

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOOD END FIRST SCHOOL**

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110368

Headteacher: Mrs Jacqueline Baron

Lead inspector: Keith Sadler

Dates of inspection: 27 – 28 June 2005

Inspection number: 273319

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	96
School address:	Redbridge Stantonbury Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	MK14 6BB
Telephone number:	01908 316424
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Karen Cooper
Date of previous inspection:	19 May 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wood End is a smaller than average sized first school. There are 96 pupils on roll. The school is located in the Stantonbury area of the city of Milton Keynes. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils overall are well below average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is high. Children's attainment on entry to the school includes the whole ability range but is well below expected levels overall. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who joined the school at other than the normal time of entry into Year R is high and the school also has a high proportion of pupils leaving the school other than at the end of Year 3. The school gained the *Investors in People* award in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16405	Keith Sadler	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language Special Educational needs Information and communication technology Music Physical education Personal, social and health education.
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector	
33124	Bridget Trim	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science History Geography
12783	Martin Kerly	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Religious education.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Wood End First is an effective school and provides good value for money.** Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. This encourages good learning and achievement. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She has led the school well in securing significant improvements since the last inspection. Teamwork is very good and the head has the confidence of governors, staff, parents and pupils. The capacity for further improvement is good. Governance is satisfactory. There is a very good ethos for learning and all pupils feel included. The impact of all these factors leads to standards that are improving.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good leadership of the headteacher.
- The pupils' attitudes, their behaviour and personal development are all very good.
- There is a need to make more routine use of ICT in class lessons.
- The care, guidance and support of pupils are very good.
- The partnership with parents is very good and parents' level of satisfaction with the school is very high.
- Achievement is good.
- Standards, though improving, need to be raised higher.
- Governors are supportive of the school, though they need to challenge the school to do better.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The school has shown good improvement since the previous inspection. The under-achievement of significant numbers of pupils has been resolved. The achievement of all pupils, including that of boys and higher attaining pupils, which was found to be weak at the time of the last inspection, is now good. Targets are now used well to improve performance, teaching and learning are systematically monitored and improvements made; the quality of teaching and learning is good and the teaching of reading is now very good. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection. Attendance is now in line with the national median.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils achieve well in relation to their ability.** Children enter the school with well below average attainment levels. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage, though a significant minority of children do not attain the expected goals. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and, by the time that they reach the end of Year 3, standards are in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The E\* in the table above represents results that are in the lowest five per-cent nationally. In science, pupils achieve very well and they are on course to attain standards that are above the national average at the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good. Standards in

ICT, RE and design and technology are in line with expectations and there are indications that standards in most other subjects are also in line with expectations.

**Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Their attitudes to learning and to each other are very good. Their behaviour is very good and the pupils enjoy their school and learning. The school successfully nurtures the pupils' self-esteem and their confidence and they thrive on the good opportunities for them to be enterprising and to take responsibility. The school has an inclusive ethos which helps the pupils to have very positive attitudes. Attendance in the last reported year was in line with the national median and pupils' punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good,** with almost all lessons being good or better and one third being very good. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Pupils learn well because teachers encourage pupils very well, provide good quality and challenging work and they insist on high standards of behaviour. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to teaching and learning. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils work hard and their application and productivity in lessons are good. The curriculum is good and there is a very good range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum, particularly in musical and extra-curricular activities. The support, advice, welfare and guidance for pupils are very good. Pupils' education is aided by the good links that the school has with the parents and the local community and the very good links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The leadership of the headteacher is good and she has led the positive changes in the school well. She has a clear vision for the future of the school and is determined to ensure that pupils' achievement is further strengthened. The staff work together very well as a team. Subject leadership is good. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths of the school and support the school. However, as yet, they do not provide sufficient challenge for the school, nor do they spend enough time in school to monitor the work of the school. Nevertheless, they ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Financial management is secure and the school runs smoothly. There are good self-evaluation processes in place.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school and they have positive views. In particular, they say that their children love attending the school and that they make good progress. They also think that the teaching is good and the school is well led. Pupils are proud of their school and thoroughly enjoy learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED.**

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

- Continue to raise standards through the further implementation of improvement strategies.
- Develop the role of governors in order that they can provide challenge for the school.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Children in the reception class achieve well, though a minority do not attain the expected goals at the end of the year. Achievement is good and, although standards in tests for seven year olds are well below the national average, there has been improvement in the past two years. At the end of Year 3, standards are broadly in line with the national expectation, with pupils on course to achieve average standards at the end of Year 6.

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

- Standards are improving.
- The improvement strategies to boost attainment have resulted in good achievement in all year groups and good progress in learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- There is a need to continue the focus on raising standards further.

#### **Commentary**

1. In recent years, in national tests, Year 2 pupils' attainment has been generally well below the national average, both in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. As a result, the school's improvement trend has been below the national trend over the period of the past four years. However, there are signs of significant improvement in test results. In the 2004 tests for Year 2 pupils, standards improved in reading, and in mathematics there was a marginal improvement. The 2005 results in reading, writing and mathematics show further improvement on the 2004 results. This improvement is confirmed by inspection findings. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are attaining standards that are below the national expectation, though those in Year 3 are working close to the national average, particularly in reading and mathematics. In science, standards are above the national average. In all these areas, pupils are on course to attain the national expectation at the end of Year 6 and, in the case of science, above average standards. Standards in ICT and design and technology are in line with the national expectation. No judgements could be made in other subjects.
2. Although the full range of ability is represented in the children on entry into the reception class, overall their attainment is well below expected levels. As a result of the good teaching and learning and the good inclusive curriculum, children achieve well in all six areas of learning and by the time that they leave the reception year, a large minority of children are in line to achieve the expected goals in all six areas of learning. However, overall, their attainment is below nationally expected levels when they enter Year 1.
3. Pupils continue to achieve well in both infant classes and in Year 3. The school has worked hard to remove the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. In the two years since this inspection achievement has been boosted mainly by the strong focus placed on raising standards through a good range of improvement strategies. These have included bringing more consistency and coherence in the quality of teaching. This has been successfully achieved and, as a result, learning is now at least good in most lessons and frequently very good. In consequence, pupils achieve well. The HMI visit to the school in 2004 noted that good progress at that time had been made in boosting the achievement of more able pupils, though the school's efforts to raise standards for the significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs was less successful at that time. The school renewed efforts to ensure that these pupils' progress was boosted. As a result, the two groups of pupils highlighted as under-achieving at that time, namely boys and lower ability pupils, now make good progress and their achievement is in line with that of their classmates.



These inspection findings confirm the end of Year 2 test results which show that there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. In addition, pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well.

- At the time of the last inspection, it was noted that targets for improvement in pupils' performance were not in place. The school has addressed this issue very well and there is now a comprehensive range of targets in place. These are well-known to pupils and parents in mathematics and English, and this has had a positive impact on the pupils' overall achievement. This area is now a strength.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (13.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.4 (12.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.0 (13.5)	16.3 (16.3)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and they behave very well. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very interested in all aspects of school life.
- Relationships are very strong, bullying is very rare and the school is racially harmonious.
- Pupils' social and moral development is very well provided for.
- The school is very active in promoting good attendance.

