

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THORNHILL LEES CE NURSERY AND INFANT  
SCHOOL**

Dewsbury

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107705

Headteacher: Ms J Lunn

Lead inspector: Mr E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 3rd, 4th, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 268111

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Nursery and Infant  
School category: Voluntary Controlled Church of England  
Age range of children: 3-7  
Gender of children: Mixed  
Number on roll: 252

School address: Slaithwaite Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire  
Postcode: WF12 9DL

Telephone number: 01924 325340  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr T Longstaff

Date of previous inspection: February 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Thornhill Lees CE Infant and Nursery school is big for its type, and serves a largely minority ethnic group population of mainly British Asian families, of Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and other Asian heritage. There are also small groups of White British and mixed European/Asian heritage children in the school. The school's catchment area has high poverty and social deprivation indicators, although the number of children taking free school meals is only just above average. A high proportion of the children are bilingual, learning English as an additional language. The main first languages of these children are Panjabi, Gujarati and Urdu. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above average, but the number of children with a statement of their educational needs is below average. A broadly average number of children leave or join the school at other than the usual times. The school offers community education classes in cooperation with adult education providers. It received Achievement Awards for the improvement in standards by the end of Year 2 in 2002 and 2003, and has the Gold Activemark for its work in physical education and promoting healthy lifestyles.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Art and design Design and technology Physical education
13459	E Mills	Lay inspector	
23453	C Cressey	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Geography History
10562	M Roe	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Religious Education
23583	P Kerr	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Thornhill Lees CE Infants is an outstanding school providing excellent value for money.** All the school's efforts are very skilfully applied to helping the children achieve at very high levels in almost all they do. The many children learning English as an additional language make very rapid progress so that many of them achieve high levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2.

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

- The school's atmosphere for learning is joyous, full of interest and excitement.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader, leading the whole school community very successfully to have very high expectations of children's learning and progress.
- Achievement is very high in the nursery and reception classes, and in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2.
- The whole staff, supported very strongly by parents and governors, works as a very effective team to provide an outstanding education for the children through high quality teaching and support.
- All children are fully included in all the learning opportunities offered, often with excellent bilingual support or sharply focused teaching to meet their special needs.
- Children's personal development is extremely well promoted, although there are too few opportunities for them to be fully independent in their work.

The school has made excellent improvements since the last inspection, with all key issues dealt with very effectively. The quality of teaching and learning is much stronger with a very strong impact on improved achievement and standards. Leadership and management are now highly effective in ensuring that the focus of all the school's work is on helping the children achieve the best of which they are capable. This focus is extremely beneficial for bilingual children and for those with special educational needs.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	C	D	B	A*
writing	C	B	A	A*
mathematics	D	B	A	A*

*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 children eligible for free school meals*

Achievement is excellent across the school for both boys and girls. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve at high levels so that from well below average and often very low levels at entry they rise to levels that are only below average in the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. This is remarkable as many speak little English at entry to the nursery. The rapid acceleration in their learning is founded on the school's concentrated focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. This excellent achievement continues in Years 1 and 2, so that standards achieved in national tests at the

end of Year 2 are well above average nationally, and in the top five per cent compared to schools in similar circumstances. Children from all ethnic groups grow in confidence very successfully, and their **personal development is excellent**. **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**. Children love their work, and commit themselves wholeheartedly to learning. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **outstanding**. Teaching is **excellent** across the school, and the proportion of excellent and very good lessons is very high. This promotes very rapid and sustained learning so that children achieve high levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and at least good levels in most other areas. The teaching and support staff work superbly together to prepare and present lessons and activities that grip the children and focus directly on their needs. This is because the staff constantly assess and monitor the children's progress, adapting their lesson planning flexibly and skilfully as the children's learning progresses. The curriculum is very well planned, and is superbly enriched with visits, visitors and innovative teaching methods. The learning environment is very skilfully designed to support and enhance children's learning. Care, guidance and support are also excellent, as are links with parents, with very strong effect on their children's progress. The skilled sharing of different cultures has a powerful effect on children's progress. Links with the community are very good, and they are good with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **outstanding**. Leadership by the headteacher and other key staff is excellent. The headteacher brings rigour, determination and inspiring vision to school improvement and promoting children's achievements. She tempers this with great humanity, warmth and enthusiasm, crediting much of the school's success to the efforts of her staff, the children and their parents. Other key staff share the headteacher's high expectations, and use the evidence from data analysis and monitoring very effectively to promote the children's learning and to raise standards. Management is excellent, and the systems to enable the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the school's work to focus on outcomes for the children are outstanding. The governors provide very good support and challenge, and have very good understanding of how the school is progressing. All statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents from a variety of ethnic backgrounds all hold the school in very high esteem, and feel fully involved in their children's education. They say that the staff are open and friendly, and are impressed by the rapid progress made by their children. Children also love the school, and enjoy their lessons.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school has no significant weaknesses. However, more opportunities could be planned for children in Years 1 and 2 to investigate, solve problems or develop ideas in their own way as independent learners.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

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

Achievement is excellent across the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average overall in the core subjects and in the top five per cent compared to those in schools in similar circumstances.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all children make rapid progress in response to excellent teaching.
- Children make rapid gains in learning in the nursery and reception classes.
- Standards have improved very well in recent years.
- Achievement is very good in many of the foundation subjects.
- Higher attaining pupils use highly developed speaking and listening skills very well in explaining their work in other subjects.
- Detailed and sharply focused tasks and activities encourage those children with special educational needs to reach their demanding targets swiftly.
- Children learning English as an additional language often devour new learning with excellent concentration and excitement.

#### Commentary

1. Achievement is excellent across the school for both boys and girls. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve at high levels so that from well below average and often very low levels at entry they rise to levels that are only below average in the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. This is remarkable as many speak little English at entry to the nursery. The rapid acceleration in their learning is founded on the school's concentrated focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. This excellent achievement continues in Years 1 and 2, so that standards achieved in national tests at the end of Year 2 are well above average nationally, and in the top five per cent compared to schools in similar circumstances.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (15.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.1 (15.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.4 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 68 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve extremely well and reach close to the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. They attain below average levels in communication, language and literature and mathematical development, but their achievement from very low levels at entry is excellent. This is because the nursery and reception staff plan exciting tasks and activities that engage the children. The staff then use the children's involvement in



these activities to develop their listening and speaking skills superbly. For example, in the well-set out nursery outdoor play area, the children delighted in the spinning and whirling fabrics and toys brought out by the teacher on a windy day, generating the use of a whole range of specific vocabulary about wind, blowing and movement.

3. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing tests, and pupils' achievement is excellent. Results at the school have improved extremely well since the last inspection; the overall upward trend is well above the national average. When compared to similar schools, results in reading and writing tests in 2004 were very high. This is despite the limited use of English by many children on entry and the high percentage of children with special educational needs. During the inspection standards seen were well above average in Year 2 with boys performing slightly better than girls, as at entry to the nursery. The whole school concentration on the rapid development of children's speaking and listening skills in English lays a very strong foundation for their progress in reading and writing, and in all other aspects of their learning.
4. Standards in mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 2. Children make exceptionally good progress and achieve at very high levels. Children with special educational needs have very clear targets and receive very good support. This enables them to achieve very well. Children at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language achieve outstandingly and reach similarly high standards as their peers.
5. Standards in science are also well above average at the end of Year 2. In discussion, the average and higher attaining children show an excellent understanding for their age of the scientific ideas that they have learned. They also use an extensive scientific vocabulary. Work samples show that all the children achieve extremely well over time.
6. By the end of Year 2, children also reach well above average levels in their personal development, and achieve extremely well. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education they achieve very well and reach above the levels generally seen for their age. In physical education they achieve well to reach average levels for their age.
7. Most children with special educational needs, including those with a statement of educational need, make excellent progress. They achieve exceptionally well in the core subjects and very well within the broad range of the curriculum due to the high quality of the teaching and support. As a result they also achieve very well in relation to specific targets set, especially in their literacy, numeracy and communication skills. By the end of Year 2, most children with special educational needs achieve close to expected levels for their age and in some subjects, for example in religious education, they even exceed them. This represents very high achievement for these children.
8. Because the majority of the children learn English as an additional language, the whole staff see themselves as an essential part of the dedicated Ethnic Minority Achievement team. This concentration by the staff enables the children to make exceptional progress in developing their skills in English, equipping them extremely well as learners. This progress lies alongside the development and use of their first language, so that by age seven, many are truly bilingual. The school has identified specific small groups of pupils who did not achieve as well as others in language

development last year. They receive concentrated, skilled and effective language support, including a small group of children whose first language is English. This group has been identified as needing extra help, and their inclusion in these intensive language sessions is very beneficial to their learning.

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

Children' attitudes to their work are **excellent**, and their behaviour is **very good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**. Children' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy coming to school and their excellent attitudes to their work help them to make excellent progress.
- The school sets very high expectations for children's behaviour and this results in a school environment in which they learn very well.
- The school places great emphasis on raising children's self-esteem and there are well-planned opportunities to help children to grow in confidence.
- In some lessons there are too few opportunities for children to make their own decisions about how to go about their work.

### **Commentary**

9. Parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school and this view is echoed by the children themselves, who are very well involved in the range of activities provided. All children, regardless of gender, ethnicity or level of prior attainment, are helped very effectively to become fully included in the life of the school. They are extremely keen and enthusiastic about their work and concentrate very well on all they do. Children work hard and listen very well to their teachers, joining in class discussions and working very well in groups or in pairs when they are required to do so. They take great pride in their work and are very eager to show staff and visitors examples of good work. Achievements are celebrated both in lessons and at 'Celebration' assemblies, which parents are invited to attend, and this praise spurs the children to greater efforts very effectively.
10. The staff have extremely high expectations of good behaviour to which children respond very well. Relationships between children, and between children and adults, are excellent and there is much emphasis on the praising and rewarding of positive attitudes and behaviour. A few parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of a small number of children but agree that the school deals very well with the rare instances of misbehaviour. Children play very well together regardless of gender or ethnic background, show courtesy to others and are polite and caring. This was particularly evident during inspection when Year 1 children showed concern when a classmate became upset. There have been no exclusions.
11. Most children with special educational needs sustain interest very well and display really positive attitudes including those few children with behavioural difficulties. This

is due to lively teaching, good relationships and well-targeted interaction within whole class sessions and groupwork.

12. The school has identified the need to improve children's self esteem and confidence. These qualities are fostered very well through the excellent atmosphere for learning (the ethos) promoted by the school. The school builds successfully on this ethos through praise and rewards to help children to value themselves and others. Teachers and non-teaching staff provide very good role models and help to set high moral standards within the school. All staff treat children with genuine respect, value their opinions and succeed in making children feel safe and secure. Parents are very happy with the values promoted by the school. Moral and ethical messages are reinforced throughout the school day and in well planned opportunities during lessons and assemblies.
13. Children are given some opportunity to take responsibility and to contribute to the life of the school, for example by serving on the school council where the sensitive guidance from the supporting teacher helps children to make suggestions for improvement. In many lessons children show very good independence and confidence. However, in some lessons there are opportunities missed for children to make choices about their own learning and to decide how to use their ideas and skills in their own way, with materials and tools they have chosen for themselves. For example, staff sometimes retrieve and return resources instead of encouraging the children to do this for themselves.
14. Despite the considerable efforts of the school to promote good attendance and the major improvements made since the previous inspection, attendance rates remain slightly below those achieved nationally. These rates are affected by absences due to religious observance and to the extended holidays taken by a few families during term time. The school monitors attendance very well and follows up all absences rigorously. Parents are informed if attendance or punctuality is causing concern. Systems have been introduced which successfully encourage and reward good attendance and these have been effective in raising attendance rates.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7%	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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **outstanding**. Teaching and learning are excellent across the school. The assessment of children's learning and its use to plan new work are excellent. The curriculum is very good, superbly enriched by visits, visitors and imaginative teaching. The accommodation and resources are very good. There is very good provision to ensure children's care, welfare, health and safety, and links with parents are excellent. Links with the community are very good and links with other schools and colleges are good.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching is **excellent** across the school, leading to very rapid and sustained learning for the children. Assessment of learning is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teamwork between the teaching and support staff is extremely constructive, particularly in the use of assessment information.
- The staff have very high expectations of children's involvement and work-rate.
- Excellent planning of lessons from outstanding subject knowledge gives children exciting learning opportunities.
- There is very high quality provision for children learning English as an additional language.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is outstanding.

### **Commentary**

15. Teaching is **excellent** across the school, and the proportion of excellent and very good lessons is very high. This promotes very rapid and sustained learning so that children achieve high levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and at least good levels in most other areas. The teaching and support staff work superbly together to prepare and present lessons and activities that grip the children and focus directly on their needs. Children's academic progress is tracked very well and teachers make it very clear what children need to do to improve their work. Work is carefully assessed and any areas for improvement clearly identified. Targets are clearly conveyed to children and are reported to parents. Progress over time is well documented and children's work is adapted to ensure that targets are met.

