are on track to reach the goals set in national guidance and many will exceed them.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	B	A	A
mathematics	A	C	A	A*
science	A*	A	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.

In the number reaching expected and higher levels, pupils in Year 6 achieved at least as well in this year's national tests as they did in 2003. In 2003, the last year for which national

comparisons are available, pupils attained very well in English and exceptionally well in mathematics and science. The asterisks in the table above indicate a performance in the top five per cent of similar schools. Inspection evidence suggests that standards in the present Year 6 are at least as high as in 2003. In English all pupils are expected to reach the expected national standard and an increased number of pupils are set to achieve the higher levels. The picture is similar in mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6 pupils are also doing well and reaching above average standards in history, geography, religious education and art and design.

More pupils attained expected and higher levels in the 2004 tests for Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics than they did in 2003. Test results in 2003 in writing were well below average and caused concern, but this year's raw scores show a dramatic improvement in writing and an improvement in reading and mathematics. The present Year 2 are attaining well above average standards in reading. In mathematics, writing and science they are reaching above average standards.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils really enjoy school and there are very good levels of attendance and punctuality. They develop very mature attitudes by the time they leave. They think about important issues and care about other people. Pupils are willing to take responsibility and contribute to the school's development through the school's council and regular circle time in their classrooms. Overall, **pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.**

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Overall, **the quality of education provided by the school is very good** and its care for pupils and work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very good. **Teaching and learning are very good.** Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects taught. They present lessons in a very interesting way and make the most of opportunities to apply learning in different contexts. In the mixed Year 2 and 3 class teaching is sometimes excellent, so pupils are exceptionally enthusiastic learners. Assessment is very thorough and well evaluated. It is used well to set targets for groups and individuals. Reception pupils are consistently very well taught. Classroom assistants offer very good support in all classes

The school offers its pupils a very rich and interesting curriculum. Lessons are enriched by an exceptional programme of residential visits, local visits and visiting speakers. Pupils with special educational needs are offered very good provision. Partnerships with parents are excellent. They are kept very well informed and make very good use of the exceptional number of opportunities to talk to teachers informally and during parents' evenings. Links with the community, including the church, are very strong.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and promotes a very good ethos. She and the teaching team work very hard to improve and enrich the curriculum so pupils enjoy their learning and develop well as people. The governors give the school very good support. The school has established a clear set of priorities and manages the monitoring and evaluation of its work very well with very full support from the governing body. However, in one important respect, governors do not fulfil statutory requirements.

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

The parents think highly of the school and recognise the very good quality of the opportunities it offers. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and value their friendships. They like their teachers very much and feel very well cared for. Communication is very good.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no major issues for the school to address. However the school needs to maintain its focus on improving pupils' writing.

In addition, the governors should ensure that all statutory requirements are met.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils' achievement is very good throughout the school. Standards are at least above average in English, mathematics, science, the humanities and art. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science continue to be well above average in Year 6
- All pupils, including the able and those with special educational needs, achieve very well
- The decline in standards in writing in Year 2 has been halted and, in particular, more able pupils are achieving high standards similar to those reached in mathematics
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and most will achieve or exceed the early learning goals before starting Year 1

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Foundation Stage are comfortably achieving nationally agreed targets. They are acquiring a very good range of basic reading and writing skills, and make very confident and appropriate contributions to class discussions. In mathematics they are making very good progress. These children like school very much and have settled very well into the school routine. They concentrate very well and are very well behaved.
2. This year, standards in Year 2 are above average. The well below average 2003 test results in Year 2 in writing were partly due to a weak year group which is now being given extra support as it moves through the school, and partly due to a lack of appropriately focussed teaching. These results caused concern, and the school has worked hard to improve the situation by focussing very strongly on the teaching of writing. In 2004 all pupils reached the nationally expected level in writing and about a fifth of pupils achieved the higher levels, so the school's results have significantly improved. Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, above average standards are now being reached and that pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with special needs, are doing very well. This year, in writing and mathematics, attainment is above national expectations and pupils of all abilities are achieving well. Pupils are attaining well above average standards in reading and the whole year group is expected to reach national expectations and about half to reach the higher levels in this subject. Standards in science are similar.

(The following table gives the most recently available nationally published information, i.e. for 2003, which clearly cannot reflect the improvement noted above.)

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
reading	16.1 ( 17.9 )	15.7 ( 15.8 )
writing	13.2 ( 17.1 )	14.6 ( 14.4 )
mathematics	16.2 ( 16.5 )	16.3 ( 16.5 )

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*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In Year 6 pupils achieve exceptionally well compared to their prior attainment in Year 2 in mathematics and science. In English compared to their Year 2 figures their results are very good. They reach well above average levels in English and mathematics and very high results in science. The more able pupils do very well, particularly in English. Pupils with special needs make very good progress because they have very clear targets and are given very good support by their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils achieve above average standards in history, geography and religious education and art and design. The curriculum is rich and the pupils' well developed skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology are applied purposefully.

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
English	29.0 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.6 (27.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.4 (30.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Standards of attainment have been broadly maintained in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. In Year 6 these standards are well established but in Year 2 the improvement in writing is recent. Across the school average standards are maintained in information and communication technology. The school is poised to improve standards in this subject as the impact of significant improvements in resources takes its effect. Pupils are achieving well as they exploit the capability of their new resources and benefit from more confident teaching. Standards are now above average in physical education, history, geography, religious education and art and design. The school is meeting its targets.

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

Attitudes are very good and behaviour is excellent. Personal development is excellent due to the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Standards have been maintained or improved well since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' confidence, maturity and awareness of citizenship is excellent
- Behaviour is excellent and pupils are very well mannered
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and other activities very much
- Attendance levels are well above average

### **Commentary**

5. The school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes strongly to pupils' confidence, self esteem and maturity. They are becoming good citizens as a result. The School Council and supporting class councils make an excellent contribution to this process. Older pupil-elected members go on a full day training course, write their own manifestoes and arrange meetings. Typical pupils' comments are;

“I was interested in being on the school council because I want to help my class get their views heard” and; “I want to make decisions to help our school.”

