

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RUSSELL FIRST SCHOOL**

Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110252

Headteacher: Mrs G Sierant

Lead inspector: Mrs S E Hall 21750

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 267606

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First school  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3-8  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 236

School address: Russell Street  
Stony Stratford  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire

Postcode: MK11 1BT

Telephone number: 01908 563148  
Fax number: 01908 267378

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Ms R Watters  
governors:

Date of previous 11<sup>th</sup> January 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Russell First School is in the old market town of Stony Stratford near Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. With the full time equivalent of 236 pupils, it is of a broadly average size. Mobility in and out of the school is higher than is usual because of the changing circumstances of some families and parental choice. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is close to the average, although as there are no school meals the school has information to indicate more parents are entitled to free school meals than register. Census information indicates that the socio-economic context of the school is average but more than half the pupils attend from other areas with lower indicators. About 7 per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with 14 being at the early stages of English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than average with most of these being learning, speech and behavioural difficulties. However, within some year groups there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Five pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. On entry to the school children have skills that are below average for their age. The school received an achievement award in 2002 for improvement in national test results and is part of a 'Community Mobiliser' project. The school is in its last year as a first school and will become an infant school in September 2005.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21750	Mrs S E Hall	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language
9163	Mr G Humphrey	Lay inspector	
20086	Mr D Speakman	Team inspector	English Personal, social and health education and citizenship Music Religious education Special educational needs
20893	Mr D Curtis	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History The Foundation Stage curriculum.
2911	Mr E Steed	Team inspector	

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with several very good features. There is a clear sense of a happy and purposeful community, which is warmly welcoming and very inclusive of all its pupils. Standards are average for the ages of the pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall. Leadership, management and governance of the school are all good overall. Expenditure per pupil is average and the school achieves good value for money.

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

- Leadership of the headteacher is very good and is a pivotal feature of school development.
- The school is very welcoming to pupils and adults alike and has a strong and caring ethos.
- Provision for children in the nursery is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average.
- Standards in writing, including spelling, are not as good as they could be.
- School assessment and monitoring routines across the curriculum are not developed well enough to identify the small steps necessary for further improvement.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their learning and relationships are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Parents have very positive views of the school which most support very actively.

There has been good overall improvement since the previous inspection. The school has addressed all the areas identified and standards have risen in several subjects, particularly in mathematics. There is now more challenge in the work for higher-attaining pupils, the school has completed schemes of work and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for teaching religious education. Whilst there were initially some improvements in provision for information and communication technology, this has not been sufficient and remains an area for further improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	B	C	C
Writing	C	A	C	D

Mathematics	C	B	A	A
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*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Achievement in the school overall is **good**. When children enter the school, there is a wide range of ability. A relatively high proportion of children have below average skills for their age in all areas of learning and overall standards on entry are below average. In the nursery children make very good progress because of the very good quality of teaching and support they receive. Good progress is maintained in reception and on entry to Year 1 children meet the overall targets expected for their age and exceed them in their personal and social and their physical development.

At the end of Year 2, standards are generally average for the age of the pupils. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and religious education at the age of seven but they do not achieve well enough in information and communication technology where standards are below those expected. There is a higher proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 with special educational needs than last year. These pupils, alongside all other groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because they are well taught. Standards are generally in line with expectations in Year 3. These pupils currently achieve satisfactorily, but temporary staffing arrangements are not ensuring the consistently good achievement seen elsewhere in the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall, being very good for spiritual and moral development and good for social and cultural development. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, behaviour is good, and there are very good relationships across the school. Attendance is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Children in the nursery are very well taught enabling them to make rapid progress in all areas of their early learning. Good progress is maintained in reception and Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 2 is good overall and has some very good features. The team of staff in Year 2 is particularly skilled at managing the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which ensures they, together with their classmates, achieve well. High quality support staff add considerably to pupils' learning. Teaching and learning in Year 3 is satisfactory overall, although some unsatisfactory teaching by temporary staff was observed during the inspection.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with clear strengths in the very good opportunities to enrich the curriculum. This is especially so in the arts, with staff, parents and pupils being justifiably proud of the work produced in art and music. However, there are weaknesses in the curriculum for information and communication technology where technical difficulties have affected staff confidence as seen in the limited evidence of computer usage in pupils' work and during the inspection. The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is a high priority in the school and is very good. There are very good links with parents, other schools and the community. The



majority of parents are highly appreciative of the quality of education and care offered.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. This is a pivotal factor in school improvement and especially in the creation of an effective staff team and a very inclusive environment. Governance of the school is good. While many governors are relatively new to their posts, they are very keen to develop their roles and first-hand knowledge of the school further. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Management of the school is good. Financial management is carefully tracked, and the school is effective in its work to seek additional funding. However, school self-evaluation and monitoring whilst sensitive and supportive lack rigour and, sometimes, as currently seen in some unsatisfactory aspects to teaching in Year 3, the school has not monitored learning actively enough to identify where weaknesses occur. The role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluation procedures is satisfactory, but is not as effective as it could be.

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

Parents are very pleased with the quality of education their children receive. A relatively large proportion attended the inspection meeting and were fulsome in their praise of the personal support for their children. However, a number, rightly, have concerns about the quality of provision for pupils in Year 3. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and like the wide range of activities they take part in.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in information and communication technology and its use in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially their spelling and handwriting.
- Extend assessment and monitoring procedures to identify the small steps necessary for improvement.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The achievement of pupils is **good** overall. Achievement is **very good** in the nursery; it is **good** in Year 2 and **satisfactory** in Year 3. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage and by the end of Year 2 are **average** for the age of the pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, especially in the nursery.
- In Years 1 and 2, all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their abilities. Standards in writing are not as high as they should be.
- Standards in mathematics and religious education are above average at the age of seven.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average throughout the school.
- Some higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 do not currently achieve as well as they could.