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (15%)	24 (59%)	9 (22%)	2 (5%)	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.*

16. The whole staff work together as a team absolutely dedicated to the children's needs and the achievement of the highest standards in all they do. This cooperation between the adults, also involving many parents, has very strong impact on the children's attitudes to their work, to their relationships with staff and each other, and to their behaviour. This commitment to high standards and cooperation is very effectively translated into high quality learning experiences for children in most lessons.
17. There is excellent communication between support staff and class teachers with thorough briefing from assessment and evaluation of previous work and joint planning of what children are expected to learn. Support staff have undertaken extensive training in how they fulfil their role, particularly for children with special educational needs, and have had access to subject specific training especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT. They are therefore extremely clear about how to assess learning outcomes and are skilled in helping children to take an active part in whole class sessions and in group work. This has the effect of ensuring that the support is very well matched to children's needs and that progress is excellent. For example, the Nursery Nurse in the nursery is a music specialist and leads very well the children's development of tempo and pitch using song accompanied by percussion instruments. These very young children are encouraged to evaluate their performance as well as to learn the language to describe their musical preferences.
18. Teachers' planning is very consistent in including a range of different tasks matched to the range of needs within the class. All staff know the children very well, mark their work thoroughly, and very effectively adapt questioning and forms of presentation to their needs, using specific resources which support their learning. For example, a language support teacher and a bilingual support worker helped children withdrawn from class very skilfully to cover the same type of work as their peers in writing recounts. As necessary, the support worker spoke to children in their home language to clarify any potential points of misunderstanding, then reinforced her explanations in English. From the children's responses, their rapid progress in learning was evident.
19. The staff's wide knowledge of how young children learn and of the curriculum with all its aspects and subjects leads to a rare combination of high expectations, high involvement, and high enjoyment. Lessons are characterised by:
  - very clear focus on learning outcomes for the children, shared with them;
  - very good pace in whole class sessions;
  - very effective questioning and prompting of the children to promote extended thinking;
  - tasks and activities that absorb and motivate the children to concentrate and work hard.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good, meeting all statutory requirements, and enrichment is excellent. The school provides a wide range of high-quality learning experiences for all the children in its care. The accommodation is very good, and extremely well-organised to motivate and enthuse the children. Learning and other resources are generally very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very thorough planning ensures that the needs of all the children are met in lessons and in the many extra clubs and activities that are provided.
- The school's focus on the basic skills of communication, language and literacy helps the children to learn well in other subjects.
- Excellent support for children whose home language is not English enables them to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities on offer.
- There is excellent provision for children with special educational needs.
- ICT is used extremely effectively in some classes but is not yet fully established throughout the school as a tool for use across the curriculum.
- The very good accommodation and resources are used very well to support learning, although the equipment for gymnastics in the hall is barely adequate.

## **Commentary**

20. It is evident from talking to children and from the work in their books and on display around the school that very effective and enjoyable learning is taking place across the full curriculum. In the nursery and reception classes, the children are learning at a rapid rate through purposeful play in an environment that has been expertly constructed by the staff. In Years 1 and 2, an emphasis on the basic skills ensures high achievement in literacy and numeracy and excellent planning ensures that the children use and develop these skills in other subjects wherever possible. The enrichment activities that are organised at lunchtimes and after school include ones that reinforce basic skills as well as ones that provide creative opportunities, for example art, and the opportunity to begin to learn a musical instrument.
21. The support given to the large proportion of children whose home language is not English is exemplary. Excellent leadership and management of this provision enable the enthusiastic and skilled staff to fully meet the needs of all the children, and their families. Those children at the early stages of learning English slip seamlessly between English and their home language under the guidance of the excellent bilingual teaching assistants. In this secure environment they make very rapid progress in learning English and are therefore soon able to learn rapidly in other subjects.
22. Specific support for children with special educational needs is very well matched to specific targets in their education plans. Target setting for all children is excellent and children with special educational needs benefit from this very good practice. Support staff are very well informed about learning outcomes in relation to the lessons and to individual child targets. This ensures that their support is strategically focussed to ensure that children are making excellent within the targets set for them.
23. Very good provision for ICT ensures that the children make very rapid progress in computer skills. In those classes in which the teachers have received training, the

ICT equipment is used extremely effectively to make lessons clearer and more enjoyable. The children in these classes become highly skilled along with the teachers in the use of the technology. In classes in which the teachers are not yet trained, opportunities are missed to support the children's learning in this way. Plans are in hand to complete staff training in the near future.

24. The curriculum is very well enhanced by strong links with the community. For example, design and technology provision is greatly improved with the support of a member of the community. The local rugby team visits the school, enhancing the provision for physical education. Recent links with the local Anglican Church and a local Mosque help to promote religious understanding and tolerance.
25. The children become part of a successful team and learn to play their roles as responsible citizens. For example, the school council gives children the opportunity to represent their classes and children willingly undertake many routine tasks around the school. The reward assemblies show that the school values how the children relate to one another, for example through rewards for good play. The involvement of parents in these and other aspects of school life reflects the school's place as a focus for the whole community. A clear focus on healthy living in science and physical education lessons ensures that the children develop a good awareness of the importance of good food and exercise in keeping fit and healthy. Relationships and drugs awareness education forms part of the school's work on healthy living in science and personal, social and health education.
26. A strength of the Foundation Stage provision is the extent to which the children are encouraged to be independent in their learning. They are allowed to choose what to do and then supported as they play to get the most out of the learning opportunities the activities present. In Years 1 and 2, the planning of lessons is so thorough and effective that sometimes opportunities are missed for children to usefully explore beyond the planned boundaries. As a result, creative thinking is not always developed as well as it could be and the most able children are sometimes not sufficiently challenged to use their skills to solve more complex problems.
27. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The school is making increasingly effective use of the buildings and grounds and the extensive play area for the younger children is used particularly well. Some drawbacks to the building remain – for example, some classrooms and other areas do not have shade from the sun and get too hot on sunny days, and there is a shortage of space for meetings, for example with groups of parents. The school is fully aware of these problems and is seeking manageable solutions. Whilst most learning resources are very good, the gymnastics equipment in the hall is barely adequate. There is little apparatus of a size suitable for young children to handle for themselves.

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

The school makes **very good** provision for ensuring children's care, welfare, health and safety. **Very good** support and guidance are provided for children. The school's measures for taking children's views into account are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school places a very strong emphasis on the care and welfare of children and has very good systems in place to support them.

- The excellent relationships which exist throughout the school ensure that children receive very effective personal support.
- Children are helped to settle into the nursery and into the main school very well.
- Children's progress is tracked very well and ensures that both children and parents are aware of any targets for improvement.

## **Commentary**

28. The school has very good procedures in place to ensure that children starting in the nursery settle in quickly. The very good induction arrangements for children for whom English is an additional language help to integrate them very quickly and securely into school life and enable teachers and other staff to target support promptly and accurately. This excellent support continues as children move through the school.
29. Children with special educational needs have their needs reviewed regularly with involvement from external agencies, parents, class teachers and support staff. The children themselves are becoming increasingly involved in many reviews. The level of care for children with medical needs is very good.
30. A notable feature of the school is the way in which parents and carers are welcome to stay in school for 15 minutes each morning to ensure that their children are settled and happy. This session is also very useful for the informal exchange of information. Procedures for transfer to junior school are also effective in helping to ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of education.
31. Children quickly develop good and trusting relationships with staff, know where to find help if they need it and are confident to ask for such help. The high number of skilled, highly qualified and dedicated support staff helps to ensure that children's needs are met very well. The support provided for children extends to other family and community members. The school provides staffing, resources and accommodation for parents and other members of the community to learn how they can help their children, either by improving their efficiency in English or with guidance on the management of behaviour. A breakfast club is organised and subsidised by the school in order to ensure that all children have a good start to the day.
32. The school places great emphasis on the welfare of children and has clear procedures in place to ensure their safety in school and on out of school visits. Parents feel that their children are looked after very well. Children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, and the need to eat well and healthily is promoted very well. All adults in the school community make a very good contribution to the pastoral care of children, which is a strength of the school.
33. Careful monitoring of children's academic progress by the staff has a very positive effect on children's achievement. Children are also made aware that their views matter and the School Council is effective in allowing children to have a voice in the running of the school. However, teachers and other members of staff do not always allow children the freedom to make enough choices or to be independent in their learning.