6. Pupils are given very good opportunities to reflect on issues and express their opinions. For example, in a Year 2/3 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson every pupil reflected sensibly on “my special possession” and had the confidence to describe it to the class. Pupils’ confidence and maturity are evident in their relations with visitors, and their enthusiasm for being given a wide range of responsibilities, such as “office duties” at break time and “special person” for the day. These duties are undertaken with great pride and responsibility. Achievement, success and effort are celebrated through rewards, displays and assemblies.
7. Understanding of a diverse range of cultures is promoted very well, with pupils receiving a wide variety of experiences, ranging from African drummers to a visit to the factory of a Formula 1 motor racing manufacturer. An appreciation of art, music and dance is strongly encouraged. The unusually full provision of a residential visit each year from Years 2 to 6 further enhances pupils’ maturity and independence.
8. Behaviour at playtimes, especially at lunchtime, is excellent. Here pupils from Years 5 and 6 supervise younger ones on their table, resulting in an excellent social occasion. Pupils and parents say there is no serious bullying, racist or sexist behaviour. This is confirmed by the absence of temporary and permanent exclusions over the last two years. Pupils know right from wrong and what to do if minor squabbles or accidents happen. The pupils and their parents say how much they like school and pupils appear very happy. They are very keen to participate in the wide range of extra- curricular activities, such as rugby, netball and computer club. In lessons throughout the school they show a very good interest in their work. This was evident in the consistently very good attitudes displayed by the youngest pupils in the reception class. For example, they respond very enthusiastically to their teacher’s instructions when improving their physical development by running, stretching and jumping very skilfully. Throughout the school response in lessons, and especially to questions and discussion, is very good.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Attendance levels have been well above average and levels of unauthorised absences low for the last four years. Very good procedures are in place to monitor and promote attendance to which parents respond very well. Punctuality is very good enabling lessons to start promptly.

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

Overall, the quality of education provided is very good with some exceptional features.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is very good overall. Pupils enjoy their learning and work very hard and concentrate very well. Assessment is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects taught and place a very good emphasis on the development of thinking skills
- In the Foundation Stage the two practitioners have an excellent understanding of the best way to motivate children and present the curriculum
- Adults provide excellent role models, so behaviour is exceptionally good
- Teachers use a very rich collection of resources, including visits, to present lessons in an imaginative way and make the most of opportunities to apply learning in different contexts across the curriculum
- Assessment is thorough and well evaluated. It is used well to track progress and to set targets for groups and individuals

### Commentary

10. Teaching is a strong feature of this school. Subject knowledge is strong because teachers prepare very well, work co-operatively and make very good use of training opportunities particularly related to the development of thinking skills. Teachers prepare their lessons thoughtfully and use a rich range of resources and techniques to make lessons interesting and understandable. Expert visitors also make a strong contribution, particularly in a history lesson when a local resident answered pupils' prepared questions about the war. Another visitor, a practising Sikh, shared insights into her religion. In a Year 6 English lesson, complicated information about the Second World War was made manageable because the teacher used role play to drive the point home. In an excellent mathematics lesson in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class data handling was grounded in a real context as pupils sampled Greek food as part of their history project and recorded preferences. Teachers understand the importance of thorough teaching of the basic skills and this begins with the imaginative teaching, often linked to story and rhyme, in the reception class. However younger pupils' writing skills, though very much improved, are not developed as fast as they could be because pupils are not given regular opportunities for independent practice.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	16	9	3	0	0	0

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

11. Teachers work hard to make sure that pupils of all abilities enjoy lessons and are enabled to make progress. This is particularly important because all classes except the reception class contain pupils from two year groups. Very good classroom assistants work closely with teachers so all pupils receive a very good level of attention and achieve very well. Those pupils who find learning difficult benefit very much from their support and develop very good attitudes to learning. Work for more able pupils is well planned; teachers direct their questions well so that pupils are appropriately challenged. The high quality, investigative teaching approaches suits the needs of this group of pupils particularly well. Work in subjects is often very well linked so pupils are expected to apply their skills,

particularly those learnt in English, mathematics and ICT, in other subjects. Homework is set for all pupils and is well linked to class work. Parents are encouraged to comment in pupils' homework books. Teachers react very quickly to these comments if there is a problem.

12. Teachers manage their classes very well so behaviour is excellent. In the Foundation Stage routines are established so that children learn to behave appropriately, to manage resources and equipment and to work productively with others. These learning skills are consistently reinforced and built upon as pupils move through the school. Discussion and public performance are an integral part of many lessons and teachers support and advise pupils so they do it well
13. Accurate assessment and tracking systems are well established in the school in most subjects. Teachers make particular use of the information provided to set targets so that pupils know what they need to learn. Teachers often make good reference to these targets in lessons. Marking is carried out regularly. Teachers often write encouraging remarks. However, when marking writing for the Year 2 pupils, they do not sufficiently focus on the small adjustments that pupils can make to improve future work and thus take a step nearer achieving their target.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very rich and provides all pupils with very appropriate and enjoyable opportunities to extend their learning and develop their independence. Resources and accommodation are good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are excellent opportunities for enrichment
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The breadth of opportunities for pupils in Year 6 is very good.
- The accommodation has recently been very much improved and, apart from limited outside access for the reception class, is very good

### **Commentary**

14. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are covered effectively and the curriculum is very well balanced, broad and relevant. The national strategies for the Foundation Stage, literacy and numeracy are very well established. The minor points identified in the previous report have been fully addressed and the curriculum is considerably improved since the last inspection. The school has improved the level of resources available for information and communication technology (ICT). There is a computer suite with laptops and additional machines in classrooms. There is now a good match of staff to the needs of the curriculum, including the Foundation Stage. Two year rolling plans address the challenge of mixed year classes.
15. The curriculum is well planned and enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects. An investigative approach to teaching and learning provides a high level of interest and challenge. The curriculum is relevant and there is an emphasis on connecting knowledge and understanding across learning areas, for example, between history and English and mathematics and science. ICT features prominently in aspects of mathematics and the

humanities. Provision for personal, health and social education is very good. Pupils are aware of the need for a healthy life style and encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Policies for sex and drugs education are linked well to other subjects. Very positive approaches to citizenship are encouraged and include very effective school and class councils.

16. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. Clubs, for example rugby and French, are well attended and enable pupils to extend learning in a less formal environment. Players from Milton Keynes and Northampton provide expert coaching. Educational visits, including an exceptional residential programme, extend learning outside the classroom very well. Visits from local residents support learning well for example in history and religious education.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and this is a strength of the school. The school ensures every pupil receives curriculum entitlement and adapts planning to meet the specific requirements set out in individual education plans. Excellent partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants ensure there is consistency and continuity in provision. The very good support offered to pupils in their learning gives every pupil equal access and opportunity to participate in all activities. Very able pupils are also well supported.
18. The accommodation has been significantly improved since the last inspection. The school now has a library, community room, ICT suite and various offices. A safe play area is now available for children in the reception class. Most classrooms have been re-furnished and made bigger, so pupils to have more space in which to develop their learning.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is excellent. Standards have improved on those described in the previous inspection report.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are valued and their involvement in school life is excellent
- Very strong emphasis is placed on the personal needs of each pupil
- Very good induction arrangements ensure reception children are happy and secure
- Support and advice available for pupils is very good

### **Commentary**

19. Pupils feel that all members of staff value their views and this gives them confidence to discuss issues and raise questions. This works outstandingly well through the School Council where pupils have had an important say in improving playground facilities and the provision of drinking water. The excellent relationships between lunchtime staff, classroom assistants and pupils, including the use of first names, make a key contribution to pupils saying they all feel very confident about talking to someone if they have any worries. All adults present know the children very well, enabling them to provide a very high level of care that is appreciated by both the pupils and their parents. The needs of the children are put first, for example, in the provision of drinking water and fruit. The premises, including

the toilet areas, are attractive and welcoming. The sensitive and very thorough approach to child protection procedures and awareness, good first aid procedures and supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes, enable pupils to feel safe and work in confidence. Very good care is taken to ensure all children are collected by a responsible adult at the end of the school day. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well with very effective input from outside agencies.

20. Very good induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure the youngest pupils quickly settle into the reception class and make very good progress in their personal development. This is supported very well as pupils move through the school. Academic support and advice for pupils is good. This is especially evident in the arrangements made to give support to pupils as they move to the next stage of education in the local secondary schools. Pupils in Year 6 are confident about their move later in the year and value the support given.

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

The school has an excellent partnership with parents; this has a very positive impact on pupils' achievements. Links with the local community and local schools are very good. The quality of the partnership has improved since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents provide excellent support and are given high support by the school
- The school provides excellent information to parents
- The local community is used very well to support pupils' learning

### **Commentary**

21. The school provides every opportunity to encourage parents to be part of their children's learning. Parents of children in the reception class receive an excellent welcome and information to help their children learn. This is built upon throughout the school, for example in the very many opportunities to come into school to view work. Initiatives such as "Keeping up with children" courses help parents understand, for example, how mathematics is taught. Annual reports give excellent, helpful and evaluative information on progress and achievements and positive and constructive targets. These further help parents to understand how they can assist in their children's learning. Parents value the quality of individual information given in consultation sessions with class teachers.
22. Regular newsletters give excellent information about school life; in particular letters give very good detail on the curriculum to be covered each term. The school is open to parents; teachers are available at the start and end of the day. Issues are dealt with promptly and parents are highly satisfied with the response. The school makes very good use of questionnaires and input from its parent governors to ascertain views on issues and to find out about parents' own concerns. Parents also provide excellent support through 'Friends of the School'. Fundraising has been exceptional and crucial to providing support for extensions to the buildings. A wide range of social events further enhances the "family feel" of the school. Many parents respond to encouragement from the school and volunteer to help in school, in areas such as reading and with art work. Parents ensure their children attend regularly, promptly and wanting to learn.
23. The school makes very good use of the local community. The village is used for a variety of local studies and local visitors help in school. The link with the local church and village is a particularly strong and effective feature. The partnership with the local schools, especially the local secondary schools, ensures pupils are very well prepared for and confident about their

move to the next stage of their education. Participation with two local clusters of schools contributes very well to the breadth of pupils' experiences, especially in sport and music, and to innovation in the curriculum.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school's leadership, management and governance are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher places a very strong emphasis on pupils' personal development; she communicates very well and has established a very good strategic plan for the school
- The governing body knows the school very well and offers very effective support
- The co-ordinators audit their subjects very well and establish appropriate priorities for development.
- The management of the Foundation Stage is very good
- The governing body does not fully meets its statutory requirements

### **Commentary**

24. The headteacher has a very clear vision of what constitutes an excellent school and what that involves in teaching, learning and ethos. She has worked effectively with the school's partners and seized opportunities to obtain the necessary funding and training to support the vision of a creative, thinking, caring school. However, she has a very full teaching commitment and this has an effect on the time she has available to monitor and improve areas of performance including the further development of writing skills which is a school priority. The school has an exceptionally strong shared ethos based on Christianity, and the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values are embedded in its approach to teaching and the curriculum. Standards of achievement are closely monitored and any underachievement is dealt with by rapid intervention and support. The low writing scores in year 2 in 2003, for example, triggered extra training and a high level of support for the year group as it moves through the school.
25. The team of teachers, who are all subject leaders, work closely together to develop a very strong, lively curriculum. This includes exceptional opportunities for residential visits for all but the very youngest pupils. There are very good links with the school development plan and performance management. Very good use is made of training opportunities to increase teachers' subject expertise and to extend their teaching strategies to help pupils think effectively and creatively. Subject monitoring is very well done and carried out jointly with a governor. The subject co-ordinators and partner governors make good use of sampling pupils' work, analysing assessment information and visiting classrooms to improve standards in their subjects. The subject reports prepared for the governing body are thoughtful and helpful, and provide a very good picture of the present status of the subject. Special educational needs provision is very well managed.
26. The governors ensure the school meets all requirements well, except in one aspect of its work. They are very efficiently organized and very productive. They have several committees. They are very involved in monitoring the school's results and comparing the school's performance with national results. The governing body is very involved in the work of the school. Governors are hard-working and give the school very practical support. Governors spearheaded the drive to obtain funding for the new building work which has



transformed the school's accommodation. The school community is very close and governors make a very strong contribution to the very good relationships between all of its members.

