

INSPECTION REPORT

**SHARNBROOK JOHN GIBBARD LOWER
SCHOOL**

Sharnbrook

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109478

Headteacher: Mrs S Kaznowski

Lead inspector: Mr P Martin

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th January 2005

Inspection number: 267647

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Lower School
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 - 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 134

School address: High Street
Sharnbrook
Bedford
Bedfordshire

Postcode: MK44 1PF

Telephone number: 01234 781328

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of Mrs E Carr-Archer
governors:

Date of previous 28th June 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Sharnbrook John Gibbard Lower School is a small lower school catering for 134 boys and girls aged between four and nine years of age.
- Most pupils, about 96 per cent, come from a white British background.
- Other pupils have a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- Less than one per cent of pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, about nine per cent, is below the national average.
- Two per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs. This is about average.
- Pupils come from above average socio-economic backgrounds.
- Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above average.
- Eleven pupils left the school and seven arrived at times other than usual during the last school year. This was mainly due to the relocation of parents who work locally at a large multinational company.
- The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2002 and Schools Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection and has been in post for two years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23262	Mr P Martin	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English as an additional language Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
32142	Mrs B Richmond	Team inspector	Special educational needs English French Geography History Religious education Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** and improving school which provides good value for money. Pupils start school with above average standards, and through good teaching, all learn and achieve well. Good leadership and management from the headteacher and governors have helped to secure good improvement in standards and in the quality of education since the previous inspection.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils reach very good standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
- Children in the reception class are prepared well for their next stages of education.
- The good quality of teaching results in good learning and achievement.
- Pupils are supported and cared for very well and they develop very good attitudes to school which are reflected in their very good behaviour.
- The good curriculum is very well enriched by a very good range of clubs, visits to places of interest and visitors to school.
- Leadership and management are good overall. However, subject co-ordinators do not do enough formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Teachers do not consistently use information and communication technology well enough to enhance teaching and learning in other subjects.
- The outside area for children in the reception class is not immediately accessible, restricting its use in developing an outdoor curriculum.

The school has made a good degree of improvement and has successfully dealt with most of the key issues from the previous report. However, although there has been an improvement in some aspects of the outdoor resources for children in the reception class, there is still no easy access to an outdoor area. The school has made good improvements in standards in English, mathematics and science, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, the care, guidance and support offered to pupils and the partnership the school has with parents and the wider community.

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	A	A	A*	A
Writing	A	A	A*	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A

Key: A - very high; 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 is **good**. Children start in the reception class with above average attainment, and by the time they start Year 1, they have reached above average standards in mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. They reach well above average standards in personal and social development and communication, language and literacy. By the end of Year 2, boys and girls reach well above average standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. These standards are maintained in the junior classes and, by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 4, attainment for both boys and girls in English, mathematics and science continues to be well above average. Standards in information and communication technology are about what they should be for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, although they do not use their skills consistently in other subjects. In religious education and music, standards are above those expected from pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. There are few pupils from ethnic minority groups, but they achieve well and reach the same standards as their classmates. Those very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are achieving well.

The school promotes positive attitudes and values. Consequently, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **very good**. Pupils enjoy being in school, resulting in very good attendance and good punctuality. Their very good attitudes and behaviour, and enthusiasm for all aspects of school life have a positive impact on their learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. The **good** quality of teaching throughout the school helps to ensure good learning and achievement. The school's procedures for measuring pupils' progress and using the findings for planning work are good. Tasks in lessons are usually well matched to pupils' ability and aid learning. Occasionally, however, work for higher-attaining pupils does not offer enough of a challenge. The curriculum is good and it covers the requirements of the National Curriculum with a breadth and depth that are important factors in raising and maintaining standards. There is a very good range of enrichment activities provided in lessons and out of normal school hours. Very good links with parents, other schools and the local community have a very good impact on pupils' learning. Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are also very good and mean that pupils' welfare is safeguarded and positive attitudes and values are fostered very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's further improvement, shared by the staff and the governing body. The governing body is effective. The headteacher, staff and governors have created effective teams and developed a very good ethos, leading to high standards, good achievement and a very inclusive school. However, some subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning of their subjects.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils are very happy with the school. Parents voiced very few concerns at the parents' meeting held before the inspection or on the questionnaire canvassing their views. The overwhelming majority are very happy with their children's standards, achievements and behaviour and with the way the school looks after them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve still further are¹:

- Develop the monitoring and evaluation role of subject co-ordinators.
- Extend the use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Make the outdoor area more immediately accessible to children in the reception class.

¹ The school has already identified these as being the most important areas for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Boys and girls of all ability levels and ages, including those with special educational needs, achieve **well**. Standards in all core subjects are **well above average** at the end of Years 2 and 4. The few pupils from ethnic minority groups achieve as well as their classmates.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- They reach standards well above those expected in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' standards and achievement have made a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection.
- Children in the reception class have a good start to their school careers.
- Information and communication technology skills, though satisfactory, are not used widely enough in other subjects.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

- 1 Children start the reception class with standards of attainment above those expected of children of that age. Because of good teaching and an effective Foundation Stage team, they learn well and by the time they start Year 1, they have achieved and gone beyond the early learning goals² in all the areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, children have reached levels that are well above those expected.