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



The school's links with parents are **excellent**. Links with the community are **very good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

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

- The school has very good relationships with parents who in turn have very positive views of the school and have a great deal of confidence in the staff.
- The school provides excellent facilities for community learning and for supporting parents who speak little English.
- The school has extremely good arrangements for keeping parents informed about children's progress.
- The school is committed to partnerships and is very much part of the local community.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents expressed very strong support for the school in an inspection questionnaire and in two meetings with inspectors. They hold the school and its staff in very high regard and very few of them have any concerns. They feel that the school caters very well for their children's needs and are very pleased with the way in which children are cared for and with the rapid progress they make in their learning. Parents of Asian heritage are very pleased with the progress their children make in the acquisition of English and with the absence of racial tension or discrimination in the school. The few parents who expressed concern about the conduct of some children agree that the school deals well with any instances of misbehaviour. The inspection found children's behaviour to be very good.
35. The head teacher plays a pivotal role in the contact with parents and, along with teachers and support staff, makes herself available to talk to parents before and after school. Parents are welcome to bring their children into classrooms and to stay for up to 15 minutes, enabling staff and parents to exchange any information and allowing parents to see what their children are doing. Bilingual staff are on hand to help with any translation needed and parents are evidently comfortable with this arrangement, appreciating the time staff spend with them and the excellent relationships which have been fostered by the school.
36. The school makes very good provision to discuss children's progress with parents and has recently introduced a 'consultation day' when teaching staff are free to talk to parents and show them children's work without formal appointments. Again, bilingual staff are on hand, and the more informal arrangements are much preferred by parents. Reports to parents are very useful, giving very clear information on how children are doing and guidance on how parents can help their children to improve. For example, parents of children in reception are asked to count with their children when they are shopping or to look at colours when they walk to school, reinforcing language and numbers. Partnerships with parents of children identified with special educational needs are very good due to the close working relationships formed with class teachers, support staff and the coordinator for special needs.
37. The school is very much part of the local community and has extended its provision for community learning and involvement. Parents and other members of the community help in school, including the grandparents of a former child, and they provide very valuable assistance in the tuition of design and technology as well as helping out in the preparation and production of resources. Members of the

community use the facilities for adult education classes and Sure Start staff work in the school with parents and families, including the provision of a very well attended pre-school group which meets weekly. School staff are vital to this provision and their enthusiasm and professionalism is instrumental in the success of these ventures. Courses for parents who speak little English are provided in school and bilingual staff have spent much time and effort to tailor these courses to the needs of parents, preparing customised resources and successfully encouraging parents to attend. Links are well established with the school's Anglican Church and the local Mosque, and liaison with local schools is good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are excellent. Leadership is excellent, as is management. Governance is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and successfully transmits her high expectations to staff, children, parents and governors.
- The assistant headteacher and other senior managers share the headteacher's high standards.
- Governors support the work of the school very well.
- Teamwork is a key feature and there is a shared commitment to improvement and equality of opportunity for all.
- Subject leaders manage their areas very well and staff performance management has a clear and measurable effect on children's learning.
- The school provides excellent value for money.

### **Commentary**

38. The headteacher provides dynamic and inspirational leadership and since her appointment has brought about excellent improvement, at a remarkable pace. She has initiated very effective self-evaluation procedures, including the close analysis of data, which she has shared with other senior managers, staff and governors. This data analysis has been used very specifically to set targets for different groups, for individuals and for whole year groups and targets set have been shared with parents and children. The impact has been evident in the very good progress and excellent achievement that children make, including those with special educational needs and bilingual children. The headteacher is also very closely involved in the evaluation and development of teaching to maximise children's learning opportunities. The effects of her performance management strategies for the staff are clearly evident in the improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection.
39. The assistant headteacher and other senior staff have supported the headteacher very well in raising standards. They have been closely involved in monitoring standards and teaching and learning. The senior management team has a range of expertise across subjects and key stages and includes the coordinator for special educational needs and the co-ordinator for Ethnic Minority Achievement, who is also the assistant headteacher. This combination of expertise has been used extremely effectively in developing clear and high expectations not only of what should be taught but the strategies to be used. All members of the senior management team including the headteacher have involved themselves very actively in managing the curriculum, teachers' time and lesson planning to meet children needs.

40. The headteacher and governors have created a team of staff that is committed to the creation of a genuinely inclusive school community where all are valued. This creates an extremely positive climate for learning, which contributes strongly to the schools' success. Central to this is the way teachers and other staff have had opportunities and time to improve their practice resulting in outstanding teaching and learning for all children, high achievement and equal opportunities. The recently improved role of subject leaders means that they are monitoring standards and provision much more effectively than in the last inspection. Both teaching and non-teaching staff thrive on the added opportunity to be involved in the decision-making processes and have been actively involved in driving improvement. Performance management has been successful in motivating teaching staff and non-teaching staff who are very enthusiastic about their developing roles. Support staff are well trained, are used effectively and are vital in the planning of improvement. Induction for newly qualified teachers is excellent.
41. The provision for ethnic minority and bilingual children and for children with special educational needs is of high quality and enables them to achieve very well. This provision is well managed by senior staff and by class teachers and there is a very effective partnership between support staff, teachers and external services. The additional resources available for this provision are very effectively monitored to ensure that the school is improving learning and achievement for targeted children.
42. The governing body is playing a successful part in the leadership of the school. Strengthened membership, a revised structure and relevant training have enabled the governing body to develop its role as a critical friend to the school. It has monitored the progress of the action plan efficiently and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Parent governors in particular play an important part in strengthening links between the school and the community. Governors are aware of the school's many strengths and are willing to challenge the school in the discussion of priorities for improvement.
43. Prudent financial planning matched to priorities for improvement and careful budget monitoring ensure that the school is able to meet its commitment to:
- raising standards;
  - managing the workforce more effectively;
  - embedding management systems;
  - and to improving the quality of teaching and learning, resources and the school environment.
44. Specific funding for pupils with statements of special educational needs is allocated extremely effectively and enables support to be very well targeted to need. The level of need within each class is carefully assessed and staff allocated accordingly. As a result all children identified have some high quality support. Considering the impact that this support is having on learning and achievement it provides excellent value for money.
45. The excellent overall improvement since the last inspection and the resulting high standards indicate that the school provides excellent value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005***

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	861,296
Total expenditure	843,877
Expenditure per child	3,187

Balance from previous year	37,700
Balance carried forward to the next	55,119*

\*£6,000 still to pay out from last year's figures – real surplus £49,119.

