

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **UPMINSTER INFANT SCHOOL**

Upminster

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102307

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Eastwood

Lead inspector: Mrs Gulshan Kayembe

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 268162

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	268
School address:	St Mary's Lane Upminster Essex
Postcode:	RM14 3BS
Telephone number:	(01708) 227 320
Fax number:	(01708) 640 010
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Les Brand
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> - 29 <sup>th</sup> April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Upminster on the outskirts of London. It is of above average size with 268 boys and girls currently on roll. There are more boys than girls: 144 boys to 124 girls. This gender imbalance is particularly noticeable in Year 1. The overall social and economic backgrounds of pupils are favourable and attainment on entry to the school is above average though this varies a little from year to year. For example, there were not as many higher attainers in the current Year 2 when they began school compared to numbers of higher attainers in the current Reception classes and Year 1. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. About 12 per cent are from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds and this equates to about two to four in each class. A small proportion of these pupils have English as an additional language but all are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is well below the national average at about five per cent. Their needs are mostly moderate learning difficulties. There are no pupils who have a statement. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People award, a Schools Achievement Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2901	Mrs G Kayembe	Lead inspector	Mathematics Religious education English as an additional language
9779	Mrs Suzanne Smith	Lay inspector	
8552	Mr Wallis Hart	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Geography The Foundation Stage
20767	Mr Jerry Royle	Team inspector	English History Music Physical education Special educational needs

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9 - 13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13 - 14</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>15 - 29</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>30</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Upminster Infant School is a very good school.** The headteacher provides a singularly clear direction for development and promotes very high standards. The very good quality of teaching and the pupils' excellent attitudes ensure that they reach standards that are well above average. Overall the school provides very good value for money.

### THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Standards of work are well above average by the end of Year 2 and the school's performance in national tests is very good.
- Teaching is very good and teachers create a lively and stimulating learning environment, enabling pupils to achieve very well.
- Children get a very good start to their education in the Reception classes.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal development contribute to the strong sense of community within the school as well as to their success as learners.
- There is excellent enrichment and extra-curricular provision promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Though the school works hard to establish good working relationships with parents, there are opportunities for even closer partnership when dealing with their needs and concerns.
- The headteacher promotes excellent teamwork amongst staff and sets challenging targets.
- Subject co-ordinators provide strong leadership and know their areas well but do not have regular opportunities to observe lessons and hence promote even better learning.

### IMPROVEMENT

Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Significant improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) provision has led to much better standards and achievement in this area. The quality of teaching is now better and the high standards found at the time of the last inspection are now even higher. Though more is done to support the ablest pupils in the school, there is scope to improve this aspect further.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve very well** in their Reception Year and in Years 1 to 2. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are well above average in all the nationally defined areas of learning for children under five. Standards are also well above average by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art and design as a result of the very good progress pupils make. Standards of work are above average in history, physical education and religious education. Sampling of work in other subjects indicates that pupils achieve very well in design and technology and well in geography and music. Though boys make as much progress as girls, it is noticeable that they do not always reach quite as high standards, particularly in mathematics and writing. Nonetheless boys

do achieve very well considering their starting points. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others. The small number of pupils who were beginners in English when they started school have made remarkable progress in learning it and are now fluent English speakers. They are doing just as well as other pupils in subjects across the curriculum. Whilst there is good overall provision for bright pupils which enables them to reach high levels in national tests, at times the ablest are not stretched or stimulated to achieve to the very best of their ability. Opportunities are missed to enable these pupils to further develop investigative, enquiry or problem-solving skills and apply their knowledge and understanding to new situations.

Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour in school and **their personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent.** Attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is very good.** Teaching and learning are very good overall, and strongest in the Reception classes and in English, mathematics, science, art and ICT in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes good progress across subjects. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is imaginatively developed and meets children's needs very well. Excellent provision for extra-curricular and enrichment activities makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Links with other schools and the local community support pupils' learning very well. Pupils are very well cared for.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and has established excellent teamwork amongst staff. Members of the senior leadership team contribute well to leading the school. The leadership roles of subject co-ordinators are very well developed and they have a very clear sense of what needs to be improved. Monitoring and evaluation activities are effective in identifying and addressing issues in provision and outcomes. Overall the school's self-evaluation is accurate, however, subject leaders are not yet systematically monitoring lessons to further develop the quality of teaching in their areas. Governors carry out their responsibilities very well and have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They ensure all statutory requirements are met.

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

Overall, pupils and parents are happy with the school's provision. Parents are very positive about most aspects of provision. However, a minority express concerns about the school's approachability and the information they receive, especially about their children's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that though the school works hard to promote its partnership with parents, there are areas for improvement including providing more informative reports. Pupils agree that they enjoy lessons and like their teachers. They consider the school a friendly place.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

THE SCHOOL HAS NO NOTABLE WEAKNESSES. THE AREAS IDENTIFIED BELOW ARE WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS SCOPE TO BUILD ON EXISTING GOOD PRACTICE AND TO IMPROVE OR DEVELOP IT FURTHER.

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:**

- develop further the partnership with parents, including improving the quality of pupils' annual reports;
- build on existing good work to improve the provision for the ablest pupils; and
- provide opportunities for subject co-ordinators to regularly monitor teaching in their areas.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Overall standards of attainment are well above average by the end of the Reception Year and by Year 2. Achievement is very good throughout the school.

#### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The very good provision in the Foundation Stage means that pupils get a cracking start to their education and achieve very well.
- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art and design by the end of Year 2 and pupils continue to achieve very well in Years 1 and 2.
- Though boys achieve very well, their standards are not quite as high as those of girls.
- The achievement of able pupils is a little more variable in lessons.

#### COMMENTARY

1. When pupils begin in Reception, their standards of attainment are above average in all areas of learning, except personal development where standards are average. They receive a very good start to their education in the Reception classes so that by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, their standards are well above average in all areas of learning and are particularly strong in personal and social development, language development, mathematical development and the art elements of creative development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (18.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.1 (17.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.3 (17.7)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 88 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. By the time pupils begin Year 1, a high proportion are already above average. In most classes, between a third and half of pupils are usually working at the higher levels though this varies from year to year. For example, there are not quite so many able pupils in the current Year 2, though their progress is nonetheless very good.
3. Results of national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 were well above the average of all schools and similar schools in reading and writing and mathematics. The 2004 results signify very good achievement for these pupils. Girls performed better than boys in writing and the gap between them was bigger than the gap nationally. However, in reading, boys' results were closer to those of girls and their results were very high when compared with boys nationally. In mathematics there was no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.
4. From inspection evidence, standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design by Year 2. Pupils have very well developed literacy and numeracy skills and their use of ICT across the curriculum is good. There are good approaches to teaching problem-solving skills and good emphasis is placed on supporting the development of investigative and enquiry skills in most lessons.



These help to promote standards well. The art work on display is lively and vibrant. Some exceptional quality drawing and painting skills are evident in the best of the work on show. In other subjects inspected in depth, standards are above average and achievement good. In religious education, standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Year 2. Pupils achieve well throughout the school.