27. Prudent financial planning and secure management and monitoring of budgets help the school to meet its targets for development and educational priorities. Decisions on spending and allocation of resources are made with a very good appreciation for the principles of best value. The substantial balance contains building funds. The actual balance is about £15,000. The administrative staff provides very good support particularly in view of the headteacher's considerable teaching commitment.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	525,037
Total expenditure	465,163
Expenditure per pupil	2,594

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	55,000
Balance carried forward to the next	59,870

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

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

28. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and has improved since the last inspection and is now of consistently very good quality. Children enter the reception class as part time pupils at the beginning of the autumn term; after a month they attend full time. Their attainment is broadly average on entry. Many children attend a variety of local pre-school facilities before starting school and spend time in the reception class during the summer term. The children enjoy a very rich curriculum with very good opportunities for language development. By the time they enter Year 1, the children's attainment is at least in line with the expected goals in all areas of learning. Although children do not have free access to the outside area, they do spend a good amount of time outdoors with supervision using good equipment and achieve expected physical standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
29. Teaching is always very good so children learn very well. The two practitioners have an excellent understanding of the best way to motivate children and also to teach the curriculum. The teaching is thorough and very well structured questions extend the more able children and enable the less able, including those children with special educational needs, to achieve very well. Children achieve very well because their individual needs are carefully assessed and progress monitored. Staff have worked hard to create a vibrant working environment within the recently extended accommodation. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children are happy. There is an excellent focus on making learning a joy. Parents are very supportive and some help regularly in the classroom. The setting is very well led by an experienced and enthusiastic practitioner. Planning is very thorough for children of all abilities.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well; they enjoy learning because of very good teaching that focuses constantly on personal development and helps them to achieve the expected goals by the time they reach Year 1.
- Adults and older children provide very good role models, and partnership with parents is very strong, which contributes to children's high levels of confidence.
- Children's behaviour is excellent

#### **Commentary**

30. Children are very confident and willing to try all the activities on offer. They concentrate very well so work long enough on activities to make progress. They are kind and very caring towards each other. Boys and girls from a variety of backgrounds play well together. Teaching is very good. There is very clear focus on personal development. Exciting activities, including the use of a class parachute, help children to appreciate the benefit of co-operation. Teachers help children to behave, and deal kindly but firmly with any small incidents including disputes. Children are taught to take turns and share. Good manners

are encouraged. In their setting they co-operate well and follow simple class rules for example independently putting on an apron prior to playing in the water tray or returning a story book after reading it. Children are able to change for physical education and teachers help them to acquire tidy habits.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good, so children are very keen to acquire early reading and writing skills
- The curriculum is rich and exciting so children achieve very well, enjoy their work and want to talk about it
- Story telling, made up songs and poems, provides a rich contribution both to the development of the children's imagination and the development of vocabulary and sentence structure

### **Commentary**

31. Children are in line to achieve the expected levels before they join Year 1. A good proportion will do better. Children are very well taught and there is a very good emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills during all activities. There is very good emphasis on helping children to speak clearly and confidently and listen carefully. Regular fun filled sessions are devoted to saying and listening to letter sounds and rhymes. Children are encouraged to learn correct letter formation using their name as a starting point. Observant teachers help children to improve their skills so that awkward pencil holding does not become a habit. Story telling is a very important part and much relished part of the routine and children enjoy looking at books independently. Some are starting to read and are given appropriate support. Parents support their children at home well.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are encouraged to use mathematical language correctly whenever the opportunity arises, so their thinking in the subject is well developed
- Teaching of basic numeracy skills is very thorough and practically based, so children grasp counting and ordering in a meaningful context

### **Commentary**

32. Children enjoy mathematics and are achieving very well. Children are in line to achieve the expected goals before they join Year 1 and many of the group will do better. Teaching is very good because it is purposeful, interesting and meets the needs of children of different ability and maturity levels. Teachers use interesting approaches, including puppets like Harry the Hedgehog, to make a counting sequence fun. Children are very eager to learn and are confident with the counting sequence to twenty. Teachers make very good use of counting rhymes to help children remember the numbers. They make use of mathematics

to score games. Throughout the day, children have opportunities to apply mathematics. Mrs Shape, a delightful pop up puppet, introduces a shape session in which children could identify a range of solid shapes and talk about their characteristics. Afterwards some children worked with a parent to make a shape necklace, some with the teacher to make shape pictures and later some children made their own shape necklace.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Topical events and the local environment are used very well to extend children's knowledge and interest
- Very enthusiastic, imaginative teaching fosters children's curiosity and so they achieve very well

### **Commentary**

33. Many children join the school with a good knowledge and understanding of the world and some have had a range of experiences outside their home. In the reception class learning is clearly focussed on deepening the children's understanding of the way things move and grow, the properties of materials and the children's place in both the physical environment and in their family and communities. Through role-play, the children understand aspects of adult life, commerce and the home. Children care for plants and animals. There is very good awareness of the season. They have a small garden where they grow vegetables to eat in the summer and were planting bulbs ready for the spring. They could talk about their tasks as they carefully placed bulbs in the earth. Most children have a secure understanding that things happened before they were born and can describe events in the past. They make very good use of village walks and are delighted when older residents visit their classroom to work with them. In lessons children explore the properties of different materials; they observe, for example the bonding patterns in the school brickwork, and apply the technique to their own wall building. They enjoyed blowing bubbles through different shaped blowers and made careful observations of the outcomes. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed well. Children are acquiring good mouse control and understand how to perform a range of tasks. There are opportunities to cook.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children enjoy good opportunities to play outside, though there is no free access from the classroom
- Very skilled teaching helps children to develop the skill of using tools safely and independently
- The teachers make very good use of the hall to provide appropriate physical education lessons so that the children learn new skills and make progress