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

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

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **excellent**.

46. Provision has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school that is much valued by the parents. Management of the Foundation Stage has been very successful in creating a very strong team. All staff are very committed to providing children with a high quality education which challenges and extends their learning through a wide range of practical experiences, well-thought-out play activities and excellent adult support and interactions.
47. Attainment on entry is well below average overall because so many children are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Communication and literacy skills, mathematical understanding and personal and social skills are very low when compared to those typically seen. As a result of the excellent provision and consistently high quality teaching most children achieve exceptionally well and make significant gains in their learning.
48. About seventy per cent of children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning before the end of the reception year in personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. In literacy and mathematics about fifty per cent of children are likely to attain the national goals for early learning. This is less than the number seen typically but is a reflection of the high number of children who are learning English as an additional language. The very good start children receive is built on well in Years 1 and 2 and progress is accelerated as children become confident and fluent users of English.
49. Teachers and support staff work very well together to plan and implement a very effective teaching and learning environment. The deployment of support staff is exceptionally good. This enables children to receive a high level of individual support which plays a significant role in their successful learning and high level of achievement. Several of the teaching assistants are bilingual and can offer first language support. Although the priority is to encourage children to talk using English, first language support is readily provided to explain ideas and the meanings of words and to help when problems arise and children need to explain their needs in their home language. The programme of support is carefully planned and taught, with good attention given to those attaining highly as well as those who need a special boost to keep up.
50. All staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and this makes school an enjoyable experience which promotes a love of learning and enables children to become successful learners who achieve very well. Tasks and activities are very well planned and sessions provide a very good balance of teacher directed activities and activities that children can choose for themselves. Children's achievements are observed very carefully and the information is used to plan the next activity and to provide a detailed record of progress towards the early learning goals. Children with special educational needs are identified early ensuring they receive the support they need to make progress.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very confident, independent and eager learners who behave very well.

### **Commentary**

51. Many children start the Nursery with very immature personal and social development. They are often unsure of themselves and have difficulty making their needs clear because they do not speak English. Good use is made of first language, particularly to explain tasks and routines. Because tasks and activities are always exciting and fun and high quality support is always on hand, children's confidence and the ability to work and play with others quickly grow. As a result, by the time children transfer to the reception class they demonstrate good independence when choosing activities, or joining in group tasks, and will persist until tasks are complete.
52. Adults have high expectations of children's behaviour and as a result they understand the rules and boundaries of behaviour and work with consideration for other children.
53. Relationships between parents, carers and staff are exceptionally good. Parents are always welcome and many stay for long periods of time working alongside their children or discussing their child's progress and needs with the very caring staff. As a result children are secure, happy and confident learners.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY.**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Almost all children are working to their potential and make very good progress because the teaching is good.
- Very good use is made of play and other planned activities to promote language skills.
- The teaching of basic skills including speaking and listening is very good.

### **Commentary**

54. Talk is seen as the key to helping children become successful readers and writers. Throughout the day, speaking and listening skills are developed very competently through a wide range of well-chosen activities that are led, guided or supported by adults who see their main role as encouraging children to talk and extend their language skills.
55. High quality role-play situations are pivotal to the promotion of children's language development and this enables them to learn and practise the language of the home,

the shop or office. Adults model patterns of speech well. If understanding is missing and explanations in English do not help then assistance in the child's first language is provided. Such work supports children's English language acquisition very well and helps them grow in confidence in its use. Younger children in the nursery are provided with a wealth of vocabulary as they play in different roles. Higher attaining children in the reception class readily engage visitors in conversation and are able to express their ideas with increasing confidence and clarity.

56. During the week of the inspection the language associated with position and direction was being developed as part of mathematics. Every aspect of children's learning involved the use of this vocabulary. By the end of the week children had made rapid progress and could use the new words accurately in their conversations, mathematical tasks and play.
57. Staff systematically introduce letter sounds which provide children with the tools they need to be independent readers and writers. By the time children move into the reception class they are fascinated with written English and are very proud of their ability to write for a large number of purposes and audiences. With staff support, higher attaining children make very good attempts to write their own sentences. Children are very enthusiastic about reading and in the reception classes about half of the children are beginning to read simple books for themselves.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced at every opportunity.

### **Commentary**

58. Children receive very good individual support to help them count, recognise numbers and develop an understanding of shape, size and measures. Bilingual support is excellent in explaining ideas and new vocabulary to children who are learning English as an additional language. The adults encourage counting, matching objects and number recognition as children play independently in teacher directed group times and through daily routines.
59. Mathematics is an integral part of children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum, both in the classroom and in the out door play. A wide variety of resources, including information technology, are all used to extend children's understanding of number to ten and beyond. Older children's learning is extended well and children are becoming confident in recognising and sequencing numbers.
60. Children learn to use correct mathematical vocabulary to solve problems of size, shape and position as they play with two and three-dimensional shapes and small world toys. Good role-play situations promote an understanding of number in practical situations.

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

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **excellent**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a very good range of activities and experiences which fascinate the children and develop their understanding of the world very well.

## **Commentary**

61. Children's understanding of families and their community is developed well. Role-play activities, such as shopping, cooking and caring for babies help children to learn about their place in the family, past and future events and the significance of people in the community.
62. Members of staff continually encourage the children to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore a wide range of made and natural materials. Good scientific skills are promoted as children observe the changes which occur as seeds grow, frogspawn turns into frogs or when an egg is boiled. Care for their class fish helps children develop an awareness of their responsibility to living creatures and fits well with developing personal, social and emotional skills
63. Members of staff are always involved in practical work, such as developing the children's cutting and joining skills and constructing models with large wooden blocks or waste materials. Very good language development opportunities arise from these activities, many of which are carefully planned in advance. Independence is encouraged from the start, enabling children to select suitable materials and tools to work. Advice is always on hand to help children make the decision as to which is the most suitable material to use for a particular purpose. The final decision is always left to the individual child, helping them to learn by their mistakes and promoting good thinking skills and a sense of independence and responsibility for their own learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **excellent**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have excellent opportunities to develop all aspects of their physical skills.

## **Commentary**

64. Children's natural exuberance and energy are developed very effectively through well-planned lessons, topics and routines and daily opportunities to enjoy the excellent outdoor play facilities available for both Nursery and Reception classes. The staff have thoughtfully planned an exciting outdoor area, which not only provides very good opportunities for children to enjoy the fresh air and channel their considerable energies but is also an extension of the classroom where valuable teaching and learning occurs for all six areas of learning. Careful management of the outside area ensures that children develop an awareness of each other's space as well as beginning successfully to control such apparatus as balls and wheeled toys. Staff interact well with the children, participating in activities and encouraging them to try to improve their control and co-ordination.



65. Malleable materials, simple tools and construction materials are readily available to help children develop control over small movements. Adults are always on hand to encourage children to improve their skills and provide very good instructions and demonstrations to help them achieve success.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Creative play is a central part of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

66. Children with only a few weeks in Nursery make simple marks on paper when attempting to represent a person, whereas those who are about to transfer into the Reception year are now adding detail into their drawings, such as features and hair. Children mix and apply paint skilfully for their age and consequently they use colour well, creating lines and shapes and a range of effects, for example, using printing to create the effect of speckling on a frog.