5. In subjects that were sampled, the work seen is frequently of above average quality and achievement good. In design and technology, standards of sampled work are well above average and it is clear that pupils are making very good progress in developing their making and designing skills.
6. Overall, pupils achieve very well and there is no noticeable difference in the achievement of different groups though boys' standards in some subjects are not quite as high as those of girls. Challenging targets set by the school mean that the vast majority of pupils reach at least Level 2, the expected level, by the age of seven. A high proportion exceed this and the school does well to enable so many pupils to reach the higher level. However, the ablest, despite reaching the higher level, Level 3, are at times capable of achieving even more in terms of broadening their understanding and honing their skills further. There is scope to develop further the investigative and problem-solving approaches to provide additional stimulus and challenge for them.
7. Across the school, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, achieve very well. A few who began school with little or no English are now fluent, showing they have made rapid and remarkable progress. When pupils are grouped by ability in lessons, it is clear that higher ability groups are well represented by pupils from minority ethnic groups. Analysis of the school's data shows that overall there is no significant difference in attainment or achievement based on ethnicity.
8. Pupils with special educational needs perform very well against the targets in their plans. The fact that the targets are clear and well expressed supports progress very well. Most pupils with learning difficulties achieve very creditable results in national curriculum tests and teacher assessments.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

The attitudes of pupils, their behaviour and relationships with others are **excellent** throughout the school. Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Attendance is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a happy and harmonious community, resulting in a positive learning environment.
- Pupils enjoy their work, want to learn, and participate enthusiastically.
- The high priority given to personal skills leads to excellent growth in maturity.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. They enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and show high levels of enthusiasm for all that the school has to offer. They co-operate fully in lessons and do the very best they can. Pupils are interested in how to improve their work and value the guidance and support they receive in lessons. Pupils know there are rules and are usually very careful to abide by them. The very high standards of behaviour achieved ensure that time available for learning is used to maximum effect. The wide range of activities that are additional to classroom learning are very much appreciated and there are high levels of participation. The

school council is active and contributes very well to the development of pupils' citizenship skills and their capacity to take responsibility for their community.

10. Behaviour at break times is sociable and happy. Pupils agree that instances of bullying are very rare and dealt with well by staff. The school has never excluded any pupil. Positive relationships are a strong feature throughout the school community that embraces the range of cultural backgrounds represented. Pupils show high levels of care and concern for each other and nurture one another. They take seriously the need to support others, for example through the 'buddy' system. In discussions during the week of inspection, they listed their teachers as amongst the best characteristics of the school.
11. There has been a significant improvement in pupils' personal development since the time of the last inspection. They show high levels of respect, interest and empathy when learning about the lives of people from other cultures and religions. They are encouraged to reflect on the feelings of other people and develop strong principles that result in them identifying and taking action when one of their peers needs support. The praise and encouragement pupils receive in all aspects of their lives at school have a very positive impact on their self-esteem. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and develop an increasing ability to form opinions about ethical and moral issues. For example, they support a project to bring water to a village in India and show high levels of interest in the progress made. Social development is a very strong feature that permeates the work of the school. As a consequence, interpersonal skills develop rapidly to a very high standard.
12. Provision for personal and social development for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Their behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They very rapidly learn about classroom routines and how to interact and work effectively with one another.

## ATTENDANCE

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.3
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.*

13. Although attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection and is good overall, levels have dropped considerably during the current school year. Some pupils have had long-term sickness and two left the country permanently without first informing the school. These factors will have had a key impact on reducing attendance. Punctuality is excellent and this ensures the school day gets off to a prompt and usually uninterrupted start. Poor attendance by individual pupils is suitably identified by the school and followed up. Routines to identify and deal with issues before they reach this stage are less effective. There is no established routine for contacting parents about unexplained absence on the first morning. The school has suitable arrangements to make best use of the services of the education welfare officer (EWO).

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school and very effectively promote high standards. There is good curricular provision throughout the school. Curricular provision is very good for pupils with special educational needs. Links with parents, other schools and the community are strong.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment is good.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- TEACHING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE IS STRONG AND CONSISTENTLY VERY GOOD, SOMETIMES EXCELLENT.
- TEACHING IS ALSO VERY GOOD IN ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, ICT AND ART AND DESIGN.
- PLANNING IS EXCELLENT AND TEACHERS IDENTIFY CLEAR LEARNING OUTCOMES THAT ARE SHARED WITH PUPILS.
- ON THE WHOLE EXPECTATIONS ARE HIGH, ALTHOUGH ON OCCASIONS THE ABLEST PUPILS COULD DO WITH BEING CHALLENGED AND STIMULATED EVEN MORE.
- VERY GOOD USE IS MADE OF ICT TO SUPPORT LEARNING.
- LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF PROVIDE STRONG SUPPORT TO LOWER ATTAINERS AND THOSE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

## COMMENTARY

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. The vast majority of lessons were good or better, and just over half were very good. No teaching was less than satisfactory. The strong teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and enables them to achieve very well. The strongest teaching is found in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics, science, art and ICT in Years 1 and 2, where it is consistently very good. Occasionally, teaching in the Foundation Stage is outstanding.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	18 (51%)	13 (37%)	3 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. Overall, teachers' planning is excellent. They identify clear learning outcomes and share with pupils what they expect them to learn. Starter activities – short activities to stimulate learning at the beginning of a lesson – are invariably well structured and fulfil their purpose effectively. In almost all lessons, teaching assistants are very well used to support the learning of the least able and those with special educational needs. Teaching overall for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Behaviour is very well managed and classrooms well organised. Displays of work around the school are of high quality.

16. In the best lessons, the pace set is rapid. Questioning is used very well to probe and promote pupils' knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, there is very good match of work to pupils' individual needs, promoting rapid progress, and pupils are given very good opportunities to apply their existing knowledge to new situations. In effect, enquiry and investigative approaches to learning are very well developed in the most successful lessons.
17. Where lessons are not quite as successful, opportunities to challenge the ablest pupils far enough are missed; pace is slower, there is a little too much teacher talk and hence fewer opportunities for speaking and listening and lack of work at different levels to match the different needs of pupils according to their capabilities.
18. Teachers make good use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The interactive whiteboards are very well used by teachers to promote pupils' learning and pupils are usually actively involved in helping demonstrate work on these boards. Computers are well used to support work in other subjects, particularly in English and mathematics.
19. Assessment is well developed and overall used well to plan work to meet the needs of the vast majority of pupils. Systems are particularly good within English, mathematics and science. Teachers have good systems for most other subjects though in religious education, assessment systems are still being developed. Assessment arrangements for the Foundation Stage are excellent.
20. Work is well marked and there is regular oral feedback to pupils. However, there is some inconsistency in the frequency of written comments and how well these comments enable pupils and their parents to understand what needs to be done to improve. There is regular homework and pupils receive sufficient and suitable homework for their ages.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

Curriculum provision is good overall. The taught curriculum is enhanced through excellent provision of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Accommodation is good and resources are very good.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The curriculum is broad and well balanced. There is good variety and depth to planned activities.
- Curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. Activities for children are very well structured and organised so that children learn through practical activities.
- Excellent enrichment activities contribute well to pupils' personal development as well as to their academic achievement.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good but that for the ablest pupils is evolving and has further to go.