#### Commentary

##### Foundation Stage

1. Children enter the nursery with very wide ranging skills which overall are below average for their age as they were at the previous inspection. Several children have very restricted communication skills and speak in limited detail and with an inadequate vocabulary. Children make rapid progress and achieve very well in the nursery because of the consistently high quality of teaching they receive. In the reception classes, children continue to make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority achieve the targets for their age in all areas of learning and they often exceed these in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development.

##### Key Stage 1 and 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.8 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.4 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In the national tests in 2004, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics when compared to schools nationally. When standards are compared to those in schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals they were well above average in mathematics, average in reading but below average in writing. There was a positive trend in rising standards from 2001 to 2003 with a consistently improving picture in mathematics since 2001 but more varied progress in reading and writing where standards fell in 2004 from the previous year. Inspection findings are that standards in the present Year 2 are generally average for the age of the pupils. Pupils achieve well overall. However, there is a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs within the current Year 2 group than in others which has an impact on the standards attained.
3. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are average for the age of the pupils. Pupils achieve well in this area from a low base. Most pupils listen and respond well to what is required of them. While a few speak with confidence and good grammatical accuracy, several have a more restricted vocabulary and do not speak at length or use detailed terminology. Teachers work hard to provide a range of activities to develop speaking and listening skills including using a very good range of visits and visitors to interest the pupils. However, staff miss many informal opportunities for pupils to work with 'talking partners' to develop a wider vocabulary in all subjects across the curriculum. Standards in reading are average for the ages of the pupils and many make good progress and achieve well. There are weaknesses in pupils' writing where standards are often below average and pupils do not achieve as well as they could especially in Year 3. There is not enough weight put upon correct spelling, good presentation and neat handwriting, which limits standards. Overall standards in English are average in Years 2 and 3. Pupils achieve well in Year 2 and satisfactorily in Year 3.
4. Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 2 and are average in Year 3. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of numbers and the rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They are confident in measuring, particularly in units of length and time and develop good skills in being able to interpret the information shown on graphs. However, across the school, pupils' use of mathematics in investigations and problem solving is less secure and the use of mathematics across the curriculum is insecure. Standards in science are average in Years 2 and 3 and they achieve well overall. A strength in science is that pupils have lots of well-planned opportunities to carry out practical experimental and investigative tasks where they have to make careful observations and try things out. In religious education, standards are above average in Year 2 where pupils achieve well and average in Year 3 where achievement is satisfactory.
5. A weakness throughout the school is that standards in information and communication technology are below average for the ages of the pupils. This was an area identified for improvement in the previous inspection and remains so now. There have been major technical difficulties, which have affected the on-going usage of computers and the confidence of staff in this area. This is reflected in the limited amount of recent work produced by pupils epitomized by

little use made of computers during the inspection to support learning across the curriculum.

6. The large majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school. This is currently best in the nursery and Year 2 where staff have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. A strength in school is the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The support they receive ensures that their achievement is good. The register of pupils with special educational needs is active and pupils move appropriately through the stages. Similarly, pupils learning to speak English as an additional language are well supported and achieve well. However, since staffing changes during the current year, progress is not so secure in Year 3. In particular, higher-attaining pupils have not made the progress that they should and recent work shows little improvement since Year 2. This is largely because temporary staff are not making enough use of assessment information to identify what pupils are capable of. In Year 3, pupils are not sufficiently challenged or extended consistently enough.

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

Pupils behave **well** and have **good** attitudes towards their learning. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall. Attendance is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they behave well.
- Provision for pupils to develop spiritual and moral understanding is very good.
- There are very good relationships throughout the school.

### **Commentary.**

7. Pupils enjoy school and find the work interesting and challenging. They take pride in what they do and enjoy showing their work to others. Pupils are supportive of each other, and work and play well together. These positive attitudes have been successfully maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs also have good attitudes to school. They respond very well to the activities planned to meet their needs. Other pupils have positive attitudes towards working alongside their peers whatever their particular needs. Attendance is very good and well above the national average for similar schools. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, although unauthorised absence is higher than in most schools. Punctuality in the mornings is good.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)**

Authorised Absence		Unauthorised Absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils trust and value their teachers and support staff. They are caring towards each other and polite to visitors. Behaviour is good. The implementation of the school behaviour management policy is consistent. Pupils understand the school rules and appear to regard them as fair and just. Rare occurrences of bullying and other unacceptable behaviour are dealt with quickly and sensitively. There have been three fixed period exclusions in the past year, of one boy.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	122	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	96	0	0

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

9. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The school has a strong spiritual ethos and this is very well promoted. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own values, feelings and emotions through the opportunities that are provided during assemblies, 'circle' time discussions, which are part of the personal, social and health education programme, and through the wider curriculum. The school provides a very clear moral code, which has a strong emphasis on the principles of diversity and inclusion. Whilst there are limited opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, older pupils are beginning to work independently. There is no formal school council, but groups of pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss their views and opinions with the headteacher and other staff, and the outcomes of these discussions are noted and acted upon. For example, prior to the recent refurbishment of the school toilets, older pupils were invited to submit suggestions and designs to demonstrate what facilities and colour schemes they wanted. Many of their ideas and suggestions were incorporated during the refurbishment programme.
10. There is a good feeling of community within the school, which embraces the small number of pupils who come from ethnic minority and other cultural backgrounds. Diversity is celebrated in the school in some excellent assemblies and through the wider curriculum. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their British cultural heritage and tradition is very good and their awareness and understanding of other cultures, and the multicultural nature of many communities in Britain, is well developed. Overall, the school's provision for the cultural development of pupils is good and has improved since the previous inspection. This has successfully raised pupils' awareness and understanding of cultures other than their own.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** with strengths in the nursery and Key Stage 1. Teaching and learning are **good**. Curriculum planning is **satisfactory** overall. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Links with parents, other schools and the community are **very good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. The quality and use of assessment are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 and children in the Foundation Stage, particularly those in the nursery, learn well.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very effective.
- Assessment routines are not effective enough in identifying the small steps necessary for improvement.
- The quality of teaching in Year 3 is not consistently challenging, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (20%)	22 (54%)	9 (22%)	2 (5%)	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.*