67. Children develop their imagination and extend their language and mathematical skills very well in the very high quality role-play situations provided both indoors and outside. A very good range of music, songs and rhymes helps children learn about sound, rhythm, pattern and number. The very youngest children learn the names of percussion instruments effectively and how to handle them with care. Children have very good daily opportunities to choose different materials to create their own high quality designs, pictures, models and collages.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **outstanding**.

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

- Attainment in speaking and listening is above average and in reading and writing is well above average.
- The great majority of children achieve extremely well.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and deliver their lessons with flair.
- The excellent support for bilingual learners and for children with special educational needs is a major factor in the school's success in raising achievement.
- Children's individual targets that are based on careful assessments of work completed help them to improve.

#### **Commentary**

68. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing tests, and pupils' achievement is excellent. Children with special educational needs achieve very well and in the main attain in line with expectations for their age. This is very good improvement compared with the findings of the previous inspection when standards were below average in all aspects of English and progress was satisfactory.
69. The school places a strong emphasis on developing children's spoken language skills especially as the majority of children do not speak English on entry, and many are identified with special educational needs. From the Foundation Stage children systematically extend their vocabulary and language structures. The result is that they naturally absorb correct vocabulary both in English and in other subjects such as science and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, most children have acquired good language structures and are knowledgeable about them. They use a range of interesting vocabulary that enhances their writing and their work across the curriculum.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The very effective use of the literacy framework has resulted in excellent subject knowledge and expertise for both teaching and support staff. As a result, teaching and learning are very focused on children's specific needs. All members of staff are very skilled in exploring different strategies when reading with children. There is a strong emphasis in Year 1 on teaching children to blend and segment and synthesise letter sounds within words. This promotes very good progress in reading and spelling, leading to high achievement by the end of Year 2 with children able to read from sight unfamiliar

scientific vocabulary such as 'chlorophyll'. Children are also encouraged to respond to the content of books and their rich language and are familiar with different authors with many children being able to talk about the similarities of books by the same author.

71. The staff check children's progress thoroughly and follow their development carefully in very well kept records. Information gathered is very effectively used to set challenging targets for each child that help to improve learning at a very good rate.
72. Targets for writing are clearly displayed in children's notebooks and highlighted when achieved. The quality of the written comments about children's work is excellent with a good balance between encouraging comments and comments linked to individual targets and general learning outcomes. The staff interact very effectively with children in small group sessions. They prompt, encourage and offer praise very well and bilingual learners also benefit from this input in their home languages. This close attention for the staff enables the children to try out language before trying to write for themselves.
73. The staff's very structured approach to shared and guided writing (opportunities for teachers to work with large and small groups to explore writing techniques) is extremely effective. In Year 1, children make excellent progress in writing independently to retell a story or event. In Year 2, children extend the richness of their language in using descriptive words and phrases after sharing a story about the sea. However, in some sessions children are not sufficiently encouraged to use their writing skills independently. There are sometimes opportunities missed to allow the children to follow their own ideas using the skills they have learned.
74. Subject leadership and management are excellent and firmly focussed on high standards so that improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding. All staff have a thorough overview of standards, teaching and learning and resources across the school. There are very effective systems in place for both planning and evaluating children's work. The quality of the analysis provided is an indication of the excellent subject knowledge that has been developed through well-focused and well-received training for both teachers and support staff. This analysis ensures that future work is tailored very specifically to whole class and individual needs. Although parents are strongly encouraged to get involved in supporting their children at home not all children get the practical support they need. However, parent workshops and community education sessions are successfully tailored to meet parents' identified needs in order that they feel better equipped to help their children.

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

75. This is very good. The skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are regularly extended and applied across the curriculum. There is a very strong emphasis on extending children's vocabulary. For example, in religious education lessons children use specific language related to both Christianity and Islam with great confidence. The school reflects the strong focus on language development and displays support language learning well. There are active plans for more planned linking of language across the curriculum.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all children achieve very well in mathematics leading to high standards in Year 2.
- Imaginative teaching interests and often excites the children in lessons.
- Support staff make an exceptional contribution to children's success.
- Very good leadership and management have improved standards.

## Commentary

76. Standards in mathematics are well above average in Year 2. Children make exceptionally good progress; they work as hard as they can and have excellent achievement. Children with special educational needs have very clear targets and are given very good support enabling them to participate fully in lessons and achieve very well. Children at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language achieve outstandingly and eventually reach similarly high standards as their peers. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
77. Most children enter the nursery with mathematical understanding which is well below that seen nationally but by Year 2 have made significant gains in their learning and are reaching much higher than expected levels of attainment for their ages. Almost all children in Year 2 are very competent mathematicians showing a very good understanding of number, shape and measure. Most children have a secure knowledge and understanding of place value and can recall addition and number facts to 100. Higher attainers are eager to work with four digit numbers and, once successful, ask their teachers for even harder calculations! For example, a gifted and talented child worked diligently rounding up and down a series of increasingly challenging numbers and was not satisfied until he was nearing five figure numbers to work with. Children are taught to recognise the logic of number through patterns and rules and use and explain different strategies to solve number problems.
78. The quality of teaching and learning are very good leading to the very high standards achieved. An analysis of children's work shows that teaching is of a consistently high quality, so that children produce a range of very good work and make better than expected gains in their mathematical understanding. Teachers and support staff constantly check during lessons whether children are on task and fully understand their work. High levels of challenge push learning on for those children who learn at a more rapid rate and children who are particularly gifted in mathematics. Several of the teaching assistants are bilingual and can offer first language support to explain new concepts and vocabulary. The excellent support is central to the rapid progress children make, particularly those at the early stages of acquiring English and those who learn at a slower rate or who have special educational needs.
79. Teachers use a variety of methods to teach mathematical skills and build up knowledge and understanding and extend their thinking. These include:
- effective whole class sessions on mental arithmetic;
  - probing question and answer sessions and well planned activities to consolidate and practise new learning;
  - well planned practical tasks which engage young learners well;
  - clear explanations and very good demonstration and reminders of mathematical strategies;

- and encouragement to explain clearly the strategies which they use to arrive at an answer.
80. The work in mathematics is very well planned to take account of children's different ages and levels of attainment. Assessments are built into the planned work and used well to plan future work and track children's progress in order to identify whether they are making the progress expected of them and are working to capacity.
81. The subject is led and managed very well and this has been successful in raising standards to the high level they now are. All issues from the last inspection have been addressed with rigour resulting in rapid improvements. The very good opportunities for the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning ensure that there is good progression from year-to-year, consistency in the quality of teaching in all classes and that good practice is spread across the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

82. Children have very good opportunities to use, consolidate and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science, design technology and physical education. For example, in a physical education lesson children saw the practical value of knowing how to double when the teacher used a 30 second timer to time a 1 minute task. There are also good links between the subject and developments in ICT.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Highly effective leadership and very good teaching and learning are raising standards.
- The children have a very good knowledge and understanding of science and very good investigative skills.
- Children are encouraged to investigate scientific ideas and processes very well, although opportunities for them to explore their own ideas are sometimes overlooked.