### **Commentary**

- Parents, and pupils of all ages, agree that they very much enjoy coming to school and the very positive attitudes seen at the last inspection have been maintained. From the youngest children upwards, they approach their work with a great deal of enthusiasm. For example, children in the reception class were very eager to draw a map of their route to school and older pupils participated keenly in discussing their move to middle school during a personal, social and health education lesson. The very wide range of enrichment opportunities available to pupils is also entered into very enthusiastically. Pupils who attend the recorder club, for example, work hard to play well and are proud of their achievements. Such very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life have a consequent impact on learning.
- Relationships have also been maintained at very good levels. This is because adults not only act as very good role models but also treat pupils with a great deal of respect and this is reciprocated. As a result, the way the school promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, is considered to be excellent. Pupils work productively in lessons in pairs or groups because relationships are very good and they are sympathetic to the needs of others. Their learning benefits significantly as a result of this.
- Standards of behaviour are now judged to be very good, rather than good. The school rules are written positively and adults have a consistent approach to maintaining discipline, avoiding negative strategies. There are pupils who have challenging behaviour but they are so

effectively managed and supported that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils and parents spoken to during the inspection are confident that any bullying is very swiftly and effectively dealt with.

8. Pupils' personal development is a very strong feature of the school and impacts positively on learning as well as on behaviour and relationships. Their spiritual development is still good. Assemblies, which include a daily act of collective worship, enable pupils to reflect on wider issues, such as how changes in our lives affect us and these themes are carried through into lessons such as circle time sessions. Pupils are also encouraged to appreciate the beauty of music, with classical music playing as they enter and leave the hall. The interplay between nature and art is also very strong throughout the school, with the Woodland Trail in the grounds being used very effectively to link the two through work such as creating Gaudi-influenced insect models.
9. Pupils' social and moral development remains very good. Assemblies encourage sociability, as pupils do not sit in class rows but are allowed to sit in friendship and mixed-aged groups. Playtimes, especially the morning break, where adults join in games with pupils, are also very sociable occasions. Pupils are naturally very friendly; for example they engage visitors in conversation and show an interest in them. Even the youngest children are aware of what is right and wrong and they are encouraged to think of others, to share and to be polite. Older pupils know that it is important to listen carefully to others and to show respect for different cultures. This is partly due to the many visits and visitors that they are given the opportunity to experience. A recent involvement in the Make Poverty History campaign enabled pupils to understand the needs of others less fortunate than themselves.
10. Pupils' cultural development has been maintained at good levels. Pupils have the opportunity to celebrate the major religious festivals, visit different churches, modern and old, as well as a mosque and Buddhist temple. Their appreciation of art and their knowledge of different artists have been much enhanced by the work of an artist in residence and a children's author has also visited.
11. Attendance, rated unsatisfactory at the last inspection, is now broadly in line with national figures. The school's unauthorised absence rate is higher than the national median because the school is rigorous in the way it records absences. For example, holidays taken in term time without prior permission or for more than 10 days are not authorised. The most recent figures reported by the school show that the unauthorised absence rate has halved. This is as a result of the school's concerted effort to improve attendance. Initiatives include individual and class rewards, rigorous following-up of absences with phone calls on the first day, letters and then referrals to the education welfare officer. There is normally only a small number of pupils who regularly arrive after the registers have closed in the morning and so punctuality is now considered to be good.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2%	School data	1.4%
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.*

### **Exclusions**

There have been no exclusions.

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

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good; the curriculum is of good quality and is very effectively enriched by additional activities. Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are very good. The school maintains a good partnership with parents and the local community. Links with other schools are very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and a strength of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers, throughout the school, plan lessons well.
- Teachers manage the pupils very well and, as a result, the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.
- Learning support staff, including the assistant who supports the teaching and learning of pupils who speak English as an additional language, provide very good support and significantly enhance teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

12. There have been very significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. At that time there were a number of weaknesses which led pupils to make too little progress in lessons. All these weaknesses have now been rectified and the quality of teaching is now good, a strength of the school, and a key reason for the significant improvements in pupils' learning and hence their progress and achievement. Almost all the teaching seen was good or better and one third very good.
13. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage. The experienced teacher is supported very well by the learning support assistant, who is fully involved in day to day activities supporting groups of pupils. The staff provide very good role models, are conscientious, caring and supportive, so that there is a happy and secure learning environment for children. Lessons and activities are managed well and relationships are very good. All adults have high expectations so that children are very well behaved and motivated and show very good levels of interest in what they are expected to do. The home/school link teacher provides very good support, particularly in ensuring that children settle quickly into school. Through her home visiting schedule, parents are helped to provide assessments of their children's abilities and aptitudes and this, too, helps them to make a very good start to their schooling.
14. Teaching and learning in the two infant classes and in Year 3 are good. Teachers plan lessons very carefully and effectively, ensuring that good quality activities are provided which are pitched at just the right level to ensure that the pupils make suitable progress in their learning. In all lessons the teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and what the expected outcomes are. These are shared with the pupils, which helps their learning because they know how the current work builds on that learned previously. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the contribution that the teaching assistants make. Whether working with small groups or individuals, they support pupils' learning very well. Working with class teachers, they make a very effective contribution to the positive atmosphere and very good behaviour and they help to focus pupils' learning.
15. Teachers use assessment information well. Their questioning skills are good and this enables them to pinpoint future work to meet pupils' needs. In addition, the introduction of a range of targets for pupils has helped to boost achievement. Pupils' assessments are recorded well by staff and this, too, enables future work to be adjusted to enable learning to be enhanced.

16. Staff, including learning support staff working with pupils with special educational needs, support teaching and learning very well. This helps pupils to feel included and enables them to make good progress in their learning. The work for these children is very well organised and based on sound procedures for the assessment and record-keeping of their work.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	12	2	0	0	0

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

17. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Good provision is made for these pupils in lessons and, in addition, the specialist support provided by the teaching assistant is of good quality, supporting good learning and progress.

### **The curriculum**

The school ensures that all pupils have a good quality and range of learning opportunities which cater for a range of pupils' needs and learning styles. It provides them with very good opportunities to widen their experiences, both through extra-curricular activities and visits from a variety of talented people.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of stimulating and challenging activities is well matched to pupils' needs and increases their confidence and self-esteem.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Children take an active part in writing their own support plans.
- The accommodation and resources are very good and used well to support children's learning.
- Effective links are made between different subjects, especially with regard to extending writing, together with ICT, which supports many areas of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

18. The challenging and well-structured curriculum is a key factor in raising achievement overall, particularly with the emphasis given to the key skills. Careful thought and planning link different parts of the curriculum together in interesting ways. This helps to motivate pupils and keep them focused. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson pupils were writing a biography of Florence Nightingale when studying story endings. Boys and girls have equal opportunities. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including the provision for special education. Its overall quality is much improved since the last inspection.
19. The most significant improvement to the curriculum is that teachers' planning takes into account the different levels of attainment within their classes. They provide good opportunities to develop independent learning especially in science. The curriculum is adapted well to pupils with special educational needs and they receive good support. The needs of ethnic minority pupils and those for whom English is an additional language are considered carefully, so that these pupils are fully included at all times.
20. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan well to support these pupils by making sure that all lessons are planned to meet the differing learning needs of these pupils. In addition, these pupils' individual education plans are of

good quality. They are well focused, meet specified needs and are reviewed regularly. However, there is a need to ensure that individual education plans include areas of the mathematics curriculum for some pupils who have special educational needs in this subject.