### Commentary

11. Teaching across the school is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and it is consistently very good in the nursery where high quality provision has been maintained. Teaching of the youngest children is particularly effective because all staff, both teachers and those in support roles, have a very good understanding of children's early learning needs. Very effective use is made of facilities indoors and out to ensure a bright and lively learning environment is created where all children can have fun and flourish. Because of the high level of teaching children make rapid progress in the nursery and achieve very well. There is good teaching in the reception classes, where pupils with special educational needs are very effectively supported.
12. Teaching in Year 2 is consistently good and the sample of pupils' recent work indicates it is often very good. Staff have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. Planning is good and clearly identifies what the pupils are to learn and how related tasks meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress. Teaching in Year 1 is generally good.



13. Across the school, staff are particularly good at managing pupils with special educational needs and in particular those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Support staff play an invaluable role in this work. They are very effective in helping troubled pupils to have full access to the curriculum. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the core subjects of English and mathematics is good overall and sometimes very good when pupils are given focused and intensive support. The pupils' needs are identified at an early stage. Individual education plans have precise targets. Teaching assistants are fully involved in planning with teachers and provide regular and ongoing feedback on pupils' progress. This ensures that planned activities match the pupils' needs.
14. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language are well supported in their learning and often make rapid progress. This is seen to best effect in both Years 1 and 2 where pupils initially with little English are well supported by staff, including good work by a teaching assistant providing mother tongue support for a pupil recently arrived from Germany. The school is also making good use of support staff from the Local Education Authority to work with identified pupils.
15. Teaching in Year 3 is satisfactory overall but with some that is unsatisfactory, particularly in the key areas of English and mathematics. Currently teaching is provided through a job share arrangement and with temporary staff. Planning is not as thorough as it is for other year groups and does not consistently identify how the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities are to be met. This particularly affects the higher-attaining pupils who do not make the progress that they are capable of in some lessons because they are not challenged at a consistently high enough level. This is seen where pupils who achieved well in national tests in Year 2 do not maintain previous progress. The school is rightly considering the temporary staffing situation and is keen to provide the best possible teaching for all pupils.
16. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good and information is used well to inform planning. Overall assessment routines and the use of assessment data to inform teaching are satisfactory but, nonetheless, an area for improvement. The school is very committed to the philosophy of formative assessment for learning and is very effective in this area. For example, through observation, discussion and scrutinising pupils' work teachers have a good awareness of the activities undertaken. However, the school is not as successful in the use of summative assessment to measure pupils' progress against a given criteria or their peers. The school makes only limited use of tests and formal assessments and staff are sometimes unclear as to the small steps that are necessary to bring about further improvements either for individuals, groups of pupils or for the whole class.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Curriculum enrichment is **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision in the arts is very good.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall and it is very good in the nursery.
- Provision in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils benefit from an impressive range of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits and visitors to the school.
- The school places great importance on including each and every pupil in all aspects of its work.

## Commentary

17. The school is successful in ensuring it meets requirements for the teaching of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for the teaching of religious education. The school places very strong emphasis on the teaching of the arts with the result that pupils produce exciting and imaginative work in art. Their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of singing is exceptional and they sing to an impressive standard.
18. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and especially in the nursery is of high quality and contributes significantly to children's achievement. Teachers ensure that all of the areas of learning are taught successfully and fully meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Outdoor provision is particularly good. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work hard to provide an imaginative and stimulating learning environment, which excites and motivates children to want to learn.
19. Through their planning, teachers are not providing pupils with sufficient time to use and apply key information and communication technology skills in other subjects and this is a contributory factor to standards in information and communication technology being below national expectations. Insufficient time is given to the teaching of information and communication technology. Teachers' confidence has been seriously impeded by significant issues with the unreliability of hardware and software, together with inconsistent technical support. Currently, the recent improvements in hardware provision are not making sufficient difference in pupils' learning as classroom computers are not used well or often enough. There are also insufficient opportunities to develop numeracy skills across the curriculum.
20. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school ensures that these pupils are identified as soon as possible so that the curriculum can be planned to provide for everyone's needs. All pupils on the special educational needs register have individual education plans highlighting their individual needs. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that targets reflect the progress made. All pupils with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as other pupils. This is one of the features that make the school so inclusive. Together with pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils receive high quality support in lessons from teachers, teaching assistants and specialist support staff. This is a major factor in their good achievement. All staff work exceptionally hard to include all pupils in every aspect of the school's day-to-day life.
21. Pupils' learning is enhanced considerably by a very good range of educational visits, including a residential visit for pupils in Year 3. A rich range of visits by outside speakers and performers plays a significant part in giving pupils stimulating experiences to support their learning in art, music and sport. The number and range of clubs in art, music and sport provided during and after school is very good for a first school and these activities are well attended by pupils.

## Care, guidance and support

The pastoral care of pupils is a strength and the school's provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** advice in relation to their learning and personal development. The school listens and responds **very well** to the views and opinions of its pupils.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good care and pastoral support and advice afforded to pupils.
- There are very good procedures for child protection, health and safety.
- The school welcomes and acts upon the pupils' views and opinions.