### **Commentary**

83. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 2. In discussion, the average-attaining and more able children show an excellent understanding for their age of the scientific ideas that underpin their knowledge of the world. They also use an extensive scientific vocabulary. For example, they talk confidently about what foods are good to eat and why, using words like vitamins, minerals and fibre. One boy explained that dairy produce was important because it provided calcium for bones and teeth. They have an exceptional awareness of the range of materials around them and the properties that make them useful, and an excellent understanding of the forces at work, for example when a parachute is descending. If they do not know the technical terms such as 'gravity' or 'up-thrust', they explain fluently what is happening in their own words. The work samples show that all the children achieve extremely well over time. An outstanding feature of teaching reflected in some of the samples is the extent to which the teachers annotate the work with comments on the children's responses and further questions for them to consider.

84. Teaching and learning are very good, characterised by:
- very good planning;
  - teachers' excellent subject knowledge;
  - excellent team-work;
  - excellent support by the bilingual staff to enable those children learning English as an additional language to find the words they needed to explain their work.
85. For example, in an excellent lesson, the staff used the opportunity to develop the children's speaking and listening skills as well as their scientific understanding. The lesson was adapted at the last minute because rain prevented the children from gathering samples of wildlife in the school grounds. The alternative activities utilised a range of stimulating photographs to get the children to observe and comment on similarities and differences between living creatures. All the staff encouraged the children to work out their own ways of classifying the animals.
86. High quality support is provided for children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This is evident throughout the children's work, enabling them all to achieve to their potential. The curriculum provides a broad diet of knowledge, lots of opportunities for observation and experimentation and promotes lively, enquiring minds. This is reflected in the high standards achieved. The children are encouraged to record their observations and findings in a wide range of different ways, including labelled drawings and diagrams, graphs and charts and vivid descriptions which utilise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
87. The co-ordinator for science provides excellent leadership and management of the subject. She has established a very clear idea of what science is about in the school and ensures that all the staff have the support they need to implement a very good action plan. The school is fully benefiting from the fact that this teacher does not have a class to teach and is therefore able to oversee developments in the classroom. Lessons that the class teacher and co-ordinator plan and deliver together are very effective because of the extent to which expertise is shared. Provision for science is now of a much higher quality than at the last inspection.
88. An area for yet further improvement is in the extent to which the children are encouraged to follow up their own ideas. The rigorous planning, assessment and recording, which is necessary to facilitate this kind of lateral expansion of investigations is clearly evident in this school. Opportunities arose in some of the lessons seen for some children to set up different activities to either consolidate previous learning or to take the investigation in a slightly different direction. On occasions, however, the planning is so meticulous that the efforts of staff are sometimes directed towards the completion of the set tasks by all the children at the expense of fostering further questioning and exploration.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ICT skills are taught systematically across the school enabling pupils to achieve very well.
- Bilingual staff give excellent support to children who need help in ICT lessons.
- Some teachers make excellent use of ICT in lessons; others have yet to fully exploit these opportunities.
- ICT is used well in some subjects, but not yet consistently across the curriculum.

## Commentary

89. The pupils achieve very well to reach above the standards generally seen by the end of Year 2. They are very confident in their use of computers and have mastered a broad range of basic ICT skills. They learn rapidly because lessons systematically build on what they already know. Optimum use is made of the networked computers in the suite by the wise deployment of a very skilled teaching assistant. She takes regular lessons in the suite, half a class at a time, giving the pupils the support they need to master new skills. The curriculum is planned very effectively so that all the pupils cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in ICT. They confidently use computers to type text, produce and label charts and graphs, paint pictures and make designs. They also instruct an on-screen robot to move in predicted ways. For example, the pupils described clearly how they would instruct the robot to draw a square.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teaching assistant works very closely with the class teachers to ensure that expectations are high but realistic. Clear instructions are given without any time being wasted, enabling the pupils to make the most of their time on the computers. The excellent resources are used very effectively, for example to enable all the pupils to print out an immediate record of their work. An excellent balance is achieved between directing the pupils towards a set objective and allowing them to find their own solutions to problems that arise. For example, when the pupils ran out of space when putting squares in a graph, some opted to make two adjacent columns while one boy created a design with the correct number of squares. When bilingual assistants are present, the support they give is excellent, enabling the pupils whose home language is not English to quickly overcome potential barriers presented by any new terminology. In their absence, the support given by the teaching assistant and other pupils is sufficient to enable rapid progress. Pupils with special educational needs are equally well-supported to achieve as well as other pupils.
91. In some lessons, especially in English and mathematics, the interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to engage the pupils' interest and involve them more directly in the lesson. The pupils are clearly used to this in some classes, reflecting the level of confidence the teachers have with the new technology. In an excellent mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher used the whiteboard superbly, both to introduce the lesson and to enable the pupils to move numbers around to clarify their thinking and explanations as the lesson progressed. In other classes, because the teachers have not yet received the necessary training, the whiteboards are used simply as an electronic blackboard, rather than as an interactive learning tool.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are good. A programme is in place to complete initial staff training and to continually update resources and expertise. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

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

93. The pupils use their computer skills in most subjects to some extent. For example they word-process text, produce graphs and charts and create computer-generated paintings. They also use other forms of ICT naturally, for example listening centres and tape recorders in 'story corners'. This is an area for further development already identified by the school, which also depends on staff expertise. ICT is increasingly a tool for developing children's understanding of number, and the use of interactive whiteboards is accelerating the links between ICT and mathematics.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History and geography**

94. Work was sampled in history and geography. There is every indication from children's work that overall the school provides a very stimulating range of learning experiences to promote children's interests in people, places, events and happenings through the ages and across the world. Standards are above average. In both subjects children have very good opportunities to build up a good knowledge base and to develop effective geographical and historical skills. Through the use of well planned visits and visitors, teachers bring the subjects alive for children and children learn to think of themselves as historians and geographers.
95. In geography, children learn about other countries and name the capital cities in Europe and in Asia where many of their families come from. Children are developing good map reading skills and plan and follow a route from school to the nearby park. They use geographical vocabulary accurately and can talk with confidence about what a 'bird's eye view is in mapping terms.
96. In history, children use a range of books, video materials, artefacts, photographs, the Internet, visits and visitors to gain knowledge and understanding of past times and characters. A visit from 'Florence Nightingale' (the headteacher in a very convincing disguise) brought a sense of wonder to a very good history lesson and children gained considerable information from her by asking well-thought-out mature questions.
97. Cross-curricular links are used effectively to deepen children's knowledge and understanding and to add focus and interest to their learning.