21. The curriculum is enriched very well by a range of exciting activities, such as a visit from a helicopter whose pilot took aerial pictures of the children on the school grounds. An artist in residence makes regular visits and undertakes special projects such as the models of a hedgehog, a squirrel, a fox and an owl which the children have made from modrock. These are awaiting installation in the new Woodland Trail. The trail has been developed recently after the school won support from a number of sources, including the local community. This is an exciting new venture which gives many curriculum opportunities, including science, environmental education and observational drawing as well as being a very pleasant place to sit and enjoy reading. In addition to these opportunities, regular trips are arranged, such as the Foundation Stage trip to the garden centre and the allotments and there are a number of clubs on offer outside lesson time.
22. The school places a great emphasis not only on the arts and environmental education but also on sports and music. There is a special ICT club for pupils who are particularly talented in this subject. The activities are popular with the pupils and parents are very happy with these additional opportunities for their children. The curriculum for RE is of good quality. It meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and, in addition, is very well enriched to enable pupils to make visits to places of worship of a range of faiths.
23. The class sizes are small, which means that the teacher/pupil ratio is good. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively. All staff have good opportunities to keep up to date through clearly defined professional development needs. Staff morale is very good. Subject leaders are effective and focused upon improving standards. Arrangements for the evaluating and monitoring of English and mathematics are very good and for other subjects arrangements are satisfactory.
24. The accommodation is very good with light, airy classrooms providing ample space for the stimulating learning environment. The hall is a large well-resourced space used mainly for assemblies, music and physical education. Recently the ICT computer suite has been upgraded and there is now internet access in every classroom. Pupils and teachers have much more opportunity to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum. The library is a very well resourced room with colourful tables and chairs that are inviting. The books, which are both displayed and arranged in such a way as to stimulate and motivate the children, are easily accessible and labelled so that children can browse independently, enjoying the books both for research and for their own sake. There is an extra room for special educational needs, when required, which also doubles up as a television and resource room. The external facilities for outside play and physical education activities are very good. The Foundation Stage shares the external space with the on-site pre-school. This is a good space which includes a covered area that permits year-long use for the whole Foundation Stage. The reception class works closely with the pre-school staff in order to make best use of this shared resource. In general, learning resources are very good and support classroom activities well.

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

There are good procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. The involvement of pupils, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adults are very caring and pupils are supported very well.
- Pupils place a very high level of trust in the school staff and their views are taken into account very well.
- Arrangements for pupils starting school and settling in are very good.



## **Commentary**

25. The school's procedures for child protection are good, with a policy in place based on local area guidelines; all teaching and support staff, apart from midday supervisors, have been recently trained. Health and safety procedures are also good, as the headteacher carries out regular risk assessments in conjunction with the school's health and safety representative. The caretaker ensures that the building and site are kept clean and litter free and that all appropriate checks of electrical and fire equipment are carried out. Governors are aware of some security concerns and are currently looking at options to remedy them.
26. It is very evident that, in this small school, all adults know all the pupils and their families very well and have a very high level of concern for their welfare. Pupils with specific needs, such as challenging behaviour, benefit from pastoral support programmes and from using the skills of outside agencies. The recent involvement of NSPCC workers to support pupils and run parent advice sessions is one example of this. Pupils' academic progress is monitored very well, with each pupil tracked and much better use now made of this information. Personal, class and group targets are set and reviewed and each individual's progress is discussed by the headteacher and class teacher. Student profiles consist of a comprehensive record of pupils' progress which is passed on from year to year and goes with the pupil to middle school. Any concerns about personal development are shared informally so that staff are aware of any issues that may affect a pupil's progress or happiness. As a result of this, pupils have a very high level of trust in adults which, in turn, has a positive impact on their attitudes to school, relationships and their learning.
27. Pupils' views are frequently sought through questionnaires and during assemblies and circle time. A recent request for some goal posts was quickly met.

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

Links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- Very well established links with other schools benefit pupils.

## **Commentary**

28. The majority of children who start in the reception class have attended the pre-school group that is held in an adjacent classroom. This means that children are very familiar with the surroundings and routines. The most important aspect, however, is the role played by the home/school link teacher, who spends time getting to know children and their families, through home visits before they start their formal education. She is available to support parents as well as children after they join and also visits families of pupils who start other than at the beginning of the academic year. This, combined with visits to the school beforehand, the assignment of a teaching assistant and a pupil "buddy" to newly arrived pupils, ensures that they settle quickly whenever they start. The good partnership with parents seen at the last inspection has been maintained. Parents consulted before and during the inspection had only positive things to say about the school. For example, all the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire feel their children are making good progress, that teaching is good, the school is approachable and that children are encouraged to do their best and to become mature and independent. The inspection evidence supports all these views.

29. Few parents help regularly in school and a small number do not ensure their children attend regularly or punctually. However, overall, parents make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning, as many are conscientious about listening to their children read at home and support in other ways such as by attending school performances, serving on the Friends' Association or as parent governors.
30. Parents receive good levels of information with regular newsletters and curriculum information. The combined prospectus and governors' annual report to parents is a very informative and user-friendly document that now contains all the necessary statutory information. The annual pupil progress report that parents receive, whilst satisfactory, does not always make clear whether the pupil is working at the expected level for their age.
31. Good community links enable the pupils to benefit from visits to a local garden centre and allotments, different places of worship and to enjoy the assemblies of visiting speakers. The school also gives something back to the community by singing for senior citizens and delivering Easter cards. There is also community use of the school for clubs such as Beavers and Cubs. All of this not only enhances pupils' learning but also raises their awareness of their own local area.
32. Very good, productive relationships are in place with the on-site pre-school group and the school has also established relationships, mainly through the work of the home/school teacher, with other local playgroups. This means that there is a lot of useful information available about the children who start in the reception class. At the other end of the school, there are very strong links in place with the middle school to which most Year 3 pupils transfer. This includes transition work in literacy and numeracy as well as personal, social and health education work. Pupils visit their new schools and staff liaise regularly, especially if the pupil has specific needs. There are also very good links with the high school that has led to some wonderful art work through the time spent in school by an artist in residence. All this does much to enhance pupils' experiences and to ensure a smooth movement into the next stage of their academic life.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership by the headteacher is good. The school is well managed. Governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides good leadership with a clear focus on raising standards within an inclusive ethos where all pupils are equally valued.
- The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The governing body has identified the need to improve its monitoring role in order to hold the school to account.
- There are very good systems for monitoring pupils' performance and taking action.
- Leaders enable all staff to work effectively within the team and the school has been awarded liP status.

### **Commentary**

33. The leadership and management of the school are good. This is a significant improvement on the satisfactory judgement at the time of the last inspection. The experienced headteacher provides good leadership. Since the last inspection she has effectively raised the school's expectations of all its pupils, and shows a determination to raise standards, whilst maintaining a caring ethos where all pupils are equally valued and supported. This is a significant improvement on that reported at the time of the last inspection. As a result pupils' academic achievement and personal development have both improved. Together with other key members of staff the headteacher has responded well to previously reported weaknesses and to the structured support provided by the Local Education Authority within the Primary



Leadership Programme. The long-term aims and objectives of the school have been reviewed and there are good school improvement plans, with a clear focus on raising standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and by groups of pupils previously identified as under-achieving. She has successfully created an effective team in which all members play their role well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well co-ordinated so that the large team of practitioners working with particular groups and individuals operates effectively; the core subjects and Foundation Stage are all well led and managed.