## Commentary

22. The welfare and pastoral support provided by the school is very good. Teachers and support staff have created a learning environment within which pupils feel secure and able to concentrate and do their best. Because staff know and understand the pupils well they are able to provide very good advice and guidance, which helps them with their personal development and learning skills. Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems are very well integrated into the life of the school. The special needs co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils with special educational needs very well and have a real concern for their welfare. There is very good awareness of the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families. The arrangements for child protection are very good. The school has established good links with social services and other external agencies.
23. There are very good arrangements for ensuring that the school environment is healthy and safe. Risk assessment is thorough and rigorous. The implementation of the health and safety policy is regularly monitored. There is good provision for first aid and for administering to the needs of pupils with special needs or physical disability. Pupils are very well supervised and taught to use school equipment safely. The personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils observe high standards of personal hygiene and have a good understanding of the value of pursuing a healthy lifestyle. The school successfully participates in the national Healthy Schools project.
24. The school actively seeks and acts upon the opinions of pupils who demonstrate great confidence and trust in their relationships with adults. The induction arrangements for children entering the nursery and the reception classes are very good. The youngest children settle very quickly into the routines of school life and show rapid development in their social and personal skills. Pupils who join the school in other years are warmly welcomed and very well supported. Similarly, the arrangements for supporting pupils and preparing them for transfer into the middle schools are very good. The good standards of welfare, support and guidance reported after the previous inspection have been maintained well and in some respects pastoral care has grown even stronger with the passing of time.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is **very good**. The school has **very good** links with the wider community and with the other schools and colleges in the immediate area.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school communicates with its parents very well.
- The large majority of parents are very supportive of the school and their children's learning.
- There are very good links with the wider community and other schools and colleges.

## Commentary

25. The school has worked hard to establish close relationships with parents and to support and encourage them to participate in their children's learning. As a result, the partnership between the school and the large majority of parents is very good. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of care and education that the school provides. A continuous dialogue between the school and parents ensures that their opinions and suggestions are noted and acted upon and any concerns dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents are supportive of what the school is doing to help their children by supporting them well at home with their learning. The school works closely with the parents of children with special educational needs, involving them in the review and update of the targets in individual education plans.
26. The annual curriculum evening, which is held at the start of the autumn term, provides parents with a good overview of curriculum content and supporting topic work for the coming year. This event is always well attended. A termly newsletter keeps them informed about activities and events that are scheduled to take place in the school for that term. No formal homework is set but parents are expected to participate in home learning and clear guidance is provided as to how this can be achieved. The main focus for home learning is on the development of their children's reading and enquiry skills. The annual progress reports provide a very good overview of pupils' personal and academic development with a clear indication of their progress, effort and attainment.
27. A significant number of parents volunteer to provide support in lessons and when they do, they are given clearly defined tasks and are very well deployed. Most parents support the school through the parents association, which organises a full programme of social and fundraising events throughout the year. The very warm social interaction between groups of parents is very noticeable when they come into school at the end of the day to collect their children.
28. The school enjoys very good relationships with many local community organisations and businesses some of which have provided financial support and sponsorship for specific school projects. The strong links with such local community organisations provide curriculum enrichment in many ways. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. There are very good arrangements for supporting pupils during their transfer from first to middle school. There is good co-operation between the local cluster of schools for staff training and the sharing of good practice. Overall, the partnership with parents and the many links with other organisations has been very well maintained, and strengthened in the way the school seeks parental views since the previous inspection.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and that of other key members of staff is **good**. Governance and management are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's vision for the school's future is very good and this is shared by all staff and governors.

- Leadership sets its sights firmly on the commitment to inclusion and meeting the needs of all pupils.
- Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very effective in providing high quality provision.
- Financial management is good and financial resources are used effectively to enhance the quality of education provided by the school.
- Senior staff are aware of the need for more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

## **Commentary**

29. The headteacher has a very strong commitment to meeting the educational and personal needs all pupils, staff and parents, which has a pivotal influence on school improvement. She has continuously refined the vision that she has for the school, in partnership with staff and governors, and has responded to changing circumstances very well. She has high aspirations for the school and these are shared by all staff and governors. This is complemented by the high level of commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils. Inclusion is a major strength of the school and this approach enables all pupils to have equal access to all the opportunities on offer. The very strong and determined leadership reported at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained.
30. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership, which is successful in bringing out the best in people and in enabling them to play a very active part in moving the school forward. She works very effectively with the deputy headteacher and the Foundation Stage leader as a senior management team. Together they manage innovation and change effectively. Subject leaders lead their areas satisfactorily. A few are new to their role but already have good ideas about how to have an impact on further improvement through extending their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in subjects for which they hold responsibility.
31. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. Self-evaluation of the provision is an important part of the management process. Together with other staff, the co-ordinator monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs from the reception onwards. She ensures that individual educational plans include clear and detailed targeting of activities to meet pupils' individual learning needs. She has worked hard to establish good links with staff, parents and outside agencies to ensure effective support for pupils with very specific needs.
32. Management structures are effective in establishing good communication within the school and in providing good guidance and support to staff who are new to the profession or to the school. A reasoned and flexible approach to school improvement planning means that members of staff feel included, are encouraged to reflect on their practice and are therefore not resistant to change. Monitoring the school's performance, particularly teaching, does not sufficiently link the strengths and weaknesses seen in observed lessons to pupils' attainment and achievement. This is an area for further development. However, the monitoring of teaching and the subsequent professional discussions held between the headteacher and staff are effective in establishing individual areas for the professional development of all staff. The very good relationships that exist within the staff team and between staff and governors enable honest discussions to take place at all levels.