Key Stage 1

- 2 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 show that pupils' performance was very high in comparison with all schools nationally in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. When compared with schools in similar contexts, standards in each of these subjects were well above average. Teachers judged that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in science was very high in comparison with the national average and that reaching the higher level was well above average. The trend

² Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning. For example, in language and literacy, children should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

in improvement is above that of schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

- 3 Inspection findings show that pupils achieve well from an above average starting point. Because of good teaching and pupils' very good attitudes to learning, they reach well above average standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Most pupils reach at least the expected level, Level 2, and an above average proportion of them reach the higher level, Level 3. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when standards in speaking, listening and reading were above average and average in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology match those expected from pupils of this age, but pupils do not consistently make enough use of the technology when learning about other subjects, although there are some good examples of this.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.7 (18.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	17.6 (17.1)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.4 (18.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Key Stage 2

- 4 Pupils leave school at the end of Year 4. No comparisons of performance with national figures are available. However, the results of the school's own assessments for pupils in Year 4 in 2004 show that pupils leave school at the end of Year 4 with well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's data shows that pupils have made good progress since Year 2. They at least maintained the well above average standards they reached in the National Curriculum tests at that time, and a good proportion improved. Inspection findings are that standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and that pupils achieve well. This is because they are well taught, have very good attitudes to their work and experience a good curriculum, all of which enhance their learning. Standards have improved well since the previous inspection. At that time, standards in the three subjects were above average. By the end of Year 4, standards in information and communication technology are at the level expected for similarly aged pupils, but they do not use the skills they learn consistently enough in learning other subjects.
- 5 Good teaching and a broad curriculum in religious education and in music mean that pupils learn well and develop above average levels of knowledge and understanding in both by the end of Years 2 and 4.
- 6 Pupils from different ethnic minority groups, including the very few who speak English as an additional language, achieve as well as their classmates.

- 7 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their needs. They have good plans to aid their learning and most targets on these plans are useful and suitably challenging. A few targets on some plans, however, lack specificity and do not allow progress to be gauged easily enough. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Teachers and support staff value the work that pupils do, and this encourages them to try hard to make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good** and reflect the **very good** provision that the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school fosters and encourages positive attitudes and behaviour very well in all pupils.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to reflect on or explore relevant issues.
- Relationships are very good.

Commentary

- 8 Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and the work they do. These stem from the positive attitudes they bring to school as well as the work the school does to make their life at school interesting and fulfilling. Consequently, pupils work hard, and this greatly benefits their learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils were very interested in their work on sorting different kinds of paper and wanted to continue working through playtime. The very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school, good teaching and an interesting curriculum lead to very good behaviour. Relationships between pupils are, for the most part, pleasant and harmonious. During lessons, pupils work well together and this aids their learning. Year 3 pupils talked together well during an English lesson when evaluating their sandwich recipes. Pupils demonstrate a very good degree of self-confidence as they take part in lessons and in discussions. When pupils talk about the things they enjoy about school, they include lessons as well as activities outside normal lesson times. They are clear about how their education is of benefit to them now and in the future. One pupil noted that it is useful to be able to read because then he could learn the rules of games.
- 9 Personal development is very good, and much improved since the previous inspection. Pupils demonstrate a good level of respect for each other and the work they do. During assembly, pupils watched carefully as Year 4 pupils demonstrated Indian dance and listened to the accompanying music without any degree of self-consciousness from performers or audience. However, pupils do not always get enough time to explore or reflect on ideas or issues during assemblies, including class assemblies. Pupils support a range of local and national charities, for example, showing initiative when fundraising for a recent disaster. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of a number of the major world faiths. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and the fact that their own behaviour has an impact on how well they and others learn. Pupils fulfil their responsibilities very well. Older pupils willingly act as buddies for reception-aged children during playtime. This helps the older pupils to take on responsibility as well as enhancing younger children's play and cementing the school community. Pupils' participation in activities and clubs outside normal lesson times fosters their social development very well. For example, the dance and drama and the music clubs participate in countywide school events. Year 4 pupils take on further responsibilities during a residential visit. A thoughtful display in the Year 4 classroom explains how pupils can help a new

arrival with little English to feel welcome. There has been a good improvement in pupils' cultural development. The good curriculum helps to ensure that they gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures, for example, through art, music and the humanities. Visitors make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of other groups they may meet. A recent visit from an Imam helped pupils to begin to understand Islam. In the reception class, a visitor shared photographs and objects from his life in Kenya.

- 10 Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They respond well to the encouragement they receive, which helps to boost their confidence and enable them to take pride in their achievements. They behave very well, even when their behaviour has previously been a barrier to their own learning.

Exclusions

- 11 There has been one fixed-term exclusion this school year. Where a pupil's behaviour has been a barrier to learning for himself and others, the school has taken firm and definite action, and this has resulted in a good level of support which helps to overcome this barrier and re-establish very good conduct

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	128	1	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

Attendance

- 12 Attendance is very good, and is well above the national average. The school has very good procedures to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality. Most pupils arrive punctually in the morning and are very keen to come to school. However, a small number are often late, and parents are reminded regularly of the effect this has on the start of the school day and on their children's progress.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

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

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are **good**. The school cares for pupils **very well**, and offers **very good** guidance and support. It has **very good** links with parents, other schools and institutions, and with the local community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** throughout the school. This leads to a **good** quality of learning for all pupils. The use of assessment procedures to raise standards of attainment and improve achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are very well planned and prepared so they interest and engage pupils, thus aiding their learning.
- Teachers use effective methods to secure good learning.
- Learning support assistants provide very good support for all pupils and help them to learn.
- There are no common assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Commentary

- 13 The quality of teaching is good at all stages, leading to a good quality of learning, and has improved well since the last inspection. At that time, teaching was judged to be satisfactory with many good features. Teaching in just under half of the lessons seen at that time was good, but there was no very good teaching. Teaching is now good, with some very good features. During this inspection, the teaching in over half of the lessons seen was good and very good in nearly a quarter of all lessons seen. This good quality of teaching is a significant factor in the improvement in standards. The last inspection report noted that there were not enough open-ended activities, nor did teachers expect high enough standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work. Both of these key issues have been successfully dealt with. Teachers expect and receive neat, well-presented work and lessons offer a range of activities that enable pupils to use their initiative, for example, when researching various topics.
- 14 Teachers' planning is a strength. All lessons have clear and relevant purposes that are shared with the pupils so they know what they are expected to learn. Teachers ensure that lessons include relevant and motivating activities that encourage a good level of participation, thus enhancing learning. Lessons move along at a good pace, and this helps to keep pupils involved and interested. In an excellent physical education lesson, Year 2 pupils became fully engaged in creating a winter dance and reached very high standards as a result. Teachers use a very good range of effective methods so all pupils can benefit from the lessons. In a good English lesson, Year 3 pupils successfully made jam sandwiches according to the recipes they had written. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers. They are an important part of the learning teams that help all pupils, including any for whom English is an additional language, to learn well. In Year 1, the learning support assistant helped higher ability pupils to extend their understanding when sorting different types of paper. Teachers usually match the level of work to pupils' ability well. Pupils usually work very hard in lessons once they get going, although a few Year 4 pupils are sometimes slow to start, and this slows their progress at these times. Teachers quickly identify how well pupils are learning and modify lessons if necessary. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher noted that pupils were having problems because of the way they wrote out their addition and offered guidance to correct this.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	5	19	2	0	0	0

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

- 15 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers use a wide range of successful strategies to motivate, involve and challenge pupils, and regularly monitor the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. Learning support assistants support these pupils and make a valuable contribution to their achievements.
- 16 Procedures for gauging pupils' standards and achievements are good. Teachers use a range of formal tests and informal assessments well when assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and use these effectively to identify what pupils need to learn to make further progress. The effective procedures are used very well in the reception class. Procedures in other subjects, and their use, whilst satisfactory, do not follow a common pattern across the school. Marking is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced a new marking policy which is used well in English to offer useful advice and guidance and due praise. The system has not yet spread fully to other subjects in which, although marking is satisfactory, it does not give enough attention to incorrect spellings of key vocabulary.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**, with **very good** enrichment. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good cross-curricular links aid pupils' learning.
- The curriculum supports all pupils' learning well.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Extracurricular provision enriches the curriculum very well.
- Pupils are very well prepared for later stages of education.
- In spite of a number of improvements, and despite the school's best efforts, reception-aged children do not have direct access to the outside.

Commentary

- 17 There has been a good improvement in the curriculum since the time of the last inspection. There is now a broad range of worthwhile activities and experiences that cater well for the needs of all pupils. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and collective worship. Subjects are linked together well to make learning meaningful for pupils. In particular, pupils use literacy and

numeracy skills well across the curriculum. Although the information and communication technology curriculum is satisfactory in terms of ensuring that pupils gain the required skills and understanding in the subject, the technology is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects.

- 18 Educational visits, visitors from different walks of life with particular skills and interests, and a very good range of extracurricular clubs offer a very good level of enrichment. For example, an Imam has recently visited the school to talk about Islam, and pupils visit the village church and a local Gurdwara. These activities make a good contribution to religious education. Visitors to the reception class explain about life in other countries and the music curriculum is enriched by drumming sessions led by an instructor from the county's music service. There is a very good range of clubs for sporting, artistic and musical activities, and a large number of pupils avail themselves of the good opportunities for instrumental tuition.
- 19 Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils, including the higher-attaining pupils, benefit from the full range of lessons and activities provided. Teachers plan work that usually challenges pupils at the correct level, and where pupils need extra help, staff identify these needs early and arrange for the necessary support. If pupils have specific needs, the school ensures that the necessary resources are available. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils, and has begun to provide more challenging activities for these pupils.
- 20 Children and pupils are very well prepared for subsequent stages of learning. The school's strong emphasis on personal development helps pupils to become responsible individuals and keen learners. There are good procedures to ensure that pupils move successfully to their next class, and the school works very closely with the local middle school to ensure a smooth transition for pupils. Year 4 pupils take part in a residential visit to Norfolk with other Year 4 pupils from neighbouring schools who will all go on to attend the same middle school. This makes a valuable contribution to their social development, as well as preparing them for the next stage of their education. Pupils' well above average standards in English, mathematics and science help to prepare them well for further learning at the middle school.
- 21 Accommodation is good, but the lack of an immediately accessible outdoor area for the reception class has not been fully dealt with. Nonetheless, the school works hard to ensure that these children have as full an outdoor curriculum as possible. The school has made a good improvement in outside resources and play equipment for these children. They have timetabled access to the playground and a dedicated grassed area. Plans were drawn up to improve access, but these had to be put on hold because of changes in building regulations that meant the proposed ramp would be too steep. The site manager maintains the building and grounds very well, keeping classrooms and other areas bright, clean and tidy. Improvements to the school's accommodation have been made, in particular to storage areas, the hall and the library. High quality displays in classrooms and other areas stimulate an interest in and support learning as well as celebrating the work that pupils do.

Resources are up-to-date and in good order. They make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** advice and guidance. Pupils have **good** opportunities to have a voice in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a happy and safe environment where pupils are valued and well cared for.
- Pupils' health and safety at school are assured through very good procedures.
- Teachers effectively identify how well pupils are developing.
- Excellent relationships support pupils' individual needs very well
- Very good induction arrangements help children to settle quickly into school routines.
- Pupils are encouraged to share their concerns and ideas for improvements.

Commentary

- 22 The school has made a good degree of improvement since the last inspection and now has very good procedures in place to monitor all aspects of care and guidance. All staff, including teachers and learning support assistants, are committed to ensuring that all pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. They know and support pupils very well. The special educational needs co-ordinator has designed and produced some very useful 'child friendly' booklets. These explain to the pupils what their targets are, what they are learning and why. These booklets also help pupils to record their progress so they know how well they are doing.
- 23 Parents speak highly of the level of pastoral care their children receive, and consider this a significant strength of the school. Staff and governors follow very good procedures to ensure that all health and safety issues are dealt with promptly and that formal risk assessments are completed regularly. Child protection procedures are very good and fully meet the statutory requirements. Pupils have very trusting relationships with their teachers and learning support assistants, and this makes a strong contribution to their progress and achievements.
- 24 The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' personal achievements. Pupils help to set their own targets, which are reviewed regularly with the support of parents. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support through well organised individual education plans. During lessons, learning support assistants provide very good quality support which enables pupils of different abilities to be included in all learning activities. The school cares very well for pupils with special educational needs. Their work is regularly monitored to ensure that they are making progress towards the targets set for them.