34. Governance of the school is satisfactory, as reported at the time of the last inspection. There is a full complement of governors, including several new parent governors and a recently appointed chair. Governors are interested and supportive of the school and fulfil most of their roles conscientiously. The full governing body meets only three times a year, with long intervals between meetings, although there is a sound committee structure and committees meet regularly to receive reports and consider policy issues. Some governors visit the school to learn about how the school operates. The governing body is aware of the need to improve its role in monitoring the work of the school, carrying out formal checks on practice and holding the school to account by providing more challenge. The new chair and headteacher have arranged training to begin to address this in the autumn term. It is important that this training is followed up by implementing more rigorous procedures to keep governors fully involved and aware of strengths and weaknesses.
35. The management of the school is now good. There are very good arrangements for monitoring the academic performance of all pupils. This includes pupils as individuals and groups, for example gender or year groups, those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. The school effectively tracks pupils' progress over time and compares the progress of different groups within the context of appropriately high expectations of all pupils. The headteacher and other key staff have analysed the data and identified areas of weakness in pupils' abilities, for example in understanding division in mathematics, and, as a result, have put in place whole-school targets carefully matched to the pupils' learning needs. There are other good procedures for evaluating the performance of the school, including regular monitoring of teaching, as well as the work by teaching assistants when working with small groups, and checking a selection of pupils' work. The findings from these checks have been used in making changes to the curriculum, the deployment of staff and staff development. Performance management is well established and has been extended to include teaching assistants, who also have targets for their own practice. All members of the staff team are committed to their own professional development and that of the school. This has been recognised by the recent award of Investors in People status. Financial management is sound. The headteacher and administrator take a lead role in setting the budget, with governors receiving regular monitoring up-dates. An independent audit by the local authority two years ago confirmed sound procedures for administering the budget, and subsequently confirmed that all minor issues identified had been fully addressed. The school is experiencing falling rolls, related to demographic changes in the local community. To date governors and the headteacher have managed this process well; however, governors have yet to consider the full implications for the loss of the Year 3 pupils in 2006 when the school is to be re-organised into an infant school with just three classes.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	365 945	Balance from previous year	30 881
Total expenditure	379 096	Balance carried forward to the next	18 774

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Expenditure per pupil	3 949
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36. The school receives a large amount of money per pupil in comparison with the national average in recognition of the disproportionate needs of a small school. Nevertheless, the good overall achievement by pupils, their very good personal development and the good overall provision, particularly in teaching, mean the school provides sound value for money.
37. There are several significant aids to raising achievement further; they include the whole-school commitment to raising standards led by the headteacher, the good teaching and learning, the pupils' very good behaviour and their positive attitudes and the generous levels of accommodation. The main barriers are the considerable mobility of pupils, many of whom arrive with attainment well below national expectations, limited involvement by parents in their children's education and budgetary pressures which could lead to increased class sizes.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The full range of ability is represented in the intake into the reception year, though overall attainment on entry is well below average, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well. They make good progress in their learning due to the good quality teaching which is carefully planned to address the needs of the children, some of whom have recently arrived in the school. There is a strong emphasis on adult-directed teaching with opportunities for child-initiated learning, timetabled at set times during the week. The adults place great emphasis on speaking and listening skills and provide good role models in the use of language, introducing new vocabulary as appropriate across all the areas of learning. They use conversation in carefully framed questions in order to provide opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and thinking. Thus the majority of pupils make good progress and well over half are expected to achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception year. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good due to the very hard work and dedication of the staff. Assessments of children's learning are recorded in order to monitor the children's progress against the Foundation Stage stepping stones. Children identified as having special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Children who learn English as an additional language are very well supported by a specialist teaching assistant and make similar progress to their classmates. However, during the inspection, observations of children's achievements were not made while children were engrossed in their learning, which means that opportunities for capturing the essence of that learning can be missed. The arrangements for introducing children and their parents to school are very good, as there are very good links with the pre-school which operates within the school. This, in the main, is due to the effective work of the home/school link teacher. Parents appreciate the very positive experience that their children have in starting school.

The accommodation, which is safe and secure, is good. The environment for learning in the classroom and activity area is spacious, well resourced and motivational. The displays celebrate children's achievements, while at the same time providing support for new learning. However, the outside area, despite the play house, the large canopy and the large drawing board on the wall, is underdeveloped. Classroom equipment, such as the drawing table, puppet theatre and home furniture, is taken outside together with sand and water and the reception class also has access to the pre-school's little plastic slides and rockers. Nonetheless, there is limited use of the outside area for extending the range of opportunities for the children's learning across all six areas of learning, especially towards the end of the Foundation Stage.

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

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

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Children achieve very well and make good progress, especially in developing independence and self-confidence.
- Very good routines are in place so that children feel safe and secure. They know the difference between right and wrong.

## **Commentary**

38. The children are very happy. They love coming to school. The very good relationships and high priority given to personal and emotional development ensure that children achieve well and make good progress. This reflects not only the trusting relationships that the school has with its parents but also the skilful teaching of the staff. There are good opportunities and activities provided for children to develop their independence and confidence. Adults also constantly encourage them to feel proud of their achievements. As a result, children achieve well and well over half will reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
39. Teaching and learning are good. Whilst the children make good progress in their learning and many are on course to attain the early learning goals, overall standards are below average by the time that they leave the reception class.
40. Children know what is expected of them and respond very well to the good organisation in the classroom. Daily routines are made clear and expectations with regard to behaviour are consistent, with the result that children are polite and behave well. They are taught the difference between right and wrong very effectively. They have learnt to take turns, and share with others, to listen and interact with adults and with other children pleasantly and kindly. For example, when a group of children were playing with the Poleido blocks during their early morning work session, they greeted each other pleasantly. 'You look nice today', said one child to another. Children were able to work harmoniously as they played in the vet shop, making constructive suggestions to each other as they developed their imaginative pet emergency story. They negotiated the story line for a sustained period of time, enjoying and developing each other's ideas. They make good progress in developing their independence and confidence as they make their choices, organise themselves, follow instructions and clear away sensibly and tidily.
41. The classroom and activity area have designated areas to support the opportunities for child-initiated learning through a broad range of activities. The resources are plentiful and in good condition. They are clearly labelled and easily accessible. This supports the progress of all children and encourages independence by enabling children to make choices.

## **COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

The provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and leads to children's good achievement.
- All adults capitalise on every opportunity as it presents itself to develop the acquisition, understanding and use of language.
- The range of planned independent activities for extending children's vocabulary through role play and talk is good.