33. Governance of the school is good. The governing body works in close partnership with the headteacher and staff. It is comprised of a strong core of knowledgeable, experienced and active governors and there are a number who have recently joined the governing body. Governors already have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, are not afraid to ask probing questions, and are keen to develop this role even further. They are actively involved in establishing priorities, in monitoring new initiatives and in evaluating what difference they make to standards and the quality of education. They are properly involved in strategic planning and take it upon themselves to find out first hand the impact of their spending decisions. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
34. Financial management is good and helps the school to achieve its priorities. Financial systems and controls are well developed and implemented through the effective work of the headteacher and governors' finance committee so that accommodation and resources are appropriately managed. There are clear lines of accountability and funds are directly targeted on needs identified in the school improvement plan. The budget is monitored well and the office staff provides up-to-date information for governors. However, monitoring of the temporary teaching situation in Year 3 has not been effective enough to ensure best value for money in this area.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	605 892	Balance from previous year	19 287
Total expenditure	600 941	Balance carried forward to the next	24 238
Expenditure per pupil	2 664		

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

35. The overall good quality of provision has been maintained since the previous inspection, as has the very good quality of provision in the nursery. Children start the nursery with standards that are below expectations for three-year-olds, especially in the early development of key language skills. In the nursery and reception, the achievement of all children, including those with special educational needs, together with those who have English as an additional language is good. By the end of reception, children exceed the targets for their age. Teaching and learning are good with that for children in the nursery being very good and a strength of the school. This has a positive impact on children's good achievement. There are significant strengths in the quality of teamwork between teachers and most nursery nurses and teaching assistants. Leadership and management are very good and make a strong contribution to children's learning. Assessment is good, especially day-to-day monitoring of children's progress. Children benefit from good accommodation and resources.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

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

- Relationships between children are very good.
- Children are happy and secure with the day-to-day routines.

#### **Commentary**

36. Teaching and learning are very good and, by the end of reception, children exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Achievement is very good. Very effective teaching in the nursery establishes children's confidence and security in the day-to-day routines of the classroom. There is a very strong emphasis placed on children establishing very good relationships with each other and all adults. Children are co-operative and show great willingness to participate in tidying up at the end of sessions. By the end of reception, children show very good levels of concentration whether working independently or in groups. They share and are prepared to take turns and understand the importance of classroom rules.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- The teaching of the early key skills of reading and writing is very good.
- Teachers place great emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills.





## **Commentary**

37. Because of good teaching and learning, children's achievement is good. By the end of reception, they meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. In the nursery, children grow in confidence in asking and answering questions and readily initiate conversations with each other and adults. The teaching of phonics (letter sounds) is particularly strong. In reception, teachers build successfully on these important skills so that children are established on the school's reading scheme by the time they start Year 1. Early writing skills in the nursery, including the beginnings of letter formation and writing their own name, are extended in reception so that by the end of the year most can write a simple sentence without adult support. Effective questioning by teachers and an emphasis on discussion makes a significant contribution to the good progress made in speaking and listening.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress in counting.
- Number songs and rhymes are used effectively to support learning.

## **Commentary**

38. By the end of reception, children meet the Early Learning Goals as the result of good teaching and learning. Achievement is good. In the nursery, children are taught to count to 10 accurately with number songs and rhymes used imaginatively to reinforce this key skill. In reception, children count to 20 and beyond and many can mentally work out how many children are in their class, if for example three are away. Children's recognition and naming of two-dimensional shapes is good. In reception, they develop a good understanding of 'shopping' through their 'greengrocer's shop', including giving change.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Exciting themes are used imaginatively to support learning.

## **Commentary**

39. Teaching and learning are good and contribute successfully to children meeting the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Achievement is good. In the nursery, children's knowledge and understanding is developed through role-play and through work based on, for example 'Pancake Day'. The current theme of 'Africa' in reception is providing children with a rich range of activities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world and other cultures. Festivals from different cultures are celebrated as part of the provision for religious education.

## **Physical development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's learning benefits from a good range of outdoor activities.
- Imaginative craft activities make a good contribution to the development of children's hand control.

### **Commentary**

40. Teaching and learning are very good and as a result, children exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Achievement is very good. In the nursery, children are confident in climbing and in riding a good range of large-wheeled toys. They develop good skills in cutting and pasting. In reception, through activities, such as making African bracelets, children show good skills in threading beads onto string. They further develop their running, climbing, and ball handling skills to a good standard.

## **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good opportunities to play musical instruments.
- Familiar songs and rhymes are used to good effect to support learning.

### **Commentary**

41. As the result of good teaching and learning, children's achievement is good. By the end of reception, they meet the Early Learning Goals. In the nursery, children make good progress in singing familiar songs and rhymes and in performing the accompanying actions. They show good skills in dance when they move to music and follow the lead given by the nursery nurse. In reception, children are fascinated by and show good skills in playing a range of instruments from Africa.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good and pupils achieve well in these classes.
- Standards in writing and spelling are weaker than in reading, speaking and listening and prevent pupils from reaching higher standards.

- Leadership and management are good and the subject leader has clearly identified the way forward for improvement.
- Assessment routines are not developed well enough to identify the small steps necessary for improvement.
- Pupils in Year 3 are currently not making all the progress that they are capable of.

## Commentary

42. National test results for Year 2 pupils in 2004 were average in reading and writing when compared to all schools and were average in reading, but below average in writing when compared to schools with similar features. In 2003, pupils did well in national tests because there was a greater proportion of pupils of higher ability within the group than in some other year groups. There is currently a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2 and standards remain average. Attainment is currently average in speaking and listening, and average in reading, but there are weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing. When the current Year 2 left reception, communication, language and literacy was the weakest area of learning and the weakest aspect was writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, have achieved well. Attainment remains average at Year 3 and, consequently, achievement for these pupils is satisfactory. Standards are about the same as they were at the time of the previous inspection.
43. The weakest aspect of pupils' language skills lies in the quality of their writing. This is a weakness in all years. Standards of handwriting are not consistently good enough. Even by Year 3, much writing is still not joined and there is a variety and range in the standards of neatness and clarity. Spelling of common words is weak and in a Year 3 information and communication technology word processing lesson, pupils had to ask the teacher how to spell simple words such as 'enjoys'. In the Year 2 work sample, higher-attaining pupils spelt common words incorrectly, even though they are recognisable because pupils rely on using letter sounds. The school's strategies for teaching spelling are ineffective because pupils are confused by the choice of spellings continually promoted in a commercial scheme to support phonic awareness. The school is considering whether such strategies promote spelling in the most successful manner.
44. Throughout the school listening skills are good. Pupils listen with sustained concentration and with understanding. Older, higher-attaining pupils talk confidently, speaking in full sentences and use a good range of vocabulary. They are beginning to use standard English correctly and know how to form different types of questions using the words 'why', 'how' and 'what', for example. Pupils of lower attainment have not yet developed these speaking and listening skills as effectively, but do well when judged against their prior attainment. Reading standards are in line with those nationally expected for pupils of this age. Pupils read accurately and generally fluently, although some unfamiliar words create difficulties, which pupils do not have the strategies to overcome. They are beginning to read with some expression, guided by the punctuation such as speech marks. They read with appropriate understanding and can retell the story in outline, but not in detail.
45. Teaching and learning is good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 where teachers use good methods that enable pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language to achieve well through good visual and oral approaches to learning. Teaching assistants are used well in supporting these pupils.