## Commentary

34. Teaching and learning are very good, children achieve very well and most will achieve the early learning goals before they enter school. There are supervised opportunities to use the outside space for a variety of imaginative activities, including very good access to wheeled vehicles. Children do not have free access to the outside because of accommodation design. In a very good lesson in the hall children showed a good awareness of space as they moved around the hall. They worked very well as a team as they manipulated a large parachute. They followed instructions carefully as they took part in some complicated inflation exercises which ended with the exciting climax of the children disappearing from view. The staff make very good links between physical development and the children's health and well being. There is much attention given to healthy eating. The wide range of practical opportunities including cutting sticking, using malleable materials and play with large apparatus stimulate the children and enable them to make very good progress in improving their manipulative skills, coordination and balance. The children are taught to use instruments and proper tools safely and properly. In turn these skills contribute much to the children's success in early writing and creative work.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given very good opportunities for role play in the imaginative and well prepared play area
- Teaching is very good and the very well planned activities are exciting, fun and often well linked to a story or topic
- Children are confident performers

## Commentary

35. Children concentrate very well and make very good use of the art and craft opportunities available when they use a range of carefully chosen materials. These activities form an exciting part of the day and are well linked to stories and other topics. Paints are available and children have rich choices. Art and science activities are imaginatively linked so children extend their work on bubbles to picture making. Many children make use of role-play areas either co-operatively or alone. The Pumpkin Soup story made much more sense to the children when they were dressed in character running away with a wheelbarrow bearing a pumpkin. Teachers make very good use of drama including the use of puppets to bring stories and rhymes alive. There is a good range of musical instruments available in the classroom and children enjoy the many opportunities they have to sing.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above national expectations in Year 6 and pupils achieve very well
- Teaching really motivates pupils, so they develop a love of language and of books
- Language skills are very purposefully used across a wide range of subjects and to support pupil's personal development
- Reading is improving in Year 2 because of very good support
- Younger pupils' writing skills, though very much improved, are not developed as fast as they could be because pupils are not given enough regular opportunities for independent practice

#### **Commentary**

36. Standards in Year 2 are now above average overall. Results in 2003 showed pupils achieving average standards in reading but their writing results were well below the expected levels. Compared to similar schools, the results were below or well below expected levels. This year's results, the unconfirmed 2004 figures, show that in reading results were maintained with increased numbers of able pupils reaching higher levels. Writing results have improved dramatically with nearly all pupils, including the more able, achieving favourable results. The 2005 projections suggest a marked improvement in reading with all pupils reaching the nationally expected level and about half achieving the higher level. In writing, most pupils are expected to achieve national expectations, but there is some way to go before they match their high achievements in reading. Inspection evidence confirms this picture. Year 2 pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils achieve very well because they are very well supported.
37. Standards in Year 6 are consistently well above national expectations. They compare very well with previous performance and also with similar schools. Pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged and do well. Written work is neat and often mature in style. When writing an account of the Blitz a pupil showed real empathy and tried very hard to select words purposefully: 'The wireless in its little cabinet crackled with a faint voice weeping out of the mesh'. Pupils are very good, thoughtful readers and show very good understanding of text. They enjoy reading from a wide range of materials including carefully chosen class texts. These texts, which at present include 'I am David' and 'Carrie's War', provide a vivid background to their work in history.
38. Throughout the school speaking and listening skills are very well developed. In many classes teachers made good use of role-play and similar dramatic techniques to advance understanding. In Year 6 pupils acted as shop keepers, queuing customers and spivs in a shop during the Second World War. They were able to use their ration books and choose from the weekly selection of the time. Their teacher directed operations purposefully. She asked who got up before seven this morning. A few puzzled children raised their hands and were placed at the front of the queue! Further questioning as the scene progressed

addressed the morality of the black market as well as the feelings of frustration as disappointed shoppers saw the food run out. In all classes, including reception, pupils are encouraged to acquire confidence and good public speaking techniques. There are class and school councils and pupils are taught to discuss issues appropriately.

39. Teaching is very good overall and is particularly knowledgeable in the upper three classes. In particular these teachers work hard to make their teaching purposeful and links across the curriculum provide a vivid background for writing assignments. The basic skills of reading are very well taught, so younger pupils, including slower readers, have very good phonic skills and make very good use of context to help them when they are stuck. Teachers give pupil's very good support so they develop a rich vocabulary and learning about the technical aspects of writing. However, there are not enough regular opportunities for independent writing for younger pupils, so spelling and secure sentence structures are not practised often enough and do not develop in line with pupils' reading capabilities. Handwriting and presentation are given very good attention throughout the school and pupils take a pride in their work. Teaching assistants offer very good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs. They are involved in the planning and have very good questioning skills. High levels of adult support make a very strong contribution to the development of pupils' high quality vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support and are often able to achieve national expectations.
40. Assessment is thorough and is well used to set targets and to track pupils. In most classes teachers' comments encourage pupils to focus on what they need to do to produce a better piece of written work next time. The amount of recorded work in English books in the younger classes, particularly independent pieces of writing, is less than usually seen, so there is no record to use for diagnosis of persistent errors.
41. The subject is very well managed and resourced. The co-ordinator with the literacy governor monitors the subject very well. Subject data is well analysed and action taken if performance does not match expectations. Since the last inspection high standards have been maintained in year 6 and in reading in year 2 but dropped in 2003 in writing. Recent evidence shows writing standards are climbing again.