## **COMMENTARY**

21. A well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum meets pupils' academic and personal development needs effectively. There has been good progress in improving this provision since the last inspection. The curriculum very effectively meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are very well used to support pupils' learning. The programme for personal and social education is very good and well integrated into the main curriculum. An excellent range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities enhance provision most significantly and there is very good provision for musical and sporting activities. For example, pupils participate in a musical festival, Year 2 pupils visit the Royal Festival Hall, pupils have the opportunity to learn French after school and there are African art workshops to name a few. Themed weeks such

as science, book or arts week, when the timetable is suspended, are taking on the spirit of the national primary strategy and contribute very well to cultural and social as well as academic development.

22. Curricular planning is well developed in terms of meeting statutory requirements and being structured for progressive development of skills, knowledge and understanding. However, it needs to be further refined to match even more closely the needs of the ablest pupils though there is some specific provision in place for them.
23. Curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and ensures that there is a very good balance between exploratory practical activities and more formal approaches to teaching and learning. It is very well planned around the nationally recommended areas of learning and prepares children very successfully for work on the National Curriculum. The Foundation Stage methodology is extended into the first half-term of Year 1 for all pupils to ease the transition from Foundation Stage to the National Curriculum.
24. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is well supported by teaching assistants in lessons. These pupils are clearly identified and very good individual plans are in place to support their learning. Where appropriate, separate curricular provision occurs in literacy such as the enrichment reading programme for pupils with special educational needs and booster group work for children in reception. There is an early literacy intervention programme, organised by the literacy subject leader, which gives additional support to lower ability pupils in Year 1. When required, there is access to good support for pupils with English as an additional language.
25. Resources, including those of staffing, are good and in fact resources in many areas are very good. For example, there is a very good infrastructure and resources for ICT. Accommodation is good overall.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Procedures to ensure the care, welfare and safety of pupils are very good. Support and guidance based on monitoring are very good. Arrangements made to seek, value and then act on pupils' views are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High standards are set for the care and safety of pupils.
- Provision for pupils' personal guidance is very well planned.
- Staff monitor the achievements and development of individual pupils very well.
- The ablest pupils are not always provided with new challenges soon enough.
- Pupils value the way in which the school seeks and takes account of their views.

### **Commentary**

26. The school has improved on the high standards reported for this aspect of its work at the time of the last inspection. Pupils like and respect their teachers and are confident about being able to share concerns. There are suitable procedures for child protection that have recently been reviewed and with which new staff are familiarised. The school is aware of the need to ensure all members of staff regularly revisit these. Health and safety is given a high priority and risk assessments are reviewed and used regularly. Governors take a very active interest in safety matters, and pride in ensuring the school meets all requirements. There are suitable arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies and prescribed medicines. Security is regularly reviewed and maintenance programmes ensure equipment and appliance servicing fully meets requirements.
27. Very effective relationships with pre-school groups and well-planned induction ensure children settle into Reception very well. Personal, health and social education has recently been

reviewed and the new programme covers all the required areas very well. This, together with circle time and very high levels of awareness amongst teachers about issues affecting pupils, makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Year co-ordinators play an effective role in monitoring the personal development of pupils, regularly meeting with staff to discuss and evaluate work done.

28. Staff know individual pupils, their achievements and development very well indeed. This enables them to plan work and, with the very effective teaching assistants, to target individual support in lessons effectively. Work is usually marked regularly, but often omits guidance about how to improve. This is largely counteracted by the very good verbal guidance provided in lessons. Although targets provided for ability groups set high standards, there are occasions when higher-attaining pupils are not moved on as soon as they could be. The school works very well with the local junior school to ensure that transition to Year 3 minimises interruptions to learning.
29. The school has a very effective school council and through this, pupils are able to express their views and make suggestions. They are encouraged to consider the school environment and its impact on their work and play. Where matters affect the life of pupils in the school, for example the Healthy Schools Project, pupils value and respond responsibly to the opportunities they are given to offer opinions.

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

The working partnership between the school and its parents is **good** overall. Use of resources within the community and the partnership developed with other schools are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents think very highly of the school and provide strong support for their children's learning.
- In some instances, communications with parents do not best meet their needs.
- Very good links with other schools maximise the use of resources and expertise.
- Very effective use of community resources extends learning and pupils' personal development.

### **Commentary**

30. The school has improved the good partnership that it had with parents at the time of the last inspection. It now provides more detailed and a wider range of information to them. Parents think very highly of the school and provide strong support for their children's learning. This is shown in the high levels of interest they take in their children's progress; attendance at consultations with teachers; support provided in school and for extra-curricular activities. The parents' and teachers' association (PTA) is exceptionally active and makes significant contributions that support children's learning. Their high expectations of the school are largely met. The prospectus, governors' annual report and a regular newsletter very effectively inform about routines, expectations, diary dates and school news. Annual progress reports in English and mathematics suitably report progress and identify what children know and can do. In other subjects, although work covered by the year group is thoroughly reported, some parents correctly identify that there is insufficient evaluation that identifies areas for development, or information about progress. Attendance levels are suitably reported but where these are unsatisfactory, this, and the impact on learning, is not always identified. Reports in the Foundation Stage are very good, providing detailed information and evaluation of children's progress. The school makes very good provision for parents to meet teachers to discuss progress, areas for development and the end-of-year report.
31. Information about the curriculum is provided through year group curriculum evenings for parents, an after-school mathematics workshop, in written form and on the Internet. Some

parents would appreciate having this, and information about school events, a little earlier. The home/school reading books are not used as effectively as at the time of the last inspection when they facilitated two-way communication. A significant minority of parents say they do not feel comfortable about approaching the school or that they are suitably consulted. Evidence during inspection indicates there are opportunities for the school to work more closely in partnership with parents when dealing with their needs and concerns.

32. The school has developed a wide range of very effective links with others in the community. These are used very well to ensure that children transferring from pre-school provision settle happily and well into the Reception class. Meetings between teachers across infant and junior schools provide growing opportunities for them to arrange joint training, share expertise, plan for continuity, consider systems for assessment and moderate work together. There are some links with secondary schools, for example with work experience, performances for pupils and professional development. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the Junior School are very effective. They ensure pupils are confident and settle well. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure academic records and test results are transferred prior to pupils starting in Year 3.
33. The school uses opportunities within the community very well to extend opportunities for learning and personal development. Pupils develop a better understanding of the people within their community through the work they do for charity. They meet representatives from community services, for example religious ministers, the fire brigade, road safety, libraries, RSPCA and the recycling unit. There are visiting theatres that promote personal development, for example, on topics such as drug awareness. The many trips and visits to museums, such as the Ragged School museum, Christian churches, local landmarks with tourist guide and the zoo, butterfly park and Sea-life Centre amongst others enrich what they have learnt in the classroom.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and her promotion of teamwork is excellent. Governance is very good. Other staff with managerial responsibilities provide very good leadership for their areas. The school is very well managed overall.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The headteacher is very effective in promoting teamwork and has an inordinately clear sense of direction.
- Governors are very well informed and have very well structured methods for enabling them to oversee the work of the school. They work very well in partnership with the school.
- Subject leaders have very good oversight of their areas through analysis of data, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. However, most do not monitor lessons.
- There is very good emphasis on staff development in order to promote pupils' learning and hence achievement.