Lessons generally have a quick pace with a variety of activities that are effective in maintaining pupils' concentration. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 3. The most significant variations in the quality of teaching between the two key stages include teachers' expectations, the use of assessment data in planning challenging activities, marking and organisation. Across the school and particularly in some Year 3 lessons, arrangements for pupils to exchange ideas with others lack organisation and for example, pupils are not formally assigned 'speaking partners'. Tasks are not always sufficiently based in a secure assessment of what pupils know and understand. There is no evident assessment identified in planning or indications of what pupils should be able to do at the end of the lesson that they could not at the beginning. Work therefore lacks appropriate expectation and teachers do not challenge the pupils well enough.

46. The school's assessment procedures are clearly evident in the Year 2 scrutiny of work and indicate where the strengths and weaknesses lie. This is less clear in Year 3, where marking of pupils' work is of a poorer quality and does little to support pupils' further achievement. Subject leadership is good. The subject leader monitors teaching and learning formally and links with the headteacher's monitoring in the senior management team's work. Teachers have a clear view of where their pupils are, although their assessment is ongoing and formative, rather than based on a series of assessment tasks or tests to place pupils firmly at specific levels in the National Curriculum. The subject leader has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve and has prepared action plans to address identified issues.

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

47. There are satisfactory literacy links across the curriculum. Although some other subjects are used as vehicles to develop Literacy skills, such as cross-curricular links with history these are not structured and not formally set out as a whole school initiative. The school does not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' literacy skills in day-to-day activities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good** in Years 1 and 2. It is **satisfactory** in Year 3.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of number is a particular strength in Year 2 where standards are above average.
- In Year 2, pupils are motivated and enthusiastic learners.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 are not making sufficient progress.
- Pupils' use and application of numeracy skills in other subjects is not sufficiently developed.

### **Commentary**

48. Results of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were well above the national average in comparison to all schools and similar schools nationally. These results continue the significant trend of year-on-year improvement in pupils' performance. Trends show no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was well above average,

which indicates that higher-attaining pupils were challenged and extended in their learning. Standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection.

49. In the current Year 2, standards are above average and the achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, together with those who have English as an additional language, is good. Standards are not as high as last year because of a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2. In Year 2, standards have improved since the previous inspection because of good teaching. Standards in Year 3 meet expectations for pupils of this age, with the exception of higher-attaining pupils. This group of pupils has not built consistently on their knowledge, skills and understanding from Year 2. Their achievement is unsatisfactory. The achievement of other pupils, including those with special educational needs, together with those who have English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
50. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of number and the rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They are confident in measuring, particularly in units of length and time. They show good skills in being able to interpret the information shown on graphs. In Year 3, higher-attaining pupils have not made enough progress and much of their work shows no significant improvement over that achieved in Year 2. They are not sufficiently challenged or extended in all aspects of the subject. Across the school, pupils' use and application of mathematics in investigations and problem solving whilst satisfactory is not a sufficiently strong feature.
51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there are significant inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between year groups. Teaching in Year 2 is good and has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they are successful in challenging all pupils to succeed. Because work is demanding and teachers have high expectations, pupils show great enthusiasm in lessons and work hard. They show a particular delight in wanting to ask and answer questions. Teaching in Year 3 is satisfactory, with strengths in the teaching of number. However, teaching does not challenge higher-attaining pupils sufficiently. Although they are taught in two sets by ability, teachers' planning does not consistently meet the wide range of learning needs within each set, especially for higher-attaining pupils. Weaknesses in planning contribute to underachievement. Pupils are not encouraged to take care and pride in their work and marking does not tell pupils how well they are doing or what they need to do in order to improve.
52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has identified the need to improve pupils' use and application of mathematics in investigations and problem solving. She has attended in-service training on this aspect and provided good support for colleagues through recent school-based training. However, the impact of this is at a very early but encouraging stage of development. The main weakness is that the co-ordinator does not have sufficient opportunities to monitor the quality of provision including in Year 3 and therefore has not been in a position to identify whether pupils are learning in a consistent manner.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. The school has not developed the use of mathematics across the curriculum well enough. There is very little evidence to show that pupils are using and applying key mathematical skills in other subjects, especially in the use of measurement in science. There are too few examples of pupils using information and communication technology to support their learning in mathematics, especially in handling data.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good because there are well planned opportunities to carry out experimental and investigative tasks.
- The support of pupils with special educational needs is effective in promoting their learning.
- Relatively little work is recorded in pupils' books which limits the development of recording skills and assessment opportunities.
- Assessment information and that from the monitoring of teaching and learning is not used well enough to identify areas for further improvement.