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

42. The application of English across the curriculum is a very strong feature. The oldest pupils, in particular, use English very purposefully to record their thinking. In many subjects, including science and the humanities, the quality of pupils' written work is very good and it is independently produced. Presentation and handwriting are very good because of consistent expectations. Pupils make very good use of reading and particularly of research skills to support their learning. The teachers pay good attention to teaching correct terminology and provide good opportunities for pupils to use it.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6

- Teaching is excellent in the mixed Year 2 and Year 3 class.
- Pupils achieve very well
- Subject leadership is very good

## Commentary

43. Pupils transfer from the Foundation Stage with the expected knowledge and understanding of number work and make very good progress across mixed age classes that span the infants and the juniors. By Year 6 almost all pupils achieve expected levels for the age group and the target for pupils achieving the higher levels is forty per cent. Good quality systems monitor pupils' progress and work is planned to precisely meet the needs of individual pupils. The high standards apparent at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
44. The curriculum is well balanced and shows that there is good coverage across all aspects of mathematics. Emphasis is placed on an investigative approach to learning and the application of skills. Pupils are encouraged to use mathematical language in context and this is an important tool for pupils to identify strategies in problem solving. Pupils are confident and use information technology to support learning. They help their teachers to set up the interactive whiteboard and clearly enjoy, and benefit from, the very effective use of new technology.
45. The school has thorough assessment information. Teachers use the information well and take action to address individual needs and weaknesses. The progress made by pupils on the school's special education needs register is a strength. Individual education plans for mathematics support pupils' learning. The SEN coordinator and her staff of teaching assistants are highly skilled and work hard to identify barriers to learning. The SEN team has very good relationships with specialist outside agencies and calls upon additional expert advice when needed. It is to the credit of the team that seventy five per cent of pupils on the register achieve nationally expected levels in numeracy and literacy in national tests by the age of eleven.
46. The quality of teaching is very good overall with examples of excellent teaching in Year 2 and 3. In the excellent lesson the teacher brought relevance to learning. The data handling task was linked to the pupils' history topic on the Greeks and pupils recorded preferences for a range of Greek foods. The work was precisely differentiated to meet the needs of groups of pupils. There was a very high interest level, sense of purpose and excitement and, consequently, a high enjoyment factor. Pupils were totally focused. The teacher has very good subject knowledge of mathematics and information and communication technology. In year 6, in a very well paced lesson, pupils quickly grasped the term integer and were able to use a number line to round numbers with 2 decimal places. Scrutiny of pupils' work, including sets of books from last year, indicated that pupils are learning very well. These books contained a very good body of work that was purposefully marked so pupils were kept on track and examples of interesting assignments that developed mathematical enthusiasm.
47. The subject coordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and knows the action to take to improve standards. She gives very good quality guidance to teachers.



## Mathematics across the curriculum

48. There are good links with other subjects. Good emphasis is placed on planning opportunities for pupils to use and apply the skills and knowledge they have learned in mathematics in practical situations. For example, in addition to the link with history described in the commentary, there are good links with science. Teachers' confidence with ICT enables very good use to be made of equipment to enhance learning. Pupils are encouraged to make decisions independently about the ways in which they present their work, and this contributes effectively to their personal and social development.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve well
  - Teaching is very good and very imaginative
  - Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of investigative processes
49. Pupils achieve very well and by Year 2 and Year 6 a higher proportion of pupils than average achieve the higher levels. This shows the standards described in the last report have been maintained. Very good teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and imaginative planning that challenges more able pupils and meets the needs of those with special educational needs. Lessons motivate and interest pupils and staff ensure all pupils are fully included in lessons. In a very good lesson in Year 1 and 2 pupils made a torch for Goldilocks. They really enjoyed their lesson and achieved a very good grasp of the principles of a circuit. In another very good lesson, the teacher used questioning techniques very effectively to help her class understand insulation. She captured their interest very effectively by setting an amusing challenge - keeping her brother's tea warm in the morning. Very good links to other subjects also enabled pupils to understand the purpose of their learning and this degree of relevance promoted personal discovery.
50. The science curriculum is linked very well to literacy, numeracy, ICT, humanities and the arts. Pupils are encouraged to select ways to present their work and to apply their knowledge and skills independently. There are very good examples of investigations where pupils decide how to solve problems for themselves, for example when investigating the variables affecting the speed of spinners. Pupils have well developed reasoning and research skills. They explain their thoughts clearly and in an organised manner using scientific vocabulary well. They enjoy working together and comparing the strategies they have used to complete their work.
51. Pupils have very positive attitudes to science. Very good links are made with personal, social and health education. Very good use is made of opportunities afforded by the environment, visits and residential trips to enliven the subject. By the age of eleven pupils have a mature understanding of the benefits and dangers of medicines, drugs and alcohol, and of the results of abuse. They know the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Debates about social responsibility have a positive impact on pupils' personal, social, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

52. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and supports staff very well. Regular monitoring and assessments of pupils' work are analysed and the information is used to support future planning. Test results are analysed and differences in the performance of cohorts are fully understood. Governors give very good support and monitor the quality of provision regularly. There is a clear understanding of the current strengths and how the subject can be improved further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources have improved considerably in recent years
- Teachers are now confident and knowledgeable, so pupils are achieving well
- ICT is well used to support teaching across the curriculum, particularly for research purposes.

### **Commentary**

53. There was only one opportunity to see direct teaching of ICT during the inspection and it was good. Nonetheless, discussions with pupils, who demonstrated their skills and talked about their knowledge, indicated that teaching is thorough and teachers' subject knowledge secure. In the lesson seen, Year 2 pupils learnt quickly how to manipulate word art and re-size graphics. In Years 1 and 2 pupils create stories and pictures and improve and save their work. Pupils can construct graphs and use data they have collected. These pupils are reaching national levels and since the installation of their new equipment are achieving well. Discussions at the computer with Year 6 pupils indicated that they are confident users. These pupils can access and use the Internet, know about data handling and are looking forward to learning about PowerPoint and making a presentation as last years group did. Pupils can use the LOGO programme to control a screen turtle. They use the Internet frequently for research and use Word well to present work. They are aware of safety rules. These pupils are comfortably achieving national expectations and by the end of the year some will exceed this level. Teachers used interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance their lessons and pupils are also able to operate the program, for example during mathematics.