## **COMMENTARY**

34. The headteacher promotes excellent teamwork amongst staff. All are included so that teaching and support staff work very successfully together to the benefit of pupils' learning. There is a very clear sense of direction, set by the headteacher, which focuses exceptionally well on continuously improving pupils' academic and personal development. School self-evaluation is well used to identify areas for improvement and the school improvement plan is very well developed to ensure that improvements are secured and that they have a positive impact on standards and achievement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in its view of how good the school is. Improvement is secured through a rigorous cyclic process that links

the school improvement plan, setting targets and performance management in a coherent way and actively involves staff and governors.

35. Subject leaders provide overall very good leadership for their areas. They have a clear sense of direction and know the strengths and areas for improvement. Though they rigorously monitor planning and pupils' written work and track assessment data, where available, and information, they do not yet, in almost all cases, have opportunities to observe lessons. This means that they are not able to share their very well developed expertise to provide tips to their colleagues to make lessons even better or to share the best practice within the school. Performance management arrangements are well in place and the headteacher regularly monitors teaching and learning.
36. Leadership and management of the work with pupils who have special educational needs are very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is highly skilled and very experienced and provides very good support to all staff. Teaching assistants, particularly in Year 1, are very effectively deployed and used to support the learning of lower attainers or those with special educational needs. Though there is currently no need for it, when the need does arise, there is a very well established mechanism for supporting pupils with English as an additional language. The Foundation Stage is also very well led and managed.
37. A high emphasis is placed on staff development and this is very well managed by the deputy headteacher. A very good link is made between school improvement priorities and training as well as with the outcomes of performance management reviews. New staff receive good levels of help and support to settle into their roles.
38. Governors have a very clear picture of the school and its strengths and areas for development. They are very well involved in scrutinising performance data and monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan and focus very well on the strategic development of the school. There is a well-structured committee arrangement enabling governors to receive informative reports on curriculum developments. Governors' knowledge of the school, and their partnership work with it, is significantly enhanced by their attachment to subjects and areas of the school's work.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	803,729	Balance from previous year	25,415
Total expenditure	770,596	Balance carried forward to the next year	33,133
Expenditure per pupil	2,854		

39. The school's finances are very well managed and funding is well directed at educational priorities. The school improvement plan reflects very well both the strategic direction of the school and the finance needed to achieve the stated objectives. Very good attention is given to the principles of best value: the school makes effective comparisons of its performance against that of other similar schools; it challenges itself to improve, using self-evaluation well to identify areas for improvement and to set challenging targets; it is increasingly involved in consulting parents and pupils and it is prudent in its spending decisions. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are appropriately allocated. Taking account of the school's broadly average rate of expenditure, and given the very good achievement, the school is judged to provide very good value for money.



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

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

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and the provision has improved very well since the last inspection. They make very good progress in all areas of learning because the teaching is consistently very good. Standards at this time of the year, close to the end of the Foundation Stage, are well above national averages. The vast majority of children reach the Early Learning Goals (nationally identified targets for five-year-olds) and a high proportion exceed these. Attainment in personal and social development, mathematics development, language development and the art elements of creative development are strongest. The school is well aware of what needs to be done to make the achievement consistently high across all of the six areas of learning. Teachers have a very clear idea of the children's standards on entry to the school when they are four. The transition from pre-school classes is very smooth. Throughout the Reception Year, the children's progress is monitored sensitively and regularly by the team of teachers and assistants. Great care is taken to ensure that each individual child is happy, feels safe and continues to enjoy learning. There is a very good partnership with parents that is characterised by mutual respect. Most of the parents consulted described the provision as either very good or excellent. Newer staff are responding very well to the support they are receiving to help them settle into, and become effective in, their new roles. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. Provision was highly praised at the time of the last inspection and it is now even better, so improvement is very good.

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

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

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

- Children respond very well to the routines even when the work is challenging for them.
- They enjoy learning and have excellent attitudes.
- Increasingly, children show respect for the culture and beliefs of others.
- Children work harmoniously in groups and carefully with materials, computers and tools.

#### **Commentary**

39. The quality of teaching in this area is very good and children achieve very well. The standards of their personal and social development are well above average with virtually all pupils reaching the Early Learning Goals and a high proportion exceeding these. Children are purposeful, cheerful and secure throughout the day. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school. They clearly benefit from the very good communication and mutual respect between parents and teachers. Their confidence is also boosted by the very good links the school forges with local playgroups.
40. There are very good routines that result in excellent attitudes and behaviour. For example, children showed considerable self-control and eager anticipation when leaving their parents in the morning and also when sharing out the strawberries for a healthy snack at break-time.

Children work very hard to improve their work, even when free to make their own choices. They are tolerant when occasionally obliged to wait for a computer to be prepared.

41. At all times the children respond appropriately to their teachers' requests and suggestions; when instructed to do something, they respond immediately. On most occasions children are cheerful and co-operative. In an assembly, children listened very carefully and willingly joined in with a Christian song because the teacher had sung well herself and was an excellent role model. She pointed out that we do have different beliefs but all enjoy singing so the children began to learn to respect other cultures and beliefs. On most occasions, children rise to the challenges provided by their teachers and engage in thoughtful conversation.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in reading, through a well-structured programme.
- Standards of work are high and many children exceed the Early Learning Goals for language for communication and thinking.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching is very good in this area of learning. Teachers' expectations are high and they use a very effective range of teaching methods that challenge children. As a result, standards are high and are well above average. The vast majority of children reach the Early Learning Goals and a high proportion exceed these expected standards. Some higher-attaining children reach National Curriculum standards. Children are highly motivated to learn because they receive sensitive and thoughtfully worded praise, when it is merited, from teachers and teaching assistants. Children achieve very well because of the very effective methods used to develop language skills.
43. Children listen attentively when being given information. Sometimes songs are used so children are having fun while learning. They use and understand correct words when learning new skills, for example in information and communication technology. Sound effects on computers are used very effectively to motivate and amuse them so that learning is fun. Children use the computer confidently when finding out information such as about characters from pictures and information from stories. They have no difficulty reading written instructions from the whiteboard and around the room.
44. Children have very good opportunities to develop their language by talking with one another and with adults. They are inquisitive and talkative and often sufficiently confident to initiate conversation. The very good encouragement they receive from the staff promotes this confidence and helps them to continuously extend their speaking and listening skills and the range of their vocabulary.
45. The school is using a special strategy to boost the language learning of those children who have previously made slower progress. The result at this time in the academic year is that all progress with confidence. At a given time, different methods are used very effectively by the teaching team to make sure the activities are appropriate to enable individual children to confidently take the next higher step for them. For example, extra challenge was accepted by children interacting with the teacher whilst the assistant gave clear and accurate guidance about letter and whole-word sounds to those working hard to extend their vocabulary. Overall, children are making very good progress in developing early reading skills.
46. Standards in writing are consistently high and a high proportion of pupils are exceeding the Early Learning Goals for writing and communicating and are able to match some of the