### Commentary

54. Teacher assessments in 2004 show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was below average, whilst an average number achieved the higher levels. These assessments indicate that the strongest area of pupils' knowledge was that of physical processes whilst a weaker area was their understanding of experimental and investigative science. However, scrutiny of pupils' recent work indicates that teacher assessment is on the cautious side and that standards may well be higher than recent assessments indicate. Inspection findings are that standards are average for the age of the pupils both in Year 2 and Year 3 and they are growing in confidence to carry out experiments.
55. Many children enter school with below average levels of knowledge and understanding of the world around them, from this low base they achieve well as they progress through the school. All groups of pupils including boys and girls, those with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their abilities. Pupils make better progress now than they did in the previous inspection largely because there are lots of well planned opportunities to carry out open ended investigations. For instance, pupils in Year 2 make good progress when learning about electricity by constructing electrical circuits to make a model lighthouse light up in work associated with a story they have recently studied. Similarly, pupils in Year 1 make good progress in investigating which materials would be most suitable to make an umbrella to keep a teddy dry.
56. Teaching and learning are good, especially in Year 2 where pupils are managed very effectively. Pupils really enjoy their work and concentrate well so that even those with quite severe emotional and behavioral difficulties do well. Particularly effective use is made of experienced support staff who work closely with pupils so that they make good progress in constructing their electrical circuits. Pupils' success ensures that they do not become frustrated, which builds their self-esteem well. However, the sample of pupils' work indicates that relatively few activities are recorded for pupils to refer to or for staff to use for assessment purposes. Whilst there is a worthy focus upon practical activities, limited recording activities do not do enough to enhance pupils' writing skills or their use of a scientific vocabulary. The sample of pupils' work in Year 3 indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory but that currently some higher-attaining pupils are not challenged at a high enough level.



57. Leadership of the subject is currently satisfactory, but the newly appointed co-ordinator has lots of potential to develop her role in leading the staff team further forward. This includes ideas to develop more formalised assessment procedures to identify the small steps for further improvement. Management of the subject is satisfactory, although the co-ordinator has few opportunities to monitor at first hand the quality of teaching and learning in the subject and therefore be in a position to identify areas for improvement. Currently the use of information and communication technology to support learning is unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is not taught to sufficient depth.
- Pupils do not use information and communication technology sufficiently in other subjects, especially numeracy and science.
- The use of information and communication technology is not embedded in teachers' planning.
- The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

58. By the end of Year 2 and Year 3, standards are below expectations and the achievement of all pupils, irrespective of ability, gender or ethnicity is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not spend enough time working with information and communication technology to cover the depth of knowledge, skills and understanding required by the National Curriculum. Standards have not risen since the previous inspection and there has been unsatisfactory overall improvement in provision.
59. In Year 2, pupils are confident in using the tools of a graphics program and this is the strongest aspect of their work. Word-processing skills are at a basic level and pupils do not use these skills sufficiently to support their work in literacy. There is evidence that pupils know how to use a digital camera and higher-attaining pupils have produced a storybook showing good links between word-processing and digital photographs. However, this is a rarity. In Year 3, skills are at the very basic level of changing font size and font colour and in loading clipart. Poems linking text and clipart are at a very low level for Year 3. The amount of recorded work is very limited. In Year 3, pupils' ability to send e-mails is at a level expected for their age, although their application of literacy skills is weak, especially spelling. Pupils are still very insecure in entering the username and password to access the school's network.
60. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and have a significant impact on the standards achieved. The weakness stems from teachers not planning consistently for information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in lessons. When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy learning and there are strengths, especially in Year 2 where teachers encourage pupils to demonstrate to each other the key features of a graphics program. Classroom displays do not promote the subject, especially in the areas surrounding the 'computer banks' in each classroom.

61. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There are strengths in the subject co-ordinators support for teachers, especially in terms of providing new hardware and in giving technical support. However, as there are few opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision, the co-ordinator does not have a sufficient grasp of weaknesses in the subject, especially in the use and application of information and communication technology in other subjects.

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

62. Pupils' use of information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not spend enough time developing and using key skills when they are working in other subjects, especially in mathematics and science. There are exceptions. In Year 2, there are good links with history when pupils use a graphics program to 'paint' exciting pictures of the 'Great Fire of London'.

### **HUMANITIES**

63. No lessons were observed in history and geography therefore it is not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of provision, teaching or learning. In **geography**, the subject co-ordinator recognises that pupils are not developing their skills of geographical enquiry in sufficient depth. Work seen in pupils' books show that they have a basic understanding of how to draw maps and plans. In Year 3, pupils have a limited understanding of the wider world. There is little evidence to suggest that pupils use and apply key numeracy or information and communication technology skills in the subject.
64. In **history**, pupils have a good understanding of and interest in key historical events, including the Great Fire of London and Florence Nightingale. They have some opportunities to write about the events they have found out about but opportunities are missed to develop depth to pupils' descriptive writing. Good use is made of an information and communication technology graphics program to create colourful pictures depicting the Great Fire of London. In Year 3, pupils are successful in downloading from the Internet pictures to support their learning on what it was like to be an evacuee in World War 2. Teachers provide interesting displays of posters and artefacts to promote pupils' interest in this aspect of history.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' knowledge of different faiths is good.
- They are able to talk confidently about aspects of their work at a spiritual level.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good, leading to good improvement since the previous inspection and further current development.

### **Commentary**

65. By the end of Year 2, standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils with special educational

- needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in all activities and discussions and their achievement is consequently good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Evidence to substantiate judgements in Year 3 is limited but that available indicates standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Overall standards have improved since the previous inspection.
66. Teaching and learning are good overall and in the Year 2 lesson seen, they were very good. Teachers ensure that pupils' experiences are meaningful and enjoyable. Teachers value pupils' personal thoughts and their own experiences and encourage them to contribute these to discussions. Pupils therefore feel valued and are confident to contribute. Consequently, pupils show a good, developing knowledge and understanding of religious education.
67. The curriculum gives pupils opportunities to develop a good knowledge of Christianity, a good awareness of Islam as the second faith studied and an overview of a third major faith in each year group. Pupils are starting to gain knowledge of how different religions inter-relate. In Year 2, after talking about the significance of a Christian Baptism, pupils extend their understanding by considering Jewish Prayers and how they would write their own to welcome the new baby. This lesson was very well rounded off with pupils taking part in a very effective Baptism in a 'Church' created in a role-play area in the school. A similar level of spiritual discussion was seen also in a Year 1 lesson when pupils talked, with knowledge and confidence, about Joseph's dreams and what they thought the bowing sheaves of corn meant in his dream. In both lessons, the quality of discussion was good. The ideas pupils put forward were spontaneous and at a level beyond those expected for pupils of this age. Good links are made to speaking and listening and religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
68. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has only had this responsibility since the beginning of the current school year but has already made a good start to leading and managing the subject. The school has fully met the requirements of the key issues raised in the previous inspection report. The subject leader and senior managers have thought hard about the suitability of recommendations made in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and have developed a scheme of work, which is in line with the locally agreed syllabus, but also appropriate to the learning needs and experiences of these pupils. Since the previous inspection, standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum have all improved. There has therefore been a good level of improvement since then.