- 25 Induction arrangements are very good and the school works closely with the adjacent pre-school. Children settle quickly into the reception class and parents are encouraged to be involved through the very good quality of information they receive. The school's close links with the middle schools ensures that pupils in Year 4 are well prepared for their transition through their involvement in a variety of joint activities and information evenings for parents. Pupils joining the school at different times are welcomed and receive a high level of care and support. The school quickly and effectively gauged the needs of a newly-arrived pupil at an early stage of learning English and put a good level of support in place.
- 26 The school makes good arrangements to involve pupils in ideas for improving the school environment. Pupils have recently completed a questionnaire and shared their views of the school with staff. They are involved well in discussions during assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons. This has resulted in pupils helping to write their own playground rules, which they understand and value. Pupils are confident that the school listens to what they have to say, and they are proud of their responsibilities as monitors and playground buddies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school welcomes parents and is committed to maintaining a strong partnership to support children's learning.
- Parents' views are sought and valued in the development of the school's work.
- Regular communications, including curriculum information, keep parents well informed.
- Reports provide parents with clear information about progress
- The very strong links with the community and other schools enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

- 27 The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, and has continued to develop a close partnership with parents to improve the quality of education, standards and achievement. Parents are very supportive and find the school approachable and their views valued. Parents are almost unanimous in their high opinion of the school and are very satisfied with their children's progress. A group of parents help regularly in classrooms and with extracurricular activities. The school benefits from the many offers of help from parents and members of the community to improve the learning environment. Regular fundraising activities organised by the Friends of John Gibbard are very well attended, and this provides the school with a good range of additional resources to support teaching and learning.
- 28 Parents are very satisfied with the helpful information they receive from the school. Home/school communication is very good, and includes regular newsletters, curriculum information and guidelines to help parents to support their children at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs receive a good amount of information about individual education plans and assessments. The school provides them with good information about how they can help their children. The prospectus and the governors' annual report have been improved and combined to provide a well-produced document that is attractively presented and informative. In addition to the informal opportunities for parents to speak to staff, many parents use the reading diaries regularly to communicate with class teachers. The annual reports to parents are good, and provide a clear statement about progress, what pupils have learnt and targets for improvement.
- 29 The school's links with the community are very good and this helps to enrich the curriculum and to foster pupils' progress and personal development. The school is well supported by local sports clubs who provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills through sport. Pupils take part in a range of village activities and events which help to develop their sense of citizenship. Members of the local community are regular visitors to talk to pupils about

special topics to support the curriculum, and pupils welcome the elderly into school for concerts and performances. The school's successful links with a national company which is based in the village are positively supporting a science project, and have helped in developing the environmental area and producing the new prospectus.

- 30 A very strong partnership with other schools makes a considerable contribution to the quality of education and to pupils' experiences and development. The school works very closely with a group comprising the partner middle school, other lower schools and the upper school. This provides pupils with the opportunity for joint activities and shared resources. The close working partnership between staff is particularly strong with the middle school to which most pupils transfer, and this has resulted in good liaison, including consultation to support the teaching of English and mathematics. The school also has close links with the pre-school group run on the same site. These links make a positive contribution to children's smooth transition to the reception class.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The headteacher provides **good** leadership, and the school is managed **well**. Governors carry out their roles well and governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is an effective leader and manager who has a very good vision for the school's development.
- Governors play a key role in shaping the direction of the school through the challenge and support they offer.
- All involved with the school have a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of age, gender, background or ethnicity, have every opportunity to succeed.
- Subject co-ordinators' roles are not developed sufficiently well to enable them to monitor and evaluate provision in subjects rigorously enough.
- Approaches to financial management are good and best value principles are central to management and the use of resources.
- Provision for special educational needs is led and managed well.

Commentary

- 31 The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by a supportive teaching team. All have high expectations of what they and the pupils can achieve. The headteacher's and governors' clear vision for improvement is effectively shared with all staff, who work hard for the benefit of the pupils. The headteacher has been successful in leading the development of teaching and the curriculum with some exciting innovations, particularly in the enrichment of the curriculum.
- 32 Overall, the quality of leadership by other staff is good, particularly as many of them are new to their roles. Their high expectations of what can be achieved by

staff and pupils are a strength. The commitment to continually improving pupils' attainment is evident. Members of staff work well as a team, and relationships between them are a positive feature of management. The school has good systems for the collection and analysis of data about pupils' standards and achievement in English and mathematics. Consequently, senior leaders and governors have access to a range of data, which they can use to inform strategic planning. Priorities for the future development of the school are relevant and well thought out. The management of the school is good overall. The subject co-ordinators' roles in monitoring and the evaluation of teaching and learning in their subjects is satisfactory. However, much of this is informal. Co-ordinators do not routinely check on teaching and learning in classrooms to identify good practice and where improvements are needed. The school has correctly identified this as an area for development. Performance management procedures are an integral part of the school's work, and teachers' targets for improvement are effectively matched to the school's development priorities. Staff relationships are very good and provide a very good model for pupils. The school is very well placed to improve further because there is consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school. A significant amount of this is very good.

- 33 Leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The provision outlined in Statements of Special Educational Need is fully in place and reviewed annually in line with the Code of Practice guidance. Good systems ensure that these pupils, including those with physical barriers to learning, are fully included in all aspects of school life. Resources are good, especially for those pupils who have physical and hearing impairments. Support staff are well deployed and receive good, well-focused training on a regular basis.
- 34 New teachers receive very good support. They are given the training, support and feedback they need to become effective practitioners, and this means they quickly have a positive impact on learning. There is a high emphasis on providing training for the professional development for all staff, sometimes in conjunction with other schools. Recruitment, retention and the workload of staff are managed very well. The school continues to consider how best to meet new requirements. Effective methods already introduced include releasing teachers to carry out administrative and planning tasks and using learning assistants to provide short-term cover when teachers are absent. Because of the good quality of teaching and learning and its thoughtful practice, the school makes a very good contribution towards teacher training.
- 35 Governance is good, exemplified by its effective influence on the direction to be taken by the school. The governing body is very supportive, but still prepared to challenge the senior managers when necessary. Good progress has been made in responding to issues for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report. The governing body fulfils all statutory duties.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	392 635
Total expenditure	368 635
Expenditure per pupil	2 508

Balance from previous year	26 755
Balance carried forward to the next	50 755

- 36 The governing body has a clear working knowledge of the principles of best value, and finances are now managed well. Last year, a significant amount of money was left unspent at the end of the year, largely due to difficulties the school experienced in retrieving accurate figures. However, much of this has now been spent in ways that improve the quality of education. The forecast for the underspend at the end of the current financial year is comfortably within recommended guidelines. Taking into account the effectiveness of the school and the funds available, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership and management of the reception class help to ensure good teaching and learning.
- Children build well on their prior attainment and surpass the early learning goals in all areas of learning because of the good teaching and learning,
- There is no immediate access to the playground for reception-aged children.