expectations for Year 1. The vast majority of children write accurately in sentences that are grammatically correct, for example when describing *Penny the Panda's* visit to the seaside. Higher-attaining children, when interacting with the teacher, discuss various ways of starting a sentence by using phrases such 'Next we went...' or 'When we went..' to make their writing more interesting and communication more effective.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT.**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good and excellent teaching methods inspire children to learn and enjoy working with numbers and shapes.
- Variety and quality of the resources in the learning setting effectively encourage independent learning.

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching in this area of learning is very good overall and at times excellent. In one lesson, the children could hardly wait to put up their hands to answer questions and sang with enthusiasm while counting on and solving problems associated with number sequences. Because the teacher had high expectations and an excellent repertoire of teaching techniques, children were inspired to learn and developed confidence in their ability to succeed. In other lessons, the very good combination of focused and exploratory activities worked well because the resources were appropriate for the task in hand and support from adults was very well informed.
48. By the end of the Reception Year, the large majority of children are meeting the Early Learning Goals for mathematical problem-solving, calculating and shape and space and a high proportion are exceeding these goals. With varying degrees of independence, but mostly with confidence, children can add and subtract and write simple number equations. In a problem-solving activity using coins, children showed that they understood the relationship between  $2+2+2=6$  and that *two lots of three made six*. All enjoyed the problem-solving with coins and using symbols of coins, both paper and computer-generated. Their attitudes and behaviour were excellent.
49. In lessons, children contribute very well in discussion because their language skills are so good and a significant number work very well independently. In all instances observed, the children were keen to learn. They all achieve very well because the range of activities provided is of very good quality and adults stimulate pupils' thinking and development of ideas through the resources they provide and the questions they ask. As a result of these features, children's differing learning styles are very well supported.
50. The co-ordination is very good because there is a very good balance between focused and exploratory activities that are accurately assessed. Assessment is very well used by all adults to make sure the next step in the learning is confidently taken by children with varying interest in, and aptitude for, mathematical development.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good range of activities to stimulate the children's interest in the world around them
- Children enjoy and value using computers.
- Questioning and planning are very good because they elicit thoughtful comment from the children.

### Commentary

51. The teaching is very good because, firstly, the teachers' relationships with children are very good; secondly, the teachers have very good professional knowledge and expertise; thirdly, assistants are very well briefed and capably implement the agreed plans. As a result, children achieve very well and reach standards that are well above average by the end of the Foundation Stage.
52. Children are enthusiastic about sea life and the beach because they enjoyed a recent visit and responded very well when asked by the teacher to recall what they had seen when discussing their investigations into floating and sinking. Children working with computers were equally enthusiastic in the computer suite. They quickly learned to use the programme with care and equally quickly developed understanding and respect for the routines agreed with their teachers.
53. Well-motivated children with very good communication skills achieve very well. They thoughtfully focus on their work, stimulated by the very good variety of activities that have been planned for them and which engage their attention and interest. In lessons, there is a very well judged balance between exploratory learning and focused interactions with an adult. In the discussion about floating and sinking, the teacher's encouragement and enthusiasm gave children the confidence to make predictions and to suggest plausible explanations: '*it will float because it is not heavy*' or '*the bristles will make the brush float.*' One child, with considerable insight, suggested it would float because '*the water will hold it up.*' This level of understanding exceeds the expectation for five-year-olds quite comfortably.
54. Children are beginning to develop well their knowledge about culture and belief as well as their knowledge and understanding about times past and the locality they live in.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good behaviour and consideration for others supports the teachers' very good planning and enables best use to be made of existing facilities.
- There is very good communication between adults and children so activities are evaluated very well.

### Commentary

55. Standards are well above average, with the vast majority of pupils reaching, and a high proportion exceeding, the Early Learning Goals in this area. Children achieve very well in developing their skills in games and their skills in manipulating objects such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. They concentrate very well in a good range of activities. When working in pairs with a bat and ball and when learning about stitching by threading thin tape through holes equally spaced in thin card, they were very focused on completing their work.
56. Access to the play area is good and the children have safe and appropriate access to the whole-school facilities which are very good overall. The outdoor play area has good

equipment for climbing and for moving big wheeled toys at reasonable speed. However, there are too few notices, such as instructions, to encourage better language use and interactions with the supervising adults.

57. Teaching and learning are very good. The teachers have established very good routines to maintain and to develop very good attitudes and behaviour. The children are therefore willing and able to learn. They have very good quality resources and also receive very good guidance from the teachers and teaching assistants while they are in the process of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and their pupils' learning is very strong so the children achieve very well.
- Standards in art work are outstanding.
- Teachers have a strong sense of humour and clearly enjoy their work; enthusiasm is infectious so that children also enjoy their work tremendously.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards are well above average and the vast majority of children meet, and a high proportion exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception Year. Work in art is particularly strong with many children already working well within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Teaching is very good and has excellent features. As a result, children achieve very well. Teachers teach enthusiastically and remain so completely in touch with their pupils that the response from them is excellent and their achievement very good. For example, every child has produced a painting of the sky that forms a display in which every picture replicates, to some degree, the features of a famous artist's painting. Most of the children's work has so many of the original's features that it could not have been produced without very good observational skills and techniques. Overall, children's performance in the art aspects of creative development is strong.
59. Singing assemblies enable children to learn how to sing in tune and how to maintain the tune. Learning is rapid because the teacher and her colleague model singing techniques so well for them to copy. The atmosphere in the assembly observed was enthusiastic yet purposeful and above all enjoyable.
60. Planning is very good. Children have a very good range of activities in which to be creative. When adults are in close attendance, they give very good guidance to children. Steps are being taken to further improve this guidance and attention is also being given to further improvements in the outdoor play area. Overall, the creative vision and systems in place to encourage each individual child to do well and to be happy are very good.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

The provision for English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well due to very good teaching and pupils' very positive attitude to their learning.
- Standards in both reading and writing are well above average.
- The early literacy intervention programme is contributing positively to pupils' good phonic understanding.
- The monitoring of teaching needs to be developed to ensure a consistent approach.
- There is scope for more demanding work to challenge the highest achieving pupils.