54. The subject is very well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher who is given very good support by a governor. Pupils' performance is regularly assessed and the subject is developing rapidly. The co-ordinator is working effectively to embed ICT in the curriculum and to exploit the new equipment including the availability of a suite. There has been an improvement in the quality of the provision since the last inspection.

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

55. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects are developing well. They use the research capability of the Internet to further their knowledge when studying subjects like history. In mathematics, data handling capabilities are developing well. Word processing skills are well developed and most pupils are confident when using the computer for graphics work.

## HUMANITIES

56. In humanities, work was sampled in religious education and geography because only one lesson was seen in the former and none in the latter. Pupils' books were scrutinised and planning was examined. In humanities in general work is considerably enhanced by the range of visits made. These include residential opportunities for all but the youngest pupils in the school.
57. The school takes **religious education** very seriously and it is well planned and resourced. This is based on a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how pupils both learn about and learn from the religious education they receive. The pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, using skills also developed in other subjects such as history, geography and science. Work recorded in books is often independently written and indicates that pupils are thoughtful in their approach to the subject. The programme of study develops the pupils' understanding of Christianity, the religion that is most familiar to them; they are also introduced to the study of other religions as practically as is possible in a village which contains few members of other faiths. The teaching is sensitive to the needs of different groups of pupils and invites learning rather than proposing belief. The resources made available are appropriate to the school's and the pupils' needs. The addition of visits to the local church for Christian studies, and visits from people willing to talk about aspects of their own faith, provides the pupils with realistic and practical insights. Displays add to pupils understanding. In one classroom a display about baptism included Christening robes and also photographs of adult baptism. In the good lesson seen in Year 6 the teacher's friend, a Sikh, had given a very good introduction which included video footage of her cousin's wedding.
58. In **geography**, discussions with staff and pupils and sampling of planning and pupils' work show that attitudes to the subject are positive and there is good coverage of the curriculum. On the basis of the work seen standards are above expectations for the age groups. The curriculum is based on a scheme developed by the local authority. It is well resourced and maximises the local environment to promote teaching and learning. An enquiry approach to the curriculum provides a high degree of motivation for teachers and pupils. In discussion, pupils described their learning, for example, developing their mapping skills. The school values educational visits to places of geographical interest to enable pupils to compare other settings with Paulerspury. Currently, Year 4 are involved in investigating waste disposal arrangements in a very well planned and excellently resourced project. This work is displayed in a magnificent classroom display. Pupils visited waste sites and saw it sorted by machine and hand. Good links with other subjects are developing, for example with design and technology when pupils examine a range of packaging. The subject is well resourced, although the subject coordinator wishes to extend the provision of atlases. The subject coordinator is enthusiastic and leads the subject well.

## History

Provision for history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good and pupils in Year 6 achieve very well
- Links with other subjects are good

- Teachers plan and resource topics and visits to places of historical interest very well to enhance learning
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well

## Commentary

59. Standards in history are in line with expectations for pupils in Years 2 and above for those in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good support they receive from teaching assistants. At this early stage in the school year much of the early work seen in Years 1 and 2 is worksheet generated and there is insufficient opportunity for more able pupils to record independently. Attitudes are very positive, for example, pupils enthusiastically considered the implications of the Fire of London on people living in the city. In discussion, they consider the fear of people as they try to escape from their frightening environment. While their speaking and listening skills are enhanced well, there are missed opportunities for pupils to work together and illustrate, possibly through drama, their thoughts and ideas.
60. By Year 6 progress is good and it is likely that all pupils will achieve the expected levels. A significant proportion will achieve higher levels. In their study of the Second World War pupils consider the impact of the Blitz from a variety of perspectives. The work is stimulating with a very good mix of factual enquiry and reasoning. Pupils present their work neatly reflecting the level of pride taken.
61. The quality of teaching is very good overall and teachers are very knowledgeable. They prepare excellent resources, particularly for older pupils. Very good use is made of community members to give eye-witness accounts of important events. A villager shared with pupils her memories of life in the village during the war. The pupils are well prepared for their learning, having researched the period and its events and thoughtfully prepared questions for their guest to answer. Pupils showed great interest and very good listening skills as the villager recalled interesting facts about her life story. In one very good lesson the teacher amazed pupils when she set out quantities of food that were available during wartime rationing restrictions. The lesson challenged pupils and led to very good discussions that increased learning and understanding.
62. The needs of mixed age groups are addressed by setting up two-year rolling programmes to ensure that there is no repetition of topics in the curriculum and that pupils' make progress with knowledge, skills and understanding. The school uses the latest guidance to guide curricular decisions but sensibly modifies teaching plans to reflect local issues. There are good links with other subjects. In literacy, very good quality writing graphically describes the fears of a family caught up in an air raid. Preferences for different kinds of Greek food, which is linked to a topic on the Greeks, are used in mathematics to teach data handling techniques in a mixed Year 2 and Year 3 class. Information and communication technology skills are used to record preferences.
63. Educational visits to places of historical interest are highly valued as sources of inspirational teaching and learning. Pupils visit famous places such as Duxford, Holdenby House and Verulamium Museum to bring relevance to learning.
64. The subject is well led and there is helpful guidance to support teachers. A member of the governing body of the school liaises with the subject leader to monitor developments in the teaching of history. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The quality of provision in **design and technology** could not be judged as no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, discussions with staff and pupils and sampling of planning, pupils' work and photographic evidence show very positive attitudes to the subject and good coverage of the curriculum. The project on bread from last year's work sample, for example, was very thorough. Pupils evaluated a number of commercially produced loaves and then made their own bread. They used hands and a breadmaker and evaluated the outcomes. The subject is very well led.