Commentary

- 37 Children in the reception class start school with, overall, above average attainment in relation to children of that age nationally. Most have benefited from attendance at the pre-school group which shares the school site. All start at the beginning of the school year in which they are five, so have the advantage of a full year's education before starting Year 1. Children achieve well, and by the end of the year, most will have reached well above average standards in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards in these subjects were good. In other areas of learning, the standards noted at the previous inspection have been maintained. Standards in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development are at least above average, but it was not possible to make a judgement about all aspects of these subjects during the inspection. Children are well placed to start Year 1 in all areas of learning. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in standards reached in personal and social development and communication, language and literacy.
- 38 Children's achievement is good because teaching is good and children learn well. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of children of this age and how they learn. She plans lessons that effectively match these needs and children's learning to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Consequently, learning is good. The teacher introduces lessons well, using demonstrations and discussions that both challenge and encourage children, for example, in a discussion about shapes. The activities have clear purposes aimed at developing a particular aspect of an area of learning, but which also encourage good learning in other areas. For example, a mathematics lesson about pattern included printing activities, which made a positive contribution to children's creative development. The nursery nurse offers very good support for children's learning by supporting groups and individuals, for example, encouraging discussion about the task in hand. The class teacher involves other adults, including students and parents, well.

- 39 The teacher uses a range of good strategies for gauging children's progress and achievements. The teacher uses these assessments very well in planning work for individual children so that they can build on strengths and reinforce those areas where they are not quite as strong. The assessments also help the teacher to identify those children who might have special educational needs, and appropriate support is offered. The Foundation Stage is led well, resulting in good teaching, learning and achievement. The teacher, who at the time of the inspection was a newly qualified teacher, is very ably supported by the headteacher. At the time of the last inspection, there were concerns about the outdoor resources. These have largely been effectively dealt with. The teacher plans a good range of lessons that make use of the playground and a grassed area set aside for this class. There are now enough large wheeled toys, such as carts and tricycles. However, the school's latest plans to provide immediate access to the outdoor area for these children foundered because of recent changes in building regulations. The lack of this immediate access places some limitations on the provision of an outdoor curriculum. However, the school works hard to overcome these.
- 40 Children achieve very well in **personal, social and emotional development**. Most easily surpass the learning goals in this area, and their development is very good. Children have settled well into daily routines and have a very good degree of independence for their age. This has a positive impact on their learning, for example, when they sit eagerly awaiting lesson introductions, and willingly take part in discussions. Children listen carefully and move quickly to their group or individual work without fuss, and change for physical education lessons, needing little help from adults. They play and work together very well, sharing ideas and equipment readily. Their very good behaviour and attitudes enhance their learning.
- 41 In **communication, language and literacy**, children achieve very well. They speak clearly, usually in full sentences, and confidently to each other and to adults. During lesson introductions, most are willing to contribute. During a talk from a visitor from Kenya, children showed they had been listening very well by asking relevant and sensible questions. Children listen carefully to stories, join in group reading and predict what might happen next in the story, basing their ideas on what they have heard. They know that text carries reading and many recognise letters and words, for example, those from the books they meet and their own names. Children accurately identify sounds at the beginning and end of words, and write the corresponding letters. A number write their own names and copy writing legibly.
- 42 Children's achievement in **mathematical development** is good. They recognise and name a range of two-dimensional shapes, such as triangle, rectangle and circle. They use these shapes thoughtfully to create their own patterns and pictures and discuss these with each other and the adult leading the group. The activities that the teacher plans encourage learning in other areas. For example, children create patterns by printing with different shapes and paint. This has a positive impact on their creative development. Children

are beginning to write recognisable numbers, but the team did not see enough work to make judgements about their numerical development.

- 43 It is clear from the work and lessons seen that children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** achievement is good. During the term in which the inspection took place, the 'hot-air balloon', a role-play area, visited a different country each week in order to enable children to find out about the way of life in that country. Visitors play an important part in this. For example, a visitor from Kenya showed an interesting range of images from Kenya that helped pupils to understand what life might be like there. These included scenes of city and village life, and children successfully began to make comparisons with their own experiences. They explore the properties of materials whilst playing with sand and water.
- 44 Standards seen in **physical development** and **creative development** were at least good. Children create pictures when printing. They use pencils, brushes and other tools with a good level of precision when doing so. They are confident in the playground and show a good level of co-ordination and control when playing on carts and trikes, or when playing with their friends. They enjoy singing. For example, a group of children creating patterns spontaneously broke into song, tunefully singing a Christmas carol they had learned the previous term. Children use the role-play areas well, engaging in imaginative play activities, for example, in the African house, hot-air balloon and office.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average throughout the school and pupils are achieving well.
- Effective teams of teachers and learning support assistants help to ensure that teaching and learning are good.
- The subject co-ordinator has helped to improve provision, but monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not yet used effectively in securing further improvements.
- Teachers do not correct misspelling of key vocabulary well enough.
- Pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects.