## **Commentary**

42. Overall, children's attainment when they start school is well below average. Teaching and learning are good, with the result that overall achievement is good and, in some cases, particularly for the less able children, achievement is very good. However a significant minority are not on course to achieve the required early learning goals in this area and hence standards overall are below average.
43. Speaking and listening skills are promoted effectively. The staff engage children in conversation in small groups and also individually. They listen carefully to what the children have to say. As a result the children very quickly learn new vocabulary and different ways to express themselves. Adults use skilful questioning in order to develop children's thinking

skills; for example, in one lesson when they were discussing the story of *Pig in the Pond*, the children were asked why the other animals ran away when the pig splashed into the water. This good teaching is further strengthened through planned activities and child-initiated opportunities so that children learn well and make good progress. Well over half of the children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

44. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children's early reading skills are developed well through regular story sessions during the planned literacy sessions and at story time. They understand the role of characters in stories, and develop their vocabulary as they are introduced to unfamiliar words. They are able to recall stories in the correct sequence. Some children can recognise simple words and make a very good attempt at unfamiliar words using both their previous knowledge and letter sounds. Reading is encouraged through guided reading sessions and also individual reading. There is a good system of bookmarks in place, which develops the learning and spelling of new words. Reading is also taught through the *Oxford Reading Tree* structured reading programme. Children achieve well across the ability range. Reading is well supported by parents. Handwriting skills are developed well. From an early start children are taught to shape their letters correctly. Many children can write their own names. The well-resourced writing area provides a good variety of materials for children to practise their writing skills in their own play by making, for example, lists, invitations, postcards and other communications. All children are encouraged to use their phonic skills to write regular words. They have a good try at more complex words as they link sounds and letters together. Planned experiences for developing confidence and skills in early writing are part of the daily routine. The children's knowledge of letters and sounds is developed well.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and leads to children's good achievement.
- Mathematical language is taught and developed well.
- Children can successfully count to twenty.
- Activities are planned for the development of thinking and problem-solving.

### **Commentary**

45. Overall, children's attainment when they start school is well below average. Due to the good provision, both in terms of teaching and learning and the planned curriculum, children achieve well and make good progress. However, although a minority of pupils are on course to reach the learning goals in this area, overall standards are below average.
46. Mathematical development is promoted very well through the many planned activities and resources that encourage mathematical thinking. There are opportunities for children to gain knowledge and understanding of capacity, money, weight and measure from practical activities in, for example, the class vet's shop, the block play, the sand and water trays and also the construction area. Children can match, sort and count everyday objects. They know the basic shapes and enjoy simple puzzles. In one lesson the whole class were counting backwards and forwards to twenty and on to thirty up to the end of June. They can take part in simple problem-solving involving using such terms as 'one more than' and 'two more than'. The teacher very skilfully linked this concept to the previous learning when combining two numbers. Most children were able to combine two sets of numbers when counting flowers in the vase and scoops of ice-cream in the cone, in order to add up to a fixed sum of four, five and other numbers up to ten items.
47. Teaching is consistently good. The staff's relationship with the children is very strong with the result that the children work hard, respond well and make good progress. The use of

mathematical language is promoted across all six areas of learning. Staff use songs, rhymes, stories and games effectively to reinforce mathematical language and understanding. Most of the children have learnt to make simple recordings of their learning.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to children's good achievement.
- Children are offered a good range of experiences to develop their knowledge through investigations.
- The outdoor environment area is underdeveloped and provides limited opportunities for extending knowledge and understanding, especially with regard to scientific observations and investigations.
- Many have very good computer skills for their age.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world are greatly enhanced by organised outings.

### **Commentary**

48. Despite the good and effective teaching, standards are below national expectations. This is because a minority of children are not on course to achieve the expected learning goals in this area.
49. Children have a lively interest in the world about them. There are many interactive displays by which children gain information about the world through the use of plans, maps, aerial photographs and books to learn about their school and its locality. They understand how the photographs relate to their world; for example, one child went excitedly from the aerial photo on the display to the window in order to point to the position of his friend's house that he could see. The outside area is underdeveloped. It provides limited opportunities for extending knowledge and understanding, especially with regard to scientific observations and investigations and also daily physical development. However, the outings to the garden centre and the zoo bring this area of learning, knowledge and understanding alive for the children and give rise to good quality follow-up work. The photographs and writing celebrating the planting and growing of sunflower seeds and the visit to the garden centre and allotments make an excellent display at the entrance to the school.
50. Many children have access to a computer at home and have been able to gain early information and technology skills effectively. Many children use the 'mouse' effectively to draw and print patterns. They can also play early learning games. Some children can use the word-processing program and print their work with confidence.
51. Children understand the relationship that they have with their family members and with special people in their lives. There are photographs displayed in the classroom which encourage conversation. Children can talk freely about their families, where they live and about their shared experiences: for example, when one child was reading a book about aeroplanes, he spoke about how he and his family had travelled a long way to come to England, leaving his extended family behind.
52. During class lessons and school assemblies children begin to learn some of the important stories of the Christian faith. The school as a whole celebrates important religious festivals from around the world, so that children from an early age begin to learn about other world faiths.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

53. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to make an overall judgement regarding the provision in physical development. Children's physical development is promoted both through timetabled lessons in the hall, outdoor activity and, particularly for the development of small muscle control, through the many sessions planned across the whole foundation curriculum. It is clear that, when taking account of everyday opportunities in the classroom where there are some elements of good practice, provision is at least sound. The facilities both indoors and outside offer ample space to promote the children's physical development. The outdoor area is easily accessible and safe. During the timetabled sessions children are given an opportunity to play outside with small apparatus for throwing and catching and also with the pre-school's little plastic slides and rockers. At playtime during the summer term, they play on the playground and have access to the marked games and small apparatus with the older children. A member of staff is always on hand to provide support and encouragement. There is plenty of space to enjoy fast, exhilarating running about, resulting in good aerobic exercise. Small muscle control skills are developed well through a range of planned activities where children can practise the formation of letters, cut, stick, trace and complete puzzles. As a result, most children can hold and use pencils, paint brushes, scissors and other tools effectively. Handwriting is generally well formed.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is good.

### **Main Strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good, which leads to children's good achievement.
- The learning environment has been set up to promote a creative and imaginative learning experience.
- There are planned opportunities for children to express themselves creatively in a number of dimensions.

### **Commentary**

54. Achievement is good but although the quality of teaching and learning is good, some children are not on course to attain the early learning goals in this area; hence overall standards are below average at the end of the reception year.
55. Children are taught to observe the detail of objects when drawing from their own experiences with the result that the finished products are well executed both in their workbooks and on the classroom displays. They have drawn detailed pictures of recent experiences both in their drawings and also when illustrating their independent writing. For example the illustrations of the trip to the garden centre and allotments greatly enhance their written work. The planned activities such as the role play area for the vet's shop, the outside play house and the construction toys, provide opportunities for children to use language both creatively and imaginatively. Staff value the children's own ideas when they play alongside them, extending their learning and modelling clear and accurate language.
56. The children are encouraged to create different patterns using bright colours in their foam printings of animal shapes. Children enjoy listening to music, moving and clapping and playing instruments to the rhythm of the beat. At assembly they sang a favourite song with great enthusiasm. Standards are in line due to the range of many experiences offered across all areas of learning. The majority of children are expected to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Test results in Year 2 show standards that are below average, though the attainment of pupils in Year 3 is currently close to the national average.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils enjoy lessons, are well behaved and keen to learn.