#### Commentary

61. The 2004 national test results showed that standards in reading and writing were well above the national average for seven-year-old pupils. Girls' performance was better than that of boys in writing but in reading, boys' performance was outstanding. A very good proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in reading and writing, though comparisons with similar schools at this level were not quite as favourable in reading as in writing.
62. Pupils start in Year 1 with standards that are well above the level normally seen. These high standards are well sustained so that by the end of Year 2, they remain well above average. Achievement is very good overall. Standards in writing are very good. Pupils are given good opportunities to write at length so they create stories that have a clear structure and accurately use the correct punctuation to define a sentence. Pupils have a strong understanding of writing for different purposes, for example writing a letter with the correct heading and layout. Handwriting is taught well and pupils successfully transfer the skills learnt into their day-to-day work. Most present their work neatly with joined-up writing that is legible and well formed. Regular homework to learn spellings contributes positively to pupils' spelling accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to use more adventurous vocabulary. An example of this was seen in poems about the weather where pupils were using phrases such as: *'the twinkling snow..'* and *'the twirling clouds..'* with effect.
63. Pupils read very well. They enjoy books and have a very positive attitude to reading encouraged by the good stock of books and regular visits to the school library. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read and, when reading aloud, do so with expression, recognising punctuation and varying the tone and the expression of their voice for speech marks. Pupils who are experiencing difficulties reading are identified at an early stage and benefit from additional reading support in small groups to develop their phonic skills. This effective intervention is giving pupils the confidence to use these skills to sound out unfamiliar words, contributing positively to their overall reading fluency and understanding. Pupils are familiar with, and know how to use, the index and the contents. Pupils are confident when researching information and their understanding of the system for categorising and storing books in the library enables them to find the appropriate reference books with ease. Discussions with teachers and pupils indicate that the majority of pupils are well supported in their reading at home. Concern, however, was expressed by a few parents that the books brought home for reading were too easy and were not sufficiently challenging. This was confirmed in discussion with some pupils who commented that did not always read the school book at home, preferring to read their own books though they do have a free choice of books from the school library. Overall, there is sometimes a communication issue between home and school over reading and the school needs to take steps to address this.

64. The standards of speaking and listening are very good. Pupils listen attentively to instructions and wait their turn to respond during question-and-answer sessions. Pupils speak confidently when discussing their work and, when requested to read their work to the class, do so clearly and with self-assurance. The examples of *hot seating*, (where pupils pose questions to an individual pupil about a specific topic) are contributing very positively to their confidence when addressing a group of pupils.
65. The overall quality of teaching and learning are very good. The most successful lessons are well focused and proceed at a good pace, with starter activities to quickly engage pupils' interest. A particular strength of the teaching is the management of pupils. The outcome is that pupils listen carefully to instructions, allowing lessons to proceed with a minimum of interruption, contributing positively to their learning. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed to support the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Lessons are always well planned and the work is carefully matched to needs of all pupils, in particular for pupils with special educational needs who progress very well. Although the higher-attaining pupils generally achieve well, there is scope for more challenging work for the most able. Those with English as an additional language have made remarkable progress in developing their fluency and are achieving good standards of work. Overall, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are achieving very well. Pupils' work is carefully marked with encouraging comments and guidance for further improvement. This quality, however, is not consistent. Very good use is made of ICT to support progress in English, particularly in writing.
66. The leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a clear view about the future development of the subject, is aware of the areas for improvement and is working hard to introduce strategies to improve the overall standard of boys' writing. Management is good. The co-ordinator effectively monitors pupils' work and has a clear understanding of how pupils are progressing. However, there is no systematic or regular programme for observing teaching.
67. The improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. Standards in writing and reading have shown steady improvement to well above average.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

68. Literacy is an integral part of the teaching of all other subjects and there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. The standards of literacy in subjects are well above average. Writing skills are developed in other subjects and there are very good opportunities in information and communication technology for pupils to edit their work and write at length. Teachers encourage and allow pupils to write whenever possible. For example in religious education, Year 1 pupils were writing an advert for a church minister within which they were identifying the skills and qualities the job required. Pupils are also encouraged to use their skills to record and write the outcome of their research work in history.

### **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- The standards attained by pupils are well above average and their achievement is very good.
- The very good teaching contributes to pupils' very good learning.
- The subject is very well led and there is a clear direction for development. However, the subject co-ordinator does not monitor lessons.
- Very good use is made of ICT and interactive whiteboards to support learning.

## Commentary

69. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. In particular, a high proportion of pupils reach the expected level. Results of tests at the end of Year 2 for 2004 were well above the national average and the average of similar types of schools. A high proportion of pupils gained the higher level. Not as many pupils are at this level in the current group of Year 2 pupils, but nonetheless they have achieved very well in relation to their attainment on entry. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have well-developed numeracy skills. They are adept at mental arithmetic and most are able to draw on a range of methods to ensure they get the right answer. Problem-solving skills are well taught so that pupils are confident in tackling a range of problems in a variety of contexts. Most manipulate money or time problems with skill and invariably find the correct solution. Girls tend to attain higher standards than boys; for example, the small groups of lower attainers in each class tend to be populated by boys. Nonetheless boys achieve as well as girls, often having started from a lower base. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make very good progress and are well represented amongst the top groups in lessons.
70. A key feature of the very good teaching is the rigorous and thorough planning so that individual pupils' needs are well met. Work is well matched to prior attainment and a variety of worksheets is available to support progress at varying levels. In addition, teaching assistants provide very good help to lower attainers and those on the special educational needs list. As a result, these pupils make very good progress. Work given to pupils is demanding and they enjoy the challenge of tackling difficult problems. In effect, high expectations from teachers contribute to the overall very good achievement, including that of the able pupils. Resources are well used to support learning and in particular there is very good use of interactive whiteboards and computers to support the development of pupils' mathematical skills.
71. Tracking of pupils' progress is very good. The curriculum is well developed so that topics are revisited regularly and pupils retain the learning well. The headteacher has provided very good support to the new co-ordinator. However, the co-ordinator has not had a chance to monitor lessons to promote further the good practice in the school. Nonetheless, leadership is very good, with a very clear direction for development and a strong emphasis on promoting practical activities and developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Pupils' numeracy skills are very good and they make regular and very effective use of them to support the work they do in other subjects. For example, they make use of numbers to follow simple maps and conduct surveys in geography and draw charts and graphs in science. There are very good opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum overall.

## SCIENCE

The provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers ask questions skilfully and encourage pupils to think for themselves.
- Very good adult interactions with pupils ensure safe and exciting practical investigations.
- The very good planning adds variety and flexibility to the learning setting.
- The teachers' very good subject knowledge is improving pupils' investigating skills, though higher attainers need to be challenged more when it comes to explaining findings.
- Leadership is very good although the subject co-ordinator has not yet had time to observe lessons.



## Commentary

73. In the most recent teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, all pupils reached the expected standards and more than half exceeded them. Standards are therefore well above average. Work in books shows that overall, pupils achieve very well and there is no notable difference in the standards of boys and girls. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others.
74. Pupils absorb new vocabulary very well and develop good levels of confidence in using scientific terms. They make very effective use of computers to research scientific facts and to represent data collected graphically. The work in pupils' books shows that all are good at investigating and testing. However, higher-attaining pupils do not produce as detailed and comprehensive explanations as they could when writing about what they have observed.
75. Teaching and learning are very good. Very good variety within lessons maintains the interest of all pupils very well because teachers are well aware that different pupils learn in different ways. The teachers' very good questioning techniques encourage the development of very good thinking so the pupils do very well in investigations set by teachers. Pupils really enjoyed being scientists because teachers prepare safe and exciting practical demonstrations and group activities. With very good assistance from supporting adults, pupils were seen to gain confidence in their own ability to learn. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoyed using a range of senses, first to collect evidence and then to suggest, with reasons, the identities of the objects thoughtfully concealed by the teacher. However, planned activities, though very good overall, can be developed further to improve the pupils' ability to think about their evidence, and this is especially so for higher attainers. The schemes of work are currently the subject of a well-informed review to address this issue.
76. Leadership is very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good because standards have risen. The teaching and learning have improved; the practical work and resources are much better and assessment methods are strengthening continuously through discussions about marking quality within and between schools. The recently-appointed subject co-ordinator has made a very good appraisal of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision and has very good ideas for further development. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to observe lessons.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skilled interventions by teachers and high quality equipment very successfully promote pupils' learning and enjoyment.
- Very good planning helps pupils to use and develop skills so they become confident and competent users of ICT.
- Teachers' high expectations ensure that all pupils, whatever their prior attainment, make very good progress.
- Opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of others and to apply their skills in all areas of learning are good, and improving.

## Commentary

77. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. Achievement for boys and girls of all backgrounds is very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils show skill and dexterity in using ICT to solve mathematical problems, draw graphs and charts, access the worldwide web, programme robotic toys and simulations on screen and compose their own tunes. The work on display is of singularly high standard for pupils of this age. The very good accommodation

and resources make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements. Just as importantly, very good planning ensures that pupils have time to practise and develop their skills before being asked to use them for solving problems on their own or using their own initiative. Work is very effectively set in relevant contexts so that pupils make realistic use of ICT. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils had taken pictures of a route around the locality as part of a geography lesson. They then used these pictures to simulate a route for a floor robot to follow. Pupils' enjoyment in lessons is very apparent and they are willing to share resources.

78. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers question with skill and explain well what they expect pupils to do so that pupils know exactly what is expected and achieve the next step in their learning. The use of the electronic whiteboard by pupils invited by the teacher to become '*teachers for a short time*' motivated the rest of the class so well that they all clapped and scurried to their machines fully expecting to succeed. They made very good progress in making the simulated robot postman follow the best route.
79. Leadership and management are very good and the subject leader monitors the work in this area well, including observing lessons. The learning is both purposeful and enjoyable. Priorities for the pursuit of excellence are very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent. Very good systems are in place and pupils really enjoy working with computers.

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

80. Pupils' skills in ICT are very good, and improving as more pupils are given the opportunities and freedom to make wider use of computers and computer technology, including more opportunities to make their own choices about how they will harness ICT to support their work. The range of software is expanding well. After a period of refurbishment, updating and training, the use of information and communication technology is very good in many subjects, including, for example, English, mathematics, art and design and design and technology. The school website and Internet café are also very good examples of continuing enrichment of the provision.

### **HUMANITIES**

History was the focus for humanities study this term and was inspected in depth along with religious education.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

81. Because geography was sampled, no overall judgement has been made about provision or teaching and learning. No lessons were seen, although the sample of work shows standards to be above average. Pupils are clearly able to compare local features with those of distant places and, by experiencing a good variety of activities, including explorations, they think carefully about the changes they observe in the locality.
82. The work seen shows that pupils have developed basic skills and use them to good effect. Number skills had been used for interpreting simple maps and for straightforward traffic surveys. Written work by high-attaining pupils is very accurate. Photographs show that pupils have enjoyed local investigations and visits. They also use computers well. In addition to writing with information and communication technology, they used the digital camera on a local walk to record and locate interesting features; the photographic sequence is being used to instruct a simulated robot to navigate the village map so the pupils learn to be both systematic and logical.
83. The subject is well organised. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have an increased awareness of cultural diversity through their study of India and

Scotland in Year 2. Standards have improved and there are clearly identified priorities for further improvement.

## HISTORY

The overall quality of provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have developed a good sense of chronology.
- Pupils achieve well due to their enthusiasm for the subject and good teaching.
- The good use of artefacts in lessons is contributing to pupils' understanding of historical events.

### Commentary

84. Pupils achieve well reaching standards in Year 2 that are above the level expected. Pupils in Year 1 are developing an understanding of looking at evidence and how to sort out facts. They have good knowledge of the modes of transport of the past and are able to compare means of travel with the present. Pupils are beginning to develop a sense of chronology. This was very evident when examining holidays from the past, accurately identifying the period in time. Pupils in Year 2 have knowledge of famous people, writing about the main events in their lives, for example how Florence Nightingale helped the sick soldiers and her focus on cleanliness. The present topic in Year 2 is Victorian times. Here pupils have developed a good understanding of life in a Victorian school by looking at photographs and artefacts of the time and comparing the differences with schools of today. It is planned, as in recent years, to visit a local museum to give pupils a first-hand experience of a 'ragged school'. Pupils enjoy the subject and contribute well during discussions about events.
85. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned well, incorporating a range of artefacts to stimulate pupils' investigative skills. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils watched a video about a Victorian teacher. The film enabled pupils to empathise with a Victorian classroom and teacher. This gave pupils an understanding of life in a Victorian school, prompting them to ask questions about punishment in the schools and how pupils were disciplined. Teachers use good strategies to ascertain pupils' understanding. This was very evident in a Year 1 class using a '*hot seating*' procedure. Here pupils posed questions to each other about journeys to the seaside and the transport used. Not only did this develop and reinforce pupils' understanding of chronology and the types of travel used, it also contributed very positively to pupils' individual spoken English development.
86. During the inspection it was not possible to discuss the development of the subject with the co-ordinator. However, it was evident from the documentation that the leadership and management of the subject are good overall though no systematic observations of lessons are carried out by the co-ordinator. Although the co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject for only a short period, she has identified areas that need improving and is aware that the artefacts for some aspects of the subject need to be further developed. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The best teaching is lively and promotes pupils' thinking skills well.
- Pupils in Year 1 have better opportunities than those in Year 2 to learn from religion as well as about religion. This restricts in particular opportunities for the ablest pupils to extend their learning even further.
- The school has a wide selection of artefacts covering a range of different religions. However, visits tend to be restricted to places of Christian worship.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership, but has not had the opportunity to observe lessons.