Commentary

- 45 In 2004, performance in the National Curriculum tests was very high in reading and writing when compared with all schools nationally, and well above average for similar schools. Inspection findings are that standards are at least well

above average in speaking and listening as well as in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. Standards for the current Year 4 pupils are also well above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards in reading were above average and in writing were average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils reach well and well above average standards by the end of Year 4 because of consistently effective teaching, resulting in good learning.

- 46 Both boys and girls of all ability levels achieve well, as do pupils from ethnic minority groups because class teachers support and challenge all pupils. The very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Occasionally, however, work for pupils with special educational needs is too challenging, and this slows their progress at the time.
- 47 Standards in speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to participate in lessons – they listen attentively to their teachers and one another, and articulate their thoughts well. They speak clearly to each other and adjust their speech according to the listener. In all classes, pupils competently and confidently ask and answer questions, participate in role-play and take part in discussions in different sized groups. For example, Year 1 pupils spoke and listened thoughtfully when thinking of questions to ask about dolphins.
- 48 Standards are very good in reading. This is because there is a good emphasis on learning letter names and sounds from the time the children start school. The school establishes a very good partnership with parents and reading diaries provide an important channel of communication between home and school. This supports pupils' learning. The school has recently focused on improving reading comprehension, and this has contributed well to pupils achieving well above average standards. The one guided reading session seen was well planned, resourced and taught. Recent improvements have resulted in a bright, welcoming and better-resourced library. Out-of-date books have been replaced and there is now a satisfactory range of non-fiction and fiction books.
- 49 Standards are very good in writing because teachers have clearly identified the small steps that pupils need to take to improve. Pupils often write in a range of different styles and for different purposes, applying their skills well in other subjects. They punctuate their writing well. Year 2 pupils used speech marks well when writing sentences spoken by characters in a story. There has been a good improvement in presentation and handwriting. Teachers are good role models and have high expectations that pupils' work will be neat and tidy. Pupils successfully meet these expectations.
- 50 Teaching and learning are good, with some very good elements, leading to good learning. Teachers usually use good assessment procedures well in planning work that is suitable for all pupils. However, higher ability pupils are occasionally insufficiently challenged, and their progress slows at these times. Teachers usually plan interesting and challenging activities, for example, making sandwiches when finding out about instructional text. Learning support

assistants play an important role in supporting pupils individually and in small groups. Marking has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers clearly indicate to pupils what has been done well and how they can improve, but they do not correct misspellings of key vocabulary often enough.

- 51 Leadership and management are good. Although the subject leader is relatively new to the role, she has a good vision for the development of this subject and has begun to monitor and evaluate provision. This has included visiting each class to inform her of how English is being taught throughout the school. However, formal procedures for checking teaching and learning with a view to making further improvements are not yet fully developed. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 52 Pupils apply and develop their language and literacy skills well in most other subjects. For example, they research information in books and on the Internet in history and geography. In most lessons, pupils discuss aspects of the theme at some time. Pupils write reports in science, and in most subjects they use their different writing skills, like note-taking and report-writing. However, although there is some good use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning, this is inconsistent.

French

The subject was sampled, and only one lesson was seen. It is not possible to make overall judgements about provision.

- 53 Pupils in Year 4 learn French. They are at an early stage and attain satisfactory standards for their age. In this satisfactory lesson, pupils showed evident enjoyment and excitement, and most participated fully in the lesson. It was clear that pupils enjoy this subject and are achieving satisfactorily. The teacher provided a good range of resources and used a good range of short activities to enhance learning. Pupils particularly enjoyed the singing. Pupils pronounce words clearly and correctly because the teacher models this well for them. Unfortunately, some pupils spoilt the group work by not getting on well because they were playing with the resources instead of participating in the planned role-play situations. The rest of the lesson was good, but the teacher missed opportunities to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding by asking them to formulate a sentence.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good subject co-ordination has led to a good improvement in provision.
- Good teaching draws on pupils' very good attitudes to work to produce very good standards.
- Information and communication technology is not used often enough in teaching and learning.

Commentary

- 54 In 2004, the school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics at the end of Year 2 was well above average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Inspection findings agree with this. Nearly all pupils reach the expected level for pupils at the end of Year 2, with a greater than average proportion reaching the higher level. This is similar to the picture found at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Year 4, standards are well above average. An overwhelming majority of pupils reach the level expected at this age, and a significant number reach higher levels. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection, when standards were above average. As pupils start Year 1 with above average standards of mathematical development, this represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils from ethnic minority groups, including those few at an early stage of learning English, also achieve well.
- 55 The quality of teaching is good, with some very good features. This consistently good teaching, coupled with pupils' very good attitudes to work, leads to good learning and achievement. A notable feature of pupils' understanding of mathematics is their understanding of different strategies for solving number

problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This stems from the knowledgeable approach that teachers take when planning lessons. Pupils respond very well to the challenge of finding answers, and their learning is enhanced. Year 3 pupils, for example, used different ways to add four numbers when trying to find certain totals in a number investigation based on a 100 number square. Higher-attaining pupils employed a good range of mental and written strategies and quickly realised that certain groups of numbers could not yield the answers they wanted. Teachers structure lessons well, and introductions are carefully used to introduce topics and reinforce pupils' knowledge. Year 2 pupils demonstrated a good mental recall of numbers that added to 10, which the teacher then effectively employed when teaching how to add 3 separate numbers. Again, pupils responded very well to the challenge. There is some use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning, for example, practice programs and constructing graphs. However, the technology is inconsistently used and has little impact on standards.

- 56 Teachers use very good procedures well to judge pupils' standards and achievement, ranging from formal testing to daily assessment. Teachers use the results of these assessments well in planning work and in modifying lessons when required. For example, some Year 4 pupils became confused when adding numbers in columns. This led the teacher to adjust her plans. Usually, teachers plan work that matches pupils' abilities well. Pupils with special educational needs receive a very good level of support from learning support assistants and other adults working in the classroom. The quality of marking is satisfactory, particularly when teachers employ the new marking policy which offers guidance to aid learning as well as offering praise where it is due. Sometimes, however, teachers do not correct misspellings of key vocabulary, such as incorrectly spelled names of shapes.
- 57 The subject is led and managed very well by the headteacher, who is also the subject co-ordinator. This is a key factor in helping to ensure good provision. The subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the national strategy for improving standards in mathematics. She has implemented effective procedures for identifying good features of provision in the subject and for dealing with weaknesses.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 58 Pupils make good use of mathematics in other subjects. For example, pupils are required to measure when making artefacts in design and technology. They take measurements using instruments such as stopwatches and thermometers in science, and record their results in table and graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers effectively base lessons on teaching skills in scientific enquiry.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to make a test fair.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to promote teaching and learning.