#### Commentary

57. Pupils of all abilities are achieving well. This is as a result of the strong emphasis that the school has placed on raising standards. National test results show that standards at the end of Year 2 have been well below the national average for a number of years, both in comparison with all schools nationally and similar schools. However, there was some improvement in these standards in 2004 to below average standards for both reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards were lifted to above average. Inspection findings confirm this upward trend and standards at the end of Year 3 are close to those expected nationally. Currently, pupils in Year 3 are achieving particularly well and are on course to achieve at least average standards when they reach Year 6. Standards at the last inspection were well below average, with many pupils underachieving, so this represents very good improvement since 2003. The school has successfully addressed the severe under-achievement of boys, higher ability pupils and those who speak English as an additional language. All these groups of pupils are now achieving well in both reading and writing.
58. Pupils across the school enjoy reading and achieve well. As a result of very good teaching, they can use a variety of strategies to help with their reading, as when a Year 3 pupil was able to explain the technique of dividing words into syllables and a six year-old could spell a word out and look at the pictures for clues. In Year 2, some pupils show good levels of comprehension and successfully comment on the content, characters and setting of the books they are reading. A Year 3 pupil enjoyed talking about Roald Dahl, his favourite author, and explaining similarities in characters in Dahl's books and pointing out differences in the setting of "James and the Giant Peach" and "Charlie in the Chocolate Factory". In a Year 3 lesson, when studying Ted Hughes's "The Iron Man", more able pupils were able to identify strategies used by Ted Hughes to draw the reader into the text. "Bold letters", "repetition of adjectives", came the rapid response from the pupils.
59. The school has recently focused on improving standards in writing and, as a result, pupils are achieving well. Year 3 pupils, as a result of the very good teaching, write in a wide range of genres; they are able to write biographies in the first and third person, to re-tell complex plots such as "Fantastic Mr Fox" and to write extended narrative that is well organised, with a strong sense of audience. This was particularly evident in writing that was linked to history, when pupils were writing about life in the Blitz.
60. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening. They enjoy their lessons and will listen enthralled to a story. They respond well to teachers' questioning and will join in class discussions. They listen to each other's views with respect and enjoy putting various sides to an argument. Teachers effectively encourage the skills of speaking and listening by the use of talking partners, whereby pupils are frequently asked to discuss teaching points with each other. As a result pupils can express ideas and opinions well, giving extended answers using good vocabulary.



61. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in English. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall. The quality has been boosted and is now very good. The weaknesses identified at the last inspection – which included the observation that the lessons were too slow and hence pupils were not fully occupied and working – have been eradicated. Teachers now plan lessons well, they provide work that is pitched well to meet the varying learning needs in each class and they ensure that good quality activities are set. This helps to capture the pupils' interest and, as a result, they make good progress during lessons.
62. Almost all the teaching of English is very good. Reviews of pupils' work show that the pupils are taught very well throughout all three year groups. Pupils' work demonstrates the good and wide range of genres addressed, the very good links made between English and other subjects, and the strong teaching of grammar, punctuation and the basic skills of both reading and writing. Teachers have based their planning on the National Literacy Strategy and so ensure that pupils build on their learning in logical sequential steps. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the very good support that is provided by the teaching assistants. Whether working with individuals or small groups of pupils with special educational needs or supporting larger groups of pupils, they help to keep pupils focused well and give them good encouragement.
63. The co-ordination of English is good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and to improve standards and there is evidence that this is bearing fruit. However, she is currently provided with too little time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There are good plans in place to place a stronger emphasis on English in the next school year to ensure that this will be made possible.

#### **Literacy across the curriculum**

64. Pupils use their English skills well in other subjects such as history and geography and some particularly good examples of extended pieces of writing were seen in history. For example, pupils in Year 2 are currently considering the seaside, and pupils have written some good quality accounts about differences between a day at the seaside in 1900 and today. The strategy of talking partners is used very effectively in most subjects and some good examples of this were seen in science.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Most pupils achieve well during their time in the school.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 remain below the national average for this age group but have improved since the time of the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and is supported by the effective deployment of well-trained teaching assistants.
- The subject is very well led.
- Some marking of pupils' work needs to improve in order to raise standards further.
- Substantial time is given to teaching mathematics and pupils cover a wide range of mathematical concepts, often with good links to other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

65. Standards attained in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in the summer of 2004 were well below those expected nationally and below those in schools in similar neighbourhoods. This was an improvement on the standards achieved the previous year in tests, and those reported

at the time of the last inspection, with a small increase in the proportion of pupils exceeding the national average.

66. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 this year have improved further but remain just below the national average. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils exceeding the national expectation for this age group, which is now higher than normally found in schools in similar neighbourhoods. Understanding of mathematical concepts by many of the children is well below national expectations when they arrive in the school. The good achievement by most pupils in all three year groups means that by the end of Year 3, when they leave the school, pupils are on course to achieve the national expectations of pupils three years later at the end of Year 6. Achievement is much stronger than that previously reported, when it was unsatisfactory in some classes and many boys under-achieved across the school. Inspection evidence and the school's own performance data show that there is now no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement or that of pupils from different ethnic minorities. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make sound progress as a result of carefully structured support but a large proportion of them do not achieve the nationally expected minimum standard by the end of Year 2. The school has recognised the need to strengthen the use of mathematics targets within these pupils' individual education plans. The limited speaking and listening skills of many pupils impact adversely on their ability to talk about the mathematical strategies they are using, to reflect on how to solve problems and on their use of correct mathematical terminology in context.
67. At the time of the inspection pupils were working on a range of mathematical topics, including solving problems using more than one operation, division calculation, recognising coins and using money, and gathering and presenting data using information and communication technology. During the course of all lessons pupils were practising quick recall of counting, for example counting in twos, fives and tens, to improve their oral and mental skills. Evidence from pupils' mathematics workbooks and folders and from teachers' plans shows that the wide range of mathematical concepts in the National Curriculum is covered during the course of the year in all classes; the pupils' workbooks contain a substantial amount of recorded work. The large volume of work in the folders, whilst dated, is on loose sheets, making it difficult for the pupils and all partners within the school to track progress over time.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently at least good. This is also an improvement on that reported at the last inspection, when it was satisfactory, with a significant proportion being unsatisfactory in one year group. There are some very good features and no outright weaknesses in the teaching. Lessons begin with good, brisk sessions in which all pupils are challenged in practising and recalling number facts and tables. Often, pupils are divided for these sessions, with teaching assistants deployed well to work with specific groups of pupils, for example those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This effectively supports the learning of these groups by carefully matching the tasks to their levels of need. This is maintained throughout lessons and is a strong feature of the good teaching and learning. It is achieved by teachers knowing their pupils well and having good systems for assessing and recording each pupil's progress.
69. Teaching assistants play an important role in observing particular groups of pupils and recording their progress. Arrangements for these observations to be shared are well managed. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject; they model correct mathematical terminology during their teaching of new concepts, which they do clearly, enabling pupils to learn well. Learning is also enhanced by the imaginative strategies used to engage and enthuse pupils, for example producing labelled toy animals for work on problem-solving with money and, when gathering data, inviting pupils to consider their preferred party foods. Good use is made of National Numeracy Strategy methodology, for example using the concept of empty number lines when teaching addition and subtraction concepts. The pupils' positive attitudes to their work, the good relationships and working ethos which prevail, all contribute well to the good learning throughout lessons in all year groups. There are good whole-school assessment procedures which enable teachers, the subject leader and headteacher to monitor carefully and track the progress of individuals and whole year groups. Teachers

check their pupils' levels of understanding throughout lessons, enabling them to adjust and plan subsequent activities. However, one aspect in need of further development is marking of work, ensuring that marking shows pupils how to improve or what they need to do next, linked particularly to the good range of targets which have been established across the school.

70. There are several elements to the very good leadership of the subject. The subject leader is a good role model to colleagues and has a good understanding of the mathematics curriculum and a clear strategy for improving standards and provision. As a member of the Primary Leadership Programme management team, she has played a key role, supported by the headteacher, in raising achievement by analysing in detail all performance data in mathematics. She has shared the outcomes with colleagues and produced very clear guidance for supporting pupils in those areas identified as weaknesses, including an understanding of division and problem-solving, both of which are prominent in the recorded work in pupils' books and in the lessons observed during the inspection. Mathematics teaching has been observed across the school and substantial time in staff meetings is allocated to sharing and reviewing outcomes of these observations, contributing to the improved quality of teaching and standards achieved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. The pupils' competence in mathematics, whilst improving, remains relatively weak. In an ICT lesson on handling data, pupils' tallying skills needed reinforcing before they were able to complete the planned ICT activity. However, well planned cross-curricular activities such as practising rotational symmetry in Year 3 when printing fabric in art and design work and measurements of plant growth in science help the pupils to recognise the importance of the subject and its application across the curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils learn effectively through a practical investigative approach to learning.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons and engage well in their learning.
- The subject leader's subject knowledge and enthusiasm assist the pupils' very good achievement by the time they leave the school.
- There is no system in place for tracking individual pupils' progress.

### **Commentary**

72. The pupils' achievement in science is very good and, by the time that they reach the end of Year 3, pupils are on course to attain standards that are above the national expectation. There has been very good improvement in science since the last inspection, and the curriculum, pupils' achievement and standards attained have been much improved since 2003.
73. Achievement is very good, because the pupils enjoy the subject greatly due to the high quality teaching and learning which focus on developing pupils' scientific skills. There are very good opportunities for focused discussion as pupils plan and carry out experiments for themselves, under the watchful guidance of teachers and skilful support staff. There is a good level of challenge and expectation. The children respond very well to the range of thought-provoking questions which make them consider carefully and explain their reasoning very well. The early approach to learning through experiments and investigations enables pupils to achieve well by the end of key stage one. They receive good grounding in reaching the expected

standard and are prepared for the more demanding work in Year 3, where standards are above the national expectations.

74. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in all three year groups. Teachers prepare lessons well, with clear expectations. They ensure that there is a good provision of resources so that children can work well, giving good opportunities for personal experience and investigation. The quality of resources is very good. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, good attention was given to prediction and pupils are taught to use reason, based on what they already know. As a result, their predictions were well thought out. Thus, when they used the digital microscope to investigate how water is transported through the stem to other parts of the plant, they were able to trace the water, laced with food colouring, and make some very accurate observational drawings from which to record their findings and draw their conclusions.
75. When inspectors discussed science with a group of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, they all spoke very excitedly and enthusiastically about their science work. One child exclaimed 'science is well wicked!' They were able to talk about the different topics that they had covered and decided that the work on circuits was the most exciting, especially when they were allowed to use two bulbs. They know how a circuit works and how it can be broken. They talked about constructing circuits by connecting the wires to the batteries, using crocodile clips. The scrutiny of the work showed the high expectations and the level of the pupils' commitment to the work in all classes. For example, by the end of Year 2 pupils have covered a wide range of topics. They know that changes take place in humans, animals and materials. They also know that some changes are reversible and some are not. They understand the concept of a fair test. They can make observations and comparisons, recognising and explaining when a comparison is not fair. They can present their findings in the form of a block graph and can explain the interpretations. They can draw simple diagrams and, in some cases, write conclusions to their findings.
76. Leadership and management of science are very good. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and organises the subject very well. She produces the medium-term plans for the whole school. The resources are of good quality, well labelled and easily accessible to all members of staff. The main strategy the subject leader employs for monitoring progress in science is through the scrutiny of the work and by talking to the headteacher and the other three class teachers. Lessons are monitored as part of the annual review procedures. Tracking individual pupils' progress is not undertaken systematically as it is for the other core subjects.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are in line with the national expectation.
- Leadership is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

77. By Year 3 pupils' ICT skills are in line with national expectations and their achievement is good. These findings show that the achievement and sound standards found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils in Year 1 are able to input data when developing a database to show the pupils' favourite party foods. They are able to save, reload and use the machines. Reviews of work show that they have good control skills in both Year 1 and Year 2 in creating pictures using a paint-based program. There are many examples of

ICT work contributing well to other subjects. This helps to engage the pupils' interest and, as a consequence, achievement is good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the work that they have done in design and technology, for example, when using machines to create repeating patterns in designs for cushion covers. Pupils are able to generate pictograms and graphs to support learning in mathematics and science.

78. Only one dedicated ICT lesson was taught during the inspection. This Year 1 lesson was of good quality. Teachers' planning is good, with clear objectives set for lessons that build well into sequences of work and focus on developing the pupils' knowledge and skills. The broad range of work displayed shows that the curriculum meets statutory requirements and teachers make good use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils' learning is helped by the good opportunities teachers provide to make use of computers in the classrooms. Teaching assistants make a good contribution. They have been trained in the use of the school's digital cameras and they are used to make a good contribution to teaching and learning across the curriculum. Provision for more able pupils is enhanced through a after school computer club.
79. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear grasp of standards and teaching and learning in the subject. In addition, she monitors the quality of teaching and learning through the development of a portfolio of work. Resources for ICT are a particular strength. The suite has good quality machines, there are interactive whiteboards in two classrooms, floor robots are used and the school has a computer-controlled microscope.

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

80. Teachers ensure that ICT lessons are invariably linked to current work in, for example, English, mathematics, science, history, geography and design and technology. This provides a good context for teaching and learning of the subject. Teachers' planning includes reference to links to the use of ICT, and this is very well represented in the wide range of displays of pupils' work in all three classrooms. For example, Year 3 pupils learned about the author Anne Fine and pupils researched the internet to find photos which have been downloaded and printed. Pupils then word- processed good biographical information.

### **HUMANITIES**

81. Due to timetable constraints, it was not possible to make judgements about provision in **history** and **geography**. RE was inspected in full.
82. Provision in **history** and **geography** was sampled by analysing pupils' work and talking to pupils and the subject leader and by looking at the displays around the school. It is not possible, therefore, to make firm judgements about the quality of provision, standards, teaching or learning in these subjects. However from the available evidence, there are indications that standards are in line with expectations, with some pupils producing above-average work. This, together with school documentation, shows that pupils study a balanced range of topics that provide them with opportunities to develop the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding in both subjects. Examples of good work in both history and geography could be seen in the very good classroom displays relating, for example, to the local environment with its large-scale map and photographs and also to seaside scenes comparing Victorian and Edwardian days on the beach to seaside activities today.
83. Both subjects are well led and managed by the enthusiastic subject leader, who enriches the curriculum in a number of ways. For example she and the class teacher of Year 3 have been working closely with the local advisory teacher on an exciting project using *Pathe News* files during their study of World War Two. Pupils' ICT skills are developed through the use of the BBC website and through the use of the bank of CD ROMs.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards in line with those expected locally.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The school's provision for teaching and learning about world faiths is a strength and visits to places of worship provide very good experiences for the pupils.
- Assemblies contribute well to the religious education curriculum.

### Commentary

84. Pupils' attainments at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected locally. Pupils' attainments are judged on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal world faiths, including Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism and how they use this to reflect on their own beliefs and values. Inspection evidence shows that pupils of all abilities achieve well, including those with special educational needs, so that at the end of Year 3 they are in line to meet the locally agreed expectations for pupils three years later when they reach Year 6. This good achievement is enhanced by the presence of pupils who practise various major faiths and who are able to talk from first-hand experience about how this influences their lives and attitudes. The good relationships and positive attitudes towards one another further enhance pupils' understanding of world faiths. There is a reasonable amount of recorded work, some of which is of a good quality. In some classes this work is in a book shared with other subjects; in another it is in a separate book, which is the school's agreed policy.
85. Teaching and learning in RE are good. This is an improvement on that reported at the time of the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons very well, using the locally agreed syllabus as a framework alongside nationally approved guidance. They demonstrate good knowledge of the subject supported by careful research. The learning is significantly strengthened by the very good use of frequent visits to places of worship and the involvement of visitors from different world faiths. Pupils visit local Anglican and other Christian churches, a Buddhist Temple and a mosque and pupils are motivated in the lessons in advance of these visits, anticipating what they will see and learn about. For example, at the beginning of a Year 2 lesson pupils were able to recall their good knowledge and understanding from a previous lesson of expectations when visiting a mosque and the expectations of Muslims and non-Muslims on entry to the building. Year 3 pupils were preparing for a visit to a Buddhist Temple. In both lessons teachers used ICT well to access good quality information which helped good learning by all pupils. Teachers engage sensitively those pupils whose families are members of a particular faith to talk about important practices, symbols and celebrations. Other pupils listen to this thoughtfully, attentively and with respect. Assessment and recording procedures are satisfactory, as are the reporting arrangements to parents.
86. School assemblies frequently provide a very good contribution to pupils' understanding and awareness of different faiths and how they influence the lives of their members. For example, an excellent assembly with lots of action and visual stimulus, led by a local Christian minister, engaged all the pupils most enthusiastically in reflecting on the difficulties of coping with change. The speaker then related this to Christian beliefs and invited pupils to reflect on how they respond in challenging situations. Assemblies and lessons alike contribute very significantly to the pupils' spiritual development.
87. The subject is well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator, who has a keen interest in the subject and good knowledge of practice across the school following observations of lessons in all classes.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. Too few lessons in **physical education, music** and **art and design** were observed to enable judgements on provision in these subjects to be made. **Design and technology** was inspected in full.
89. In **art and design**, evidence was gained from looking at pupils' work displayed around the school, from a discussion with the subject leader and looking at teachers' plans. The subject has a high profile within the school and the pupils benefit from some very good enriching experiences. An example of these is a recent project involving an 'artist in residence', when a local artist worked with the pupils in each class producing larger-than-life woodland animals using wire-mesh and modrock. The finished models are to be placed around the school's Woodland Trail.
90. There is relatively little art and design work displayed in classrooms, apart from some self-portraits in charcoal in the Year 3 classroom, but there is some pupils' work of good quality displayed in the school hall. Pupils in Year 3 designed patterns using geometric shapes with lines of symmetry, produced their own printing blocks and then printed their patterns on fabric. Year 2 pupils have produced observational drawings of natural objects inspired by the work of William Morris and Year 1 have experienced weaving using paper strips, wool, tissue and other materials. A whole-school project on portraits earlier in the year effectively provided a means of looking at progression in the subject across the school. Some of these were displayed in the city-centre shopping precinct. The curriculum plan for art and design is based on well-known national guidance, to ensure balance and breadth across the year groups, with units of work taught in half-term blocks in rotation with design technology. There is an agreed system for recording pupils' attainment at the end of each year. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. The subject is just one of her many responsibilities and not a current priority. She plans to develop a portfolio of work to support moderation and as evidence of progression. The spacious accommodation and grounds contribute well to the subject, with the Woodland Trail providing a resource for observing natural objects. There are good resources accessible to teachers and pupils and a large collection of books in the non-fiction library.
91. In **music**, two good lessons were observed, in which pupils achieved well and attained standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. In the lesson in Year 2, pupils were being taught to combine words and sounds together and to compose simple pieces. In this lesson, the pupils achieved well. They worked successfully in groups of five or six and composed pieces to accompany a poem. The pupils' choices of instruments and sounds were sensitive to the poem and they created good, sustained pieces. The second lesson was also of good quality. In this Year 3 lesson, which focused on developing the pupils' understanding of rhythm and pulse, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the session. Working in pairs, they managed to sustain a beat, whilst creating a strong rhythm. They then transferred their learning to playground skipping games, where, once more, pupils successfully identified and learned about the pulse of the singing games.
92. Two **physical education** (PE) lessons were observed. In both lessons, as a result of the good quality teaching and learning, pupils achieved well and standards attained were in line with the national expectation. Both lessons, one in Year 2 and one in Year 3, were games lessons. Both commenced with a suitable warm-up and then moved on to learning and practising new skills. One concentrated on throwing and catching and the other learning to strike and receive a ball in hockey. In both lessons, the teacher used demonstration to improve performance; pupils enjoyed the lessons and progressed well. The curriculum for PE is of good quality and covers all the required areas. Resources are very good and enhance learning opportunities.

## Design and technology (D&T)

Provision in design technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and, consequently, pupils learn well.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are proud of their achievements.

### Commentary

93. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Most pupils of all abilities achieve well overall. During the inspection pupils in one class were working on producing models of playground equipment from cardboard 'junk'. In another class they were engaged in planning and developing ideas for producing glove puppets. Year 1 pupils were aware of the nature of structures needed to provide strength and stability and, by experimenting, discovered for themselves some of the difficulties in making models of swings and slides. In Year 2 pupils had produced detailed and annotated designs for glove puppets and were gaining ideas from their peers who had practised skills and techniques during the previous lesson. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their D&T lessons. They become absorbed, concentrating hard on the physically demanding skills of manipulating materials and tools, for example when practising cross-stitch in advance of sewing glove puppets. Pupils collaborate well, for example when working in pairs on building slides and swings, and co-operate when sharing materials.
94. The quality of teaching is good and, on occasions very good, with the result that pupils learn well. The best teaching is characterised by very clearly presented expositions, giving time for pupils to reflect on past work and share ideas on how to overcome problems. This is characterised by the good planning and very good preparation of materials and apparatus. Pupils are given time to plan, make and evaluate their designs and then to reflect on the process. The good learning is further enhanced by the very good deployment and contribution made by the teaching assistants, with a very favourable adult to pupil ratio and by the generous space available in the good accommodation. Assessment and recording are satisfactory, with teachers recording at the end of each unit in their preferred style, but there is no whole-school agreed practice for this. The curriculum is well planned in terms of individual lessons and covering the requirements of the National Curriculum, taught in half-termly blocks in rotation with art and design. A good feature is the way teachers successfully link D&T work with other subjects, for example the use of data in an ICT lesson, and by providing good starting points for activities such as visiting a local children's playground before embarking on making models of playground equipment. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The relatively new subject leader has a number of other responsibilities, which means that she has only limited time to devote to D&T. The subject is not a priority within the school improvement plan.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

95. Only one lesson was seen in the area of **PSHE** and it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on provision in this area. In this very good Year 3 lesson, pupils were looking forward to their forthcoming move to their new school when they become Year 4 pupils. The pupils showed very good and sensitive understanding of the issues involved in moving schools and their confidence was raised and concerns eased about moving to the new middle school. They achieved well and showed that they have a mature and responsible attitude to schooling and each other.



96. It is evident that the subject makes a strong and positive contribution to the life of the school. Classes are timetabled to have lessons each week and the curriculum is suitably planned to deal with issues raised. The school places a very strong emphasis on personal, social and health education and it is an aspect of learning that is well supported in classes. The pupils' personal and social education is very good. It has a positive impact on all that the school seeks to do in terms of developing confident people. The school works hard to ensure that pupils work and operate harmoniously.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

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