### **Religious education**

**Provision in religious education is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children achieve very well including those with special educational needs and bilingual learners.
- Teachers use visits and visitors very well to enable children to achieve successfully in learning about different religions.
- There has been considerable improvement to teachers' knowledge and confidence and the quality and continuity of the curriculum.



## **Commentary**

98. All children achieve very well so that they exceed the expectations in the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2. The many children who are Muslims add understanding of Christian beliefs to their very good knowledge and understanding of Islam. The school has successfully generated a feeling of mutual respect for Christianity and Islam in this multi-faith community.
99. There have been considerable improvements since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is significantly better and is having a very positive effect on children' attitudes and achievement. As a result many children clearly enjoy learning about differing religions and show much respect for cultures and beliefs which are different to their own.
100. Children develop and extend their understanding of stories from the Bible and the Quran and have a good understanding of their meaning. At the same time, they learn to empathise with characters in the stories and have quite a sophisticated understanding of some abstract religious concepts. For example, they have good understanding of 'repentance' for their age due to very good explanations by the staff that relate directly to the children' own experience. In one lesson, when considering the story of Joseph and his brothers, children were encouraged to identify with the different people in the story and to explore how they might be feeling.
101. The curriculum for religious education is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus and provides good continuity in developing religious knowledge and understanding. It ensures that the subject contributes very well to children' spiritual and moral development. However, children' understanding of cultural diversity is more limited. The school has already recognised the need to recognise a greater range of religious festivals, for example.
102. The curriculum is supported well by a good range of resources and artefacts and the contributions of members of faith communities, especially when the celebration of festivals takes place. Visits to places of worship are used very effectively to enable children to become familiar with religious traditions. On one visit during the inspection the children gained not only knowledge and understanding of a Christian church and the related vocabulary but experienced awe and wonder in responding to what they saw and heard.
103. The subject leader has very good subject expertise and an enthusiasm for the subject. She has been supported well by senior management in forging links with parents and in enabling the great majority of children to take a full part in subject lessons. Only a few children are withdrawn by their parents, a substantial positive change since the last inspection. Subject monitoring is very good and all teachers contribute to this in their end of unit evaluations and assessments. These are of good quality and are used well to adapt and improve lesson planning.

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

Only one lesson was observed in each of art and design, and design technology, and none in music so no overall judgements can be made in these subjects.

## Art and Design and Design Technology

104. **Art and design** has a strong place in the school's curriculum. The pupils cited the subject as one of their favourites. Teachers' planning shows that the subject is covered very thoroughly, and the work developed in Year 1 sketch books shows that pupils practise and develop a wide range of observational and drawing skills, and use a good range of media. In displays, Year 1 children have developed good line drawing skills of houses after a walk in the locality, and Year 2 pupils have drawn good masks and portraits, and explored colour mixing well.
105. Design technology is represented very well around the school with models made from a wide variety of soft, malleable and resistant materials. These are of very high quality for the children's ages, and underscore the high expectations that permeate the school. Very good involvement of a child's grandfather was a strong feature in the making of the wooden puppets. The whole design process is taught, including careful planning and evaluation. One Year 1 girl, for example, described how she designed, made and evaluated an Egyptian Princess doll during the weekly art and design technology club.
106. Year 1 work on houses links well with shape in mathematics. In a lesson seen, the teacher skilfully explored the possibilities of 'shape houses', also represented by practise drawings in their sketchbooks. Year 2 explored healthy menus in a food technology session, linked with science, also using the opportunity to make observational drawings of kitchen appliances and utensils. Both of these were good lessons.

## Music

107. There was insufficient evidence available to judge standards of achievement or the quality of teaching and learning in music during the inspection. In the time the co-ordinator has been in post, some significant improvements have been made. The teachers' confidence has been boosted by the introduction of a commercial scheme of work that offers good guidance for non-specialists. Regular lessons in each class ensure coverage of the full National Curriculum programmes of study in music. Teachers' recorded assessments show that standards are at least within the expected range by the end of Year 2 in singing, composing and performing and listening to and appraising different kinds of music.
108. Regular productions develop the pupils' confidence and nurture their love of music. The various cultural and religious backgrounds of the pupils are taken into account when selecting themes for the productions. A good range of instruments is available for the pupils to use, including some from cultures not represented in the school. Visiting performers also enhance the pupils' musical experience. All those pupils who wish to are given the opportunity to learn how to play the recorder. The pupils are taught how to play the basic notes and how to read these on a musical score. This prepares them well for the musical opportunities available in the junior stage of their education. Overall, provision has improved since the last inspection.

## Physical Education

Provision in the subject is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has a high profile, and the school has achieved the Gold Activemark.
- Children achieve well because the staff are keen and enthusiastic.
- Playground play using equipment provided contributes well to pupils' games skills.
- The staff sometimes put out and put away equipment that children should deal with themselves.

## **Commentary**

109. Children reach average standards in games and achieve well in lessons. Girls exceed boys in such skills as skipping, but boys are generally more skilled than girls in throwing, catching and striking activities. However, gifted or talented children are identified, and very high level skipping and racket skills were demonstrated in one lesson.
110. Children clearly enjoy their lessons, and take part enthusiastically. The staff use the opportunity to teach the specific language of movement which is very helpful for those pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The staff have excellent relationships with the children so that girls and most boys generally behave very well. Occasionally, however, a small minority of boys do not follow directions as readily as they should, and are not reminded about this as firmly as they should be.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers understand the structure of a good lesson, and ensure that children practise skills before using them in partner or group games. In a good Year 2 lesson, for example, children devised and played their own target games after practising aiming and catching.
112. Occasionally, the staff do not allow the children to fetch and return their own equipment. This is in part because the compact storage of some games resources in the hall makes it difficult for the children to retrieve and return it. However, in a good outdoor session, the teacher ensured that resources were available close to where children worked to make retrieval and return simple for the children.
113. Subject leadership and management are good, and the coordinator leads by example. There are good resources for games, but the gymnastics equipment in the hall is barely adequate. There is good indoor and outdoor space available that is used well.

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

114. The children's personal, social and health education is of high quality. There are very well-organised sessions where children learn social skills in pairs and groups, and discuss how to behave in school and in wider society. A strength of the Foundation Stage provision is the extent to which the children are encouraged to be independent in their learning. They are allowed to choose what to do and then supported as they play to get the most out of the learning opportunities the activities present. There are also very good opportunities for children in Years 1 and 2 to develop friendships and learn how important sharing and cooperation are in their personal development. Recent links with the local Anglican church and a local mosque also help to promote

religious understanding and tolerance. The school has well-developed policies that cover all aspects, including the school's approach to relationships education.

115. The children become part of a successful team and learn to play their roles as responsible citizens. For example, the school council gives children the opportunity to represent their classes and children willingly undertake many routine tasks around the school. The reward assemblies show that the school values how the children relate to one another, for example through rewards for good play. A clear focus on healthy living in science and physical education lessons ensures that the children develop a good awareness of the importance of good food and exercise in keeping fit and healthy.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	1
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>1</b>
Children's achievement	1
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality of teaching	1
How well children learn	1
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets children needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for children	1
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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