Commentary

- 59 Teachers judged that standards at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were very high in comparison with all schools nationally. All pupils reached the expected level, and the proportion reaching the higher level, Level 3, was well above average. This year, standards of attainment are similar in that most pupils reach the expected level and an above average number of pupils reach the higher level. By the end of Year 4, pupils also reach levels of attainment that are well above those expected of pupils of that age. Boys and girls of all ability levels, including those very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well.
- 60 Teaching is good and pupils learn well because of this. Teachers plan lessons that help pupils to learn enquiry skills as they learn scientific knowledge. In Year 1, pupils learned very well when investigating the properties of paper by observation. They thoroughly enjoyed their work, to the extent that a number wanted to continue after the end of the lesson. Teachers help pupils of different ability levels to learn well by ensuring that their work matches their ability. Year 2 pupils were well supported by adults working in small groups investigating the properties of solids, liquids and gases. Higher ability pupils were asked to think about why they might be different, rather than just note they were. The very good level of support and resources, including helium-filled balloons, helped them to do this. Pupils participated eagerly and came excitedly back into the classroom at playtime, noting that they had found other liquids around the school, including liquid soap from the toilets. Year 4 pupils consolidate this learning, and all are asked to consider why there are differences. The teacher uses class discussion well, asking pupils to talk about their ideas with each other, but does not always extend this to asking pupils to clarify their thoughts when explaining to the whole class. Because of the good teaching and pupils' keen participation, pupils' behaviour was very good. In discussion, Year 4 pupils reveal a good understanding of what makes a test fair, noting that as few things as possible should be changed when testing an idea, for example, comparing how quickly sugar and salt dissolve.
- 61 The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator offers a good deal of informal support and looks at the quality of pupils' work and is currently working on ways to develop the satisfactory assessment systems. However, she has not recently monitored and evaluated teaching and learning in a more formal way. Good links with a locally-based multinational company have a positive impact on the curriculum through an interchange of visits. The school's grounds are being developed well to provide a wildlife area. Trees have been planted, scrub cleared and the pond and a bird-watching hide renovated. Planning and

pupils' work show that pupils meet and learn a good range of scientific skills and knowledge. They make good use of their literacy skills in recording their investigations, writing notes and talking with each other. Year 1 pupils used their very good reading skills when researching how paper is made. However, recording requirements of scientific investigations in Year 4, though accurate, sometimes do not provide enough stimulation or give pupils enough chances to extend their scientific thinking and application of knowledge. There is little use of information and communication technology in teaching or learning, for example, in recording and displaying results, simulations or research. Provision in the subject has improved well since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 have improved, as has teaching in Years 3 and 4.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information and communication technology is underused in teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Good resources and accommodation make a positive contribution to provision.

Commentary

62 By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils reach standards in information and communication technology that are about those expected of pupils of their age. Their achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, leading to a satisfactory quality of learning. An examination of pupils' work shows that they are learning a satisfactory range of information and communication technology skills. The school has a good range of resources, including a recently installed suite. The Year 3 teacher used the suite well when teaching pupils how to find facts from a database. Pupils enjoyed this activity and compare the ease of finding information in this way with sorting through records on paper or card. In a well-taught lesson, Year 4 pupils used a graphics program well to create repeating patterns as the result of the teacher's effective planning and use of resources. However, some pupils were slow to settle, and this slowed progress at the start of the lesson.

63 The subject is soundly led and managed. The co-ordinator has helped to ensure that there is a coherent curriculum so pupils can progressively learn the required skills. The computer suite is a real asset, but as it has been recently installed along with an interactive whiteboard, its use has not yet had its planned impact on provision. The school has recognised this and is considering ways to make improvements. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards noted during the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64 Information and communication technology is not used consistently enough in teaching and learning in other subjects. However, pupils' saved work and the activities in some lessons showed a few good examples of the use of the technology in other subjects. For example, pupils in the music club compose music using conventional notation. Year 2 pupils enhance their understanding of shape when using the on-screen turtle to draw rectangles. Year 4 pupils use digital cameras to record geographical features, research recipes on the Internet when learning about instructional text and write evaluations of their work in physical education.

HUMANITIES

- 65 Provision in **history** and **geography** was sampled, but not enough teaching was seen to make judgements on provision. No lessons were seen in history and only two in geography, both in the juniors. Judgements are also based on an examination of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers. The examination of pupils' work in books, their recall of facts and understanding and the quality of display suggest that standards in these subjects at least match expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 4.
- 66 There has been a good improvement in planning in these subjects since the last inspection. However, there is no whole-school approach to assessment, although teachers keep their own records. This is recognised by the co-ordinators as an area for development. A key area for development in both subjects is the further use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. A strong feature of the subjects is the high quality of display which supports teaching and learning.
- 67 Discussions with pupils in Years 2 and 4 about **history** reveal that pupils enjoy this subject and are learning well. Year 4 pupils name some of the key figures involved in World War II and explain some of the key events and the impact that war had on the lives of children in Britain. They also have a good knowledge of topics that they have studied earlier, including the Tudors, Celts and Romans. Year 2 pupils similarly enjoy this subject and could talk well about the Great Fire of London and their work on Florence Nightingale.
- 68 Teaching and learning was good in the **geography** lessons observed. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement and had planned interesting and challenging tasks for the pupils. In Year 4, pupils worked together effectively when evaluating different areas of the school and deciding how they could be improved. They have recorded their findings in different ways, including the use of digital photography. In Year 3, pupils learned about the water cycle through a range of different activities with took account of the different ways that pupils learn. Good links were made to art as the pupils made a collage to show the different elements of the water cycle.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show a depth of understanding and respect for others' beliefs.
- The curriculum has improved and is now planned well, making good use of visits and visitors to bring the subject alive.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management are good, but monitoring and evaluation are not fully developed.

Commentary

- 69 Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 4. There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress, achieve well and have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- 70 The quality of teaching and learning seen in one lesson was good, and as a result, pupils are developing a deep understanding and respect for beliefs and traditions. Pupils in Year 4 spoke respectfully about significant features of Islam which had been explained to them during the visit of an Imam. Teachers use resources well. Year 4 pupils explained the importance of objects used in the Jewish faith, such as the Torah, and about Jewish festivals and special days. Year 2 pupils know about many of the main world religions, including their special days and celebrations. Members of an evangelical group are regular visitors to assemblies. Pupils benefit from visits to the local church and to a Gurdwara and from visitors from the Christian and Muslim faiths. The school recognises that a key area for development is the further use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
- 71 Leadership and management of religious education are good. The subject co-ordinator has reviewed the planning documentation well and examines work to ensure coverage of the subject, and to check that pupils are progressing well. As part of this, she has helped teachers to make a collection of pupils' graded work. She has not yet begun to monitor teaching and learning in lessons and this is an area for development. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology and physical education

- 72 These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not enough teaching was seen to make overall judgements on provision. No lessons were seen in design and technology, one in art and design and two dance lessons were seen in physical education.
- 73 In **art and design**, standards are at least satisfactory. Pupils produce attractive work in a range of media. Their sketchbooks show that they look carefully at different objects and practise a range of techniques, such as shading and blending, to produce interesting and competent drawings. Year 2 pupils know that William Morris designed wallpaper, and older pupils talk about different artists, expressing why they like their work. Year 3 pupils produce striking Impressionist pictures in the style of Monet. In a number of instances, pupils have used their art skills well in other subjects. Year 2 pupils, for example, made an informative and attractive frieze, showing the Great Fire of London as part of their work in history.
- 74 Pupils follow an effective cycle of planning, making and evaluation in **design and technology**. The work seen from pupils in Years 2 and 4 showed standards and competence above what might be expected of pupils at the end

of those years. This indicates a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The process is exemplified in the interesting pictures with moving parts that Year 1 pupils have engineered. Year 3 pupils have developed this work well and constructed greeting cards with pop-up elements. Year 2 pupils used their scientific knowledge when developing a 'Santa switch', an alarm designed to alert them that Father Christmas had arrived! Year 4 pupils talked confidently and knowledgeably about the effective processes they followed when making well-designed storybooks for younger pupils.

- 75 In **physical education**, Year 2 pupils reach very good standards in dance. In an excellent lesson, the teacher used a poem and music very effectively to help pupils to develop a moving representation of Jack Frost. Pupils showed a very good awareness of space and a wide, very well co-ordinated and controlled physical vocabulary. They improved their performances steadily during the lesson because of thoughtful evaluations. Year 4 pupils show good standards in dance when they tell a story in the style of an Indian dance, using movements and gestures previously learned from a visiting teacher. A number were happy to demonstrate this to the rest of the school in assembly. In this way, dance makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils take part in a good range of physical activities outside of lesson times, including football, tennis, dance and drama. The dance and drama club is involved, along with other schools, in a countywide arts festival. A thriving gymnastics club promotes good standards as pupils work towards awards from a national gymnastics body. Pupils who show particular ability in gymnastics are invited to take part at a higher level, and this helps them to develop their gift.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The music curriculum covers a good range of experiences, including performance, composition and appreciation.

Commentary

- 76 As a result of good teaching and a well-developed curriculum, pupils achieve well and reach good standards in music at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. In a very good musical appreciation lesson, the Year 2 teacher set the scene well before playing two different pieces of music with a winter theme, *Troika* and part of the *Firebird Suite*. Pupils listened carefully to each and compared them, describing their responses in words and pictures, using musical vocabulary, such as *tempo* accurately, and creating their own notation to record the dynamics. They expressed their preferences confidently. One pupil liked the *Firebird* because it was scary. Year 4 pupils took part with delight and enthusiasm in a very good drumming session led by a visitor from the county's music education service. Their drumming was accurate and self-assured, and all, including those with special educational needs, exhibited a good sense of

rhythm, resulting in a very proficient and exciting performance. In discussion, pupils demonstrated a good awareness of the different instruments they use.

- 77 There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Year 2 and the quality of the curriculum have improved because of good leadership and management. The co-ordinator has introduced a scheme for teaching which helps to provide a coherent and consistent approach to teaching music, something missing at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum is good. Pupils take part in a range of musical activities in the thriving music club. These include using information and communication technology to compose music using conventional notation and learning to play the recorder. A good number of pupils learn to play stringed instruments and the piano from visiting teachers. Pupils also take part in performances of music, dance and drama for different members of the community, sometimes in partnership with other schools. Music provision makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 78 The school places a firm emphasis on pupils' personal development. In addition to an effectively planned curriculum of personal, social and health education, many good opportunities are embedded in the other work of the school. These help pupils to develop into confident, healthy individuals who are motivated to learn and succeed. There has been a successful whole-school focus on improving manners. Pupils were always polite during the time of the inspection.
- 79 Pupils benefit from a very well enriched curriculum that gives them many opportunities for learning beyond the school in terms of clubs, visits and visitors. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The very good range of activities outside lesson times helps the social development of all those who take part, as well as enhancing their skills and understanding in the particular activity. The results of this provision are seen throughout the school as pupils work and play together harmoniously. The school meets statutory requirements in terms of drug and sex education, and achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2002. There is no formal pupils' council for sharing views and making decisions. However, pupils are encouraged to contribute their views and ideas about their school, of which they are very proud, in other ways, and this helps them to understand their rights and responsibilities as members of a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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