It is not possible to make a secure judgment about the quality of provision in music because only one lesson was seen. However, inspectors spoke to pupils and discussed opportunities the school provides with the subject coordinator.

65. The school aims to create a love of **music**. Pupils sing tunefully and enjoy making music together. Groups share their singing with different organisations in the community at Christmas. Currently, there are no music clubs in the school for pupils to extend their skills and breadth of experience. The school encourages pupils to learn a musical instrument and almost half take advantage of these opportunities. Instrumental lessons commit pupils to hard work and exciting challenges. In discussion, pupils say they enjoy the sense of achievement and fun as their skills increase. Pupils hear good quality live music when musicians from the LEA music service visit the school and provide a source of inspiration. The school aims to widen pupils' awareness of the different ways people from other parts of the world make music. Musicians from Africa and India have shared their music with the school.
66. In a very good lesson pupils learned to compose using body percussion. Very good links with the class history topic on Ancient Greece soon emerged as the teacher revealed cards representing Olympic sports. As the teacher pointed to the pictures, pupils responded with sounds that reflected the activity illustrated on cards. The work progressed with the class challenged to identify their own body percussion symbols. The symbols were translated into sound and the class performed their exciting compositions. The school offers great potential for exciting music making.

### Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are helped to acquire a broad range of techniques and work with a rich choice of good quality materials and achieve well and by Year 6 standards are above average.
- Teachers plan very well and use the work of visitors, famous artists to extend pupils imaginations and raise their aspirations so work is rich and thoughtful
- Pupils produce very good quality work which they can talk about using appropriate technical and abstract language

### Commentary

67. Standards are above national expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6. In Year 2 pupils take part in a very exciting Clarice Cliff project. They have grasped the fundamental characteristics of her designs and are using ceramic paints to decorate white cups which their teacher bid for at an auction. The range of resources available to them in the classroom to support their learning is of a high order and includes the teacher's own collection of Clarice Cliff. In Year 4 pupils are showing real sensitivity to the effect of watery paint as they dilute powder colour to achieve Monet like effects when creating a painting from a photographic inspiration. Evidence shows that Year 6 pupils are skilled and use paint well when painting a basket of apples from life. Standards for older pupils are above average. Pupils use sketchbooks and preliminary drawings well to clarify their thinking and record observations and experimental ideas. Their sketchbooks show careful studies of trees and flowers and a beautiful water colour sketch of a cottage garden. In the lessons seen teaching was very good and evidence from pupils' work and displays suggests that pupils are consistently well taught.
68. The subject is very well managed and plays an important role in developing pupils' spirituality throughout the school. Training opportunities include inspirational visits and training from the National Gallery visits from local artists, among whom is a wood carver, make a strong contribution to the liveliness of the subject and teachers' confidence. The subject is important in the school and is properly assessed. The high quality of displays and artefacts chosen to enhance teaching in other subjects including collective worship contributes strongly to building aesthetic values. The subject has improved since the last inspection.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above those expected
- The curriculum is of good quality with a good range of sporting activities
- Subject leadership is good
- The range of well attended after-school clubs is wide

## **Commentary**

70. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of physical education. The school follows an adapted version of a commercial scheme. All strands are taught well and there is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take part in dance. Very good links with music and history enable pupils to understand the differences between cultures and changes over time. Pupils are afforded very good opportunities on the school's very full programme of residential trips to try a variety of outdoor pursuits. Very good use is made of the local leisure centre. Swimming instructors share the teaching of swimming with school staff and almost all pupils achieve the required standard by Year 6. Sport features prominently in the curriculum and boys and girls represent their school in team games, such as football and netball. Very good links with local soccer and rugby teams provide additional coaching and these opportunities are enthusiastically supported by pupils, staff and the community. This very good provision enables staff to work alongside instructors and enhance their professional development. The school has no field of its own but has access to the village recreation area. Plans to improve the quality of this facility should enable the use of the

field during all seasons. The hard play area is restricted because a series of attractive sculptures limit the amount of space available for games. This particularly limits the opportunities to challenge older pupils fully.

71. The quality of teaching is good. A teaching strength is the quality of assessment to influence learning. Modifications to teaching plans effectively improve pupils' personal performances. Good use is made of pupils' skills and personal evaluations of their work, for example modelling sequences of movements and deciding how they might be improved. This strategy effectively promotes collaboration and reasoning. As a result performance improves in lessons. Teachers and their assistants work very well together. Teaching assistants know the support they are expected to provide. They give very good encouragement and specific programmes of work meet individual needs very well. This is particularly evident in the inclusion, self-esteem and success seen in the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
72. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers. They have very good attitudes to learning, follow instructions well and understand how to improve. Pupils celebrate each other's successes. Physical education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand the importance of physical exercise and healthy life styles. Teachers enhance pupils' personal development, encouraging them to be responsible and safe.
73. The leadership of the subject is very good. She provides a very good role model for staff and pupils.

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

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

The school's provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good foundations are laid in the reception class
- The School Council makes a very positive contribution to the life of the school
- Teaching approaches, including discussion and group work, support a positive approach to personal development

### **Commentary**

74. The school places a very high priority on this aspect of the pupils' development. This begins in the Foundation Stage and continues throughout the school. Very good routines are established from the earliest age, and these prepare the pupils for their lives later in the school.
75. The school has developed a clear policy for personal, social and health education that includes sex education and the dangers of drug abuse. It is taught within lessons and in assemblies and underpins all activities throughout the school. It is an integral part of the whole curriculum and has a very beneficial effect on pupils' relationships with one another and with adults in the school. The school has high expectations of its pupils' behaviour

and respect for others in the community. Classroom and other observations show that the pupils thoroughly understand these expectations. There are weekly circle times in each class which include meetings of the class council. The School Council discusses matters of importance to all pupils in the school. Older School Council members have received training.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### Inspection judgement

### Grade

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</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	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<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	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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