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

69. No lessons were observed in art and design or design and technology. It is therefore not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of provision in these subjects. However, it is immediately evident on entry to the school that there are strengths in **art and design** because of the high quality displays of pupils' work. These are extensive and very attractive, add considerable value to the development of a positive learning environment, and raise pupils' self-esteem. The displays interest the pupils and parents who are justifiably proud of the quality of the work produced. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that a strong curriculum is in place and that there are many very positive features about the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are taught basic art skills in a carefully planned manner so they are able to make good quality observational drawings and apply other techniques to their work. There is especially good work in the style of famous artists, currently Monet, and with some high quality work in the style of Degas recently produced from special work linked to

the 'Take One Picture' project. All staff are firmly committed to maintaining the school's strength in the arts, which makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

70. Scrutiny of pupils' work in **design and technology** indicates a satisfactory curriculum is securely in place. There has been good work in Year 2 when preparing for and making a sock puppet. Pupils have good opportunities to develop such skills as sewing in order to improve their decorative techniques on the puppets. Planning in Year 2 to make a wind up mechanism shows an awareness of the importance of the design element in such activities so that subsequent work achieves its aims. Photographic evidence indicates that pupils in Year 3 have had opportunities to design, make and decorate a box to hold individual Christmas cakes, which they baked and iced. Whilst not a lot of recent design work or evaluations of how successful the work has been were available for scrutiny, discussions and planning indicate all elements of such work are in place.
71. As few activities were observed in **music**, it is not possible to make judgements about the overall quality of provision. As part of its drive to provide an "arts rich" curriculum, the school takes every opportunity to provide valuable and very effective experiences, which develop good musical skills, as well as inviting members of the community to support the subject. These opportunities help to instill the visible love and enjoyment of music and performance seen during the inspection. Music adds significantly to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of pupils' education.
72. Singing was the only activity seen during the inspection, but the enthusiasm for this was obvious. During assemblies and in the Year 2 group lesson seen, pupils joined in excitedly, singing with a rare confidence and pleasure in their very good achievement. A positive feature of both activities seen was the way in which large groups of pupils worked together to sing to the highest quality they could. They sang very well together in groups, singing songs in rounds with a high degree of accuracy. They were very well led and supported by the teachers who encouraged them to perform to a high level and with confidence. In both lessons, teachers engaged pupils' interest with their own enthusiasm. Parents are right in their view that the school is very good at music and that staff inspire many of the pupils.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to the range of activities.
- Good use is made of curriculum enrichment activities to boost pupils' skills.
- There have been few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

## Commentary

73. Standards are average for all year groups. Pupils achieve well, which indicates most are making better progress than they did at the last inspection. Children enter the school with skills that are below average for their age. In the Foundation Stage, they make very rapid progress and some groups enter Key Stage 1 with physical skills that are slightly above average for their age. However, this is not seen in all cohorts and

the current Year 2, which contains a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than other groups, has skills that are largely average for their age. Pupils in Year 3 have average skills when practising their ball skills with a coach from the local professional football club. Pupils in Year 1 have average skills in throwing, catching, bouncing and dribbling a variety of different sized balls. Photographic evidence shows that all pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop gymnastic skills when using large apparatus in the school hall. Discussions with pupils indicate they have positive attitudes to all areas of the curriculum. Most try hard and are keen to join in the range of activities.

74. Teaching in the subject is good overall. Pupils learn well and make good progress. This is seen when pupils in Year 3 make good progress in country dancing when taught by staff with an interest in this area, which is transmitted to the pupils well. Staff manage pupils effectively, so that even when quite excited most behave well and do what is asked of them. Staff have good awareness of the need to motivate pupils with special educational needs and involve them well, as seen when pupils are chosen to give out and collect equipment and pass instructions to other pupils. However, occasionally, there is more emphasis on simply enjoying activity and in randomly using equipment and not enough emphasis is placed on the specific and sequential development of skills. For instance in Year 1, there was insufficient emphasis on how to throw or kick a ball properly. While photographic evidence indicates full use of gym equipment from an early age, this does not always appear to extend learning progressively in systematic development of basic skills.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The current subject leader is providing short-term leadership of the subject during a temporary staffing situation. A particular strength of subject improvement has been the development of a strong program of curriculum enrichment activities. These include the work of hockey and badminton coaches; work with a dance teacher, after-school ball skills activities and links with basketball and rugby teams. All of these activities are successful in enriching the curriculum and are positive features appreciated by pupils and parents. However, there have been few opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, which makes it difficult for the school to ascertain if skills are developed in a progressive and sequential manner.

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

76. No lessons were seen in personal, social and health education and citizenship, so it is not possible to report in full or to judge provision. There is a good policy in place with a strong emphasis on promoting the pupils' self-esteem and social skills. The provision is planned effectively through discussions and within other subjects and supports the pupils' personal development well. Although there is no school council, pupils' views are regularly sought on matters of school improvement. The pupils benefit from the school's work to achieve the Healthy School's Award. The pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is an aspect of the school's work that underpins and threads throughout the curriculum and the ethos of the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>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>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	2
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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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