## **Commentary**

87. Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement is good. In Year 1, pupils' achievement in learning from religion is as good as the development of their knowledge and understanding of religion. In Year 2, pupils develop detailed knowledge and understanding of Christianity but there is more limited evidence of extending learning about how religion affects our lives or the similarities or differences between different religious traditions. Most pupils achieve well and there are no significant differences between boys and girls or by ethnicity. However, there are missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils in Year 2. In Year 1, a range of work is provided to match the needs of pupils of differing capabilities and this enables brighter pupils to make good progress. Nonetheless, teaching is good overall. Lessons are structured well and teachers lead good discussions which help pupils to grasp key ideas.
88. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator knows the strengths and areas for improvement well though she has had little opportunity to monitor lessons to help further improve the teaching of the subject. Resources are very good. Regular visits are made but usually only to Christian places of worship. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

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

Art and design and physical education were inspected in depth and work in design and technology and music was sampled.

### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. Because design and technology was sampled, there can be no overall judgements about provision, teaching and learning. However, work on display and samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and discussions were held with the teacher responsible for the subject. Aspects of design and technology were also seen in art lessons.
90. TEACHERS HAVE VERY GOOD SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WORK IS PLANNED SO THAT PUPILS USE SKILLS FROM EARLIER LEARNING TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS, TO MAKE DESIGN CHOICES, TO USE SIMPLE TOOLS ACCURATELY AND TO EVALUATE PRODUCTS IN USE OR ON DISPLAY. ATTRACTIVE AND WELL-MADE MODELS SHOW THE VERY GOOD IMPACT OF THIS TEACHING APPROACH ON PUPILS' LEARNING. STANDARDS OF WORK SEEN ARE WELL ABOVE AVERAGE.

### **MUSIC**

91. Music was sampled. Hence, there are no overall judgements about provision, teaching and learning. One lesson was observed in Year 2. From the evidence available, it is apparent that standards overall are above the level normally seen. Assemblies provide good opportunities

for pupils to sing and develop their singing. Pupils enjoy singing and maintain a good pitch. Those who play the recorder are beginning to develop a basic understanding of formal notation and play in time with a CD backing. In the Year 2 lesson seen, pupils showed good rhythmic skills using their 'home-made' percussion instruments to successfully add a percussive accompaniment to a melody. The good range of multi-cultural percussion instruments are also used well by pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

The provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent display of pupils' work makes them feel proud.
- Pupils are inspired to be creative and precise by examining the work of famous artists.
- Lessons are very well planned to encourage pupils to review their own work.
- Adults in classes give very good individual guidance and support.

### **Commentary**

92. Throughout the school, standards are well above average. Displayed work includes pupils' paintings in the style of famous artists alongside copies from the computer printer of the real thing to celebrate children's precision with drawing and painting skills. Aboriginal symbolism associated with story-telling and three-dimensional models of African masks show clearly that pupils are both creative and precise and have a very good knowledge of these subjects in those cultures although few, in the work seen, had added comment to their display to show their understanding of specialised words they had used in discussion. Nevertheless the pupils' achievement is very good. Their attitudes to this subject in discussion were always very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils enjoy the subject so much because the teachers and their supporting adults are enthusiastic when giving support and guidance. Both boys and girls, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds, are given the same very good opportunities and support for improvement. As a result they all achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from specialist support in lessons and make very good progress.
93. Teaching and learning are very good. At the beginning of the lesson, the pupils showed keen interest. They were active for the whole lesson and made enthusiastic contributions at the end. This involvement was a direct result of the excellent planning and very good questioning techniques that varied in response to varying needs of the teacher and the individual pupils. The teachers had very clear expectations and communicated these so well that pupils throughout the lesson could check their own work and progress and take the next step towards higher standards with a very good degree of independence.
94. Leadership and management are very good. Pupils' success is celebrated so the subject is popular. Well-informed visitors have expanded very well the pupils' knowledge of different cultures. Good attention is paid to providing work in three as well as two dimensions; for example, pupils have the opportunity to work in clay and produce clay pots and masks. Good use is made of ICT to research the work of famous artists and to download prints from the Internet to use as stimulus for pupils' own work. Teachers share their expertise and steps are being taken to further improve the quality of marking and guidance. Since the last inspection improvement has been very good in all aspects.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The overall quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well due to their very positive approach to physical education.
- Standards are above those normally seen.
- The extra-curricular skipping club is contributing well to pupils' co-ordination skills.

### **Commentary**

95. In the games lessons observed, standards in the activities seen were above the expected level. No lessons were observed in gymnastics and dance. Pupils have developed good co-ordination. When throwing and catching a ball, pupils in Year 2 show a good level of control. This good control was also evident when using a bat and ball, pupils successfully balancing the ball on the bat and the more confident pupils able to achieve consecutive bounces. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for exercise. The warm-up sessions are used well by the pupils. During these sessions, pupils use the space well, showing a sensible understanding of the safety issues. They know the effect that exercise has on their bodies, commenting that after exercise their hearts were beating faster. Pupils have very good skipping skills, again demonstrating a level of good control and co-ordination that is above the level normally seen. Standards are enhanced by pupils' very positive attitude. They listen attentively to instructions from the teacher and work independently to improve their skills.
96. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Lessons start briskly with warm-up sessions that are carefully organised, using the shapes on the playground floor to enable pupils to utilise the space with care and safety. Lessons are clearly planned to develop pupils' confidence and build on their existing skills. Teachers have very good management skills. As a consequence, all lessons proceed with pace with a minimal amount of time wasted on behaviour issues. Teachers move around the pupils during the lesson well, encouraging them to improve, using praise to develop confidence and asking them to comment on the work of others. There are occasions, however, when pupils are not given enough time to develop and perfect their skills.
97. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and the areas that need to be improved and further developed. However, the co-ordinator does not yet observe lessons. The updated schemes of work and the recent training for teachers are all contributing positively to pupils' progress. The extra-curricular skipping club is well attended by pupils and is having a positive effect on their control and co-ordination skills. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)**

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- There are regular opportunities for personal and social development in each class.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils have exceptionally well developed social skills and their overall personal development is excellent.
- The school council makes a very good contribution to pupils' sense of responsibility and citizenship.

## COMMENTARY

98. Pupils' overall personal development is excellent. The very good opportunities for personal development mean that pupils make significant progress in developing and enhancing their social skills and extending their understanding of others. Most pupils behave very well towards one another and have a deep understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They have a mature approach, well beyond their years, to understanding the role of school councillors and in representing their classes or school.
99. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good. Lessons are well planned and there are good opportunities for pupils to join in discussion and debate. Subjects often offer pupils very good opportunities for considering personal development issues such as why people should not tell lies, for example, in religious education. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
100. There is an active school council which meets regularly with the headteacher. Members of the council are exceptionally articulate and represent their own and others' views well. They recently represented their school at a local conference for headteachers on emotional health and well-being where they answered questions as well as giving talks that they had prepared themselves beforehand.
101. Provision is very well led and managed. It has been audited and adjusted to ensure good balance and continuity. The programme is imaginatively planned and there is very good liaison with the junior school which promotes curricular continuity very well. Though the subject leader does not have time to visit classes, she does monitor work and discusses the programme with class teachers.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

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

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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



*poor (6); very poor (7).*