

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DISHFORTH AIRFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Dishforth Airfield, Thirsk

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121332

Headteacher: Mrs L Graham

Lead inspector: Mrs M Lewis

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 255976

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	80
School address:	Short Road Dishforth Airfield Thirsk North Yorkshire
Postcode:	YO7 3DL
Telephone number:	01423 322556
Fax number:	01423 322556
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Hick
Date of previous inspection:	December 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is sited on a military base near Boroughbridge in North Yorkshire. It is much smaller than the average primary school, having 80 pupils on roll aged from 4 to 11 years. Pupils are mainly taught in four mixed-age classes; reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. On some afternoons some Year 4 pupils join the Year 5 and 6 pupils. Ninety-four per cent of pupils are from service families and 6 per cent come from the local community. Almost all are of white British origin and no pupil has English as an additional language. As is usual for service families, no pupil is eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. Due to a rolling programme of postings, the number of pupils who leave and join the school other than at the usual time is very much higher than usual. This means that most pupils are in the school for a short part of their primary education, on average between 1 and 2 years. In the current year, there has already been a change of 50 per cent of pupils from September 2003 to March 2004. This presents added difficulties for the school to overcome such as additional assessments for records of progress. The school has a well above average proportion of pupils (35 per cent) with special educational needs (SEN). Four pupils (5 per cent) have a statement of SEN. This is above average. When pupils start in the reception class there is a wide range of attainment which varies from year-to-year but overall, children's attainment is average for their age. The school received the 'Basic Skills Quality Mark' in 2001 and a 'Schools Achievement' award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22787	Mrs M Lewis	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector	
4192	Mr D Hartley	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

CfBT incorporating Primary Associates  
Suite 13 West Lancs Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
Lancashire  
WN8 9TN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides an effective education** for its pupils within a caring ethos. Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well and reach average standards overall, despite the short period spent by many in the school. The headteacher and governors lead and manage the school well. It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils settle into school quickly in the reception class and when they join at other times. They behave well and have good attitudes to their work;
- Pupils make good progress in reading and reach above average standards for their ages at 7 and 11. Pupils with SEN receive good support and achieve well;
- A good programme of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning opportunities;
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and offers them a good start to their education;
- Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and writing skills are not used widely enough across the curriculum;
- Subject leaders do not check standards, teaching and learning in their subjects well enough.

**The improvement since the last inspection is good.** The quality of teaching has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Results in statutory tests at the age of 11 have risen overall. Standards in ICT are now satisfactory, pupils make sound progress in music and the curriculum in religious education is in line with the local syllabus. Children in the Foundation Stage settle well into school and provision in the reception class has improved. Library facilities are better but are still not used enough for research.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	D	B	C
mathematics	A*	E	B	C
science	A*	D	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. A\* indicates a result in the highest 5 per cent of schools nationally. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of free school meals.*

Please note: this is a small school and the number of pupils taking the tests is always few. In 2003 there were only six pupils so each accounted for 16.6 per cent of the total. These results must therefore be treated with caution in making judgements about standards.

**Pupils' achievement is good.** Children in the reception class get off to a good start and are on course to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. They exceed these standards in their personal development. In 2003, pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in tests in reading, above average in writing and below average standards in mathematics. Currently standards in reading are now above average and in mathematics they are average. There is a similar picture for pupils at the age of 11. Although in recent years standards in the juniors have fluctuated, pupils did well in the test results for 2003 when they attained above average standards in English, and mathematics and average standards in science in comparison with all schools. Inspection findings indicate that the current standards of pupils' attainment in the juniors are average overall in English, mathematics and science. At the end of the infants and the juniors, pupils reach the standards expected of them in ICT and in other subjects where judgements could be made. Pupils achieve well and perform confidently in drama and singing. Despite the very high pupil

mobility, as a result of frequent postings by the military, the school tracks pupils' progress well and in the very rare cases of pupils who stay longer, records show that they make very good progress. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are good.** Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are good. Staff manage any pupil who has problems with behaviour very well, ensuring that others are able to concentrate on their activities. Pupils are helpful to each other and work harmoniously together forming good relationships. There is a culture of excellent attendance and pupils' punctuality is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall.**

There is a significant amount of good and some very good teaching in both the infants and juniors. Lessons are well planned to match the abilities and ages of the pupils and build well on previous lessons. The skills of literacy and numeracy are given a high priority. Assessment is used well in English, mathematics and science and teachers ensure that new pupils quickly slot in at the correct level to progress in their learning. Pupils have their own targets in English and mathematics to help them improve and move on quickly. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use their writing and ICT skills across the subjects of the curriculum.

The school offers a sound curriculum overall and provides well for extra-curricular activities. It provides good care support and guidance for pupils. Partnership with parents is good. The school seeks parents' views and encourages them to support their children's learning. There are close links with other schools, the local and military community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides good leadership. She is well supported by staff although subject leaders do not have an overview of standards and teaching in their subjects. Management is effective. Governance of the school is good and the school meets its statutory requirements.

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

Most parents are pleased with the school overall, but some have concerns about behaviour in the school which are unfounded. Pupils enjoy school and feel they are valued and supported.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop the roles of the subject leaders to ensure that they have an overview of standards and teaching and learning in their subjects;
- Make more use of ICT across curriculum subjects and extend pupils' opportunities to write at length in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are satisfactory for pupils aged 7 and 11 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils attain above average standards in reading. Standards have risen since the last inspection from being below average in ICT to be average and in religious education to be in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Current pupils in the reception class are on course to reach or exceed the expected goals by the end of reception. Records show that pupils make good progress whilst they are in the school. The very few pupils who stay in the school throughout or for relatively long periods achieve very well and reach above average standards. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are good throughout the school;
- There are improving standards in test results since the last inspection;
- The identification, support and achievement of pupils with SEN throughout the school is good;
- More able pupils achieve very well and reach higher levels at both key stages.

#### Commentary

1. Dishforth Airfield is a small school with a very high level of mobility amongst its pupils. Consequently the number of pupils taking national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 is very small. Most will not have been pupils at the school for the whole of their primary education and will have attended several schools on army bases in different countries. The test results in any one year can be misleading as they are based on the results of as few as three or four or in a large group as many as twelve. Nevertheless, over the last five years the pattern of scores can give an idea of standards overall and in comparison with schools nationally even with small numbers of pupils who move frequently.
2. In Key Stage 1, there has been a consistent pattern of pupils attaining average results in reading and writing but below average results in mathematics. The inspection shows this is a fair reflection and is due to the emphasis the school has given for some time to reading and writing. Currently, however, standards are better in reading and beginning to rise in writing. They are now average overall in mathematics.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.5 (13.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Only six pupils sat the tests in 2003 so the 'Standards in national tests' table for Year 6 is omitted. However, the Key Stage 2 pattern of results over the same period shows that pupils have almost consistently achieved above average standards in English, mathematics and science and that despite the obstacles the school has to overcome, pupils achieve well and the school has maintained a favourable position in results of all subjects. From 1999 to 2001

- results were considerably higher than the national average but dipped in 2002 due to a less able cohort and rose again in 2003 in all three subjects.
4. Improvements in standards in English and mathematics have been brought about since the appointment of the headteacher who had just arrived and was in an acting position at the time of the last inspection. She teaches many lessons in the Year 2/3 class and has appointed new staff in all other classes. The curriculum has been reviewed and the school has been involved in initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the confidence of pupils as well as literacy and numeracy training for staff. The school has worked hard on planning lessons in mixed-aged classes to ensure that work is matched well to pupils' different abilities so that all pupils get a fair deal. Standards have improved in ICT and religious education which are now satisfactory, whereas they were unsatisfactory at the last inspection.
  5. Pupils get off to a good start in the reception year (Foundation Stage). All are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception and in their personal, social and emotional development they will exceed them. Children show no significant difference in their progress in any of the other areas of learning, though they make a particularly good start in their reading and oral language skills. However, more could be done to support children's physical development by improving the outside play facilities and resources.
  6. Pupils with SEN are very well supported in class and consequently they make good progress. They are identified early and their needs in English and mathematics are accurately assessed which ensures that they are given work which challenges them and moves them on. Well prepared individual educational plans (IEPs) guide and direct teachers and classroom assistants who include pupils with SEN fully in lesson planning for all activities. In some cases pupils are moved off the register after they achieve their targets.
  7. The school keeps a close track on all pupils individually and further stretches and boosts those pupils who are just falling short of the levels they need to reach for their ages and to ensure that the more able pupils reach the higher levels. They use a variety of resources from different initiatives such as the early and additional literacy strategies for pupils in Year 2 and booster classes for those in Year 6 for five months before the national tests. This ensures that both boys and girls achieve as well as they could whether they are still in the school at the time of the tests or not. More able pupils are achieving very well in Year 6 because they are identified and expected to do harder work. A similar situation occurs in Year 5 where higher attaining pupils are able to work alongside Year 6 pupils. Pupils in the current Year 6 class are on track to attain at least the levels expected for their ages and for some above. Records show that all pupils expected to reach the higher levels in 2004 have been in the school since Year 2 which indicates that the school is adding good value for these pupils.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good. The level of attendance is excellent and punctuality is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good attitudes and form good relationships throughout the school;
- The attendance rate is excellent;
- Pupils' moral and social development are actively promoted and impact well on school life;
- Good quality assemblies are provided which are relevant to the pupils.

## Commentary

8. Most pupils state they enjoy school and all those spoken to really like their teachers. The youngest children concentrate very well on activities whether it is on 'free choice' activities or in more structured times such as assemblies. Older pupils usually listen well and are confident to express their opinions. They are happy to work in pairs or groups. For instance, in an ICT lesson the oldest children collaborated very well to explore the program and became engrossed in their work.
9. Children behave well in class and around school. Some parents' and pupils' responses to inspection questionnaires highlighted some concerns about behaviour; nevertheless, all of the children spoken to said they enjoyed their playtime and find other children friendly. Behaviour management has a high priority in the school and those children who have behavioural difficulties as part of their SEN are dealt with appropriately. Staff work hard and successfully to prevent them disrupting the learning for other children. The school is a calm orderly community where pupils are polite to visitors and are keen to seek responsibilities. They show respect for conventions and school rules, such as at lunchtime and in assemblies.
10. Pupils' personal maturity is promoted effectively and their views sought through school questionnaires and the school council. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by good quality acts of worship in well planned assemblies, which the children enjoy and which are relevant to their lives. One assembly observed, following on from St. George's day, helped the children discern what the 'dragons' are they may face today for instance, loneliness, fear of exams or bullying and how they can defeat them. Many opportunities are provided throughout the day to reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong through the school rules, involvement in charity initiatives and by debating moral issues in history and literacy lessons, such as those raised by the 'Global Eye' project or looking at the lives of children in Victorian times.
11. There is also good provision for children's social development through opportunities for them to work together and in class discussions or 'Circle Time'. Visitors and visits including this year's residential to East Barnby and other out of hours provision and work with the local cluster of schools all promote social development and widen pupils' social interactions with pupils from backgrounds different from their own. Children's cultural development is satisfactory with opportunities provided to take part in music and drama performances and to work with a sculptor. Although pupils live in a monocultural society in a rural setting the school ensures that children study other countries, cultures and faiths in religious education, geography and literacy. Pupils are taught to recognise where there is unfairness and neediness in the world and to question why and do what they can to help. There is some good use made of visitors and 'cluster days' to provide 'first hand' experiences of other cultures. The school is already looking for ways to broaden pupils' experience of the multicultural diversity in Britain today.

## Attendance

The attendance rate is extremely high compared with national figures. Pupils are very punctual arriving at school in good time which enables a prompt start to the day. This strongly supports pupils' progress as no time for learning is wasted.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	2.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	76	2	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The school is sensitive to pupils' circumstances at all times, including those of war and ensures that pupils settle in well giving a high priority to pastoral procedures. Teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils quickly when they start at the school. The school provides a good programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported.

### Teaching and learning

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	13	3	0	0	0

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers make good use of assessment particularly in English, mathematics and science to move pupils on quickly. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress based on their previous learning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good grasp of the subjects and levels of the curriculum they teach;
- Work is carefully planned and lessons are well organised to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Teachers assess pupils' progress well in English, mathematics and science;
- Pupils with SEN are catered for well;
- Very good quality support is given by classroom assistants;
- There are good relationships at all levels which gives pupils confidence. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour;
- Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and ICT skills across the different subjects of the curriculum.

### Commentary

12. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged satisfactory overall and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Staff changes have taken place since then and the

school has worked hard to improve teaching methods under the leadership of the headteacher who also teaches for a significant proportion of the week in the cross-phase class for pupils in Years 2 and 3. Teaching in ICT and music was judged to be unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case.

13. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is mostly good and very good teaching occurs across Years 2 to 6. Reading and writing skills in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are taught well and this means that pupils achieve well and learn to read and write quickly. Pupils in both the Foundation Stage and in Year 2 work alongside older children and this gives them greater confidence to try new things, for instance, in the punctuation of their writing. The similar situation in the junior classes, where at least two year groups are taught together, results in pupils gaining confidence quickly and frequently taking up the challenge or volunteering to 'have a go'. Pupils regularly share ideas, evaluate their own work and work together as a team.
14. Lessons are well planned to match the different abilities and ages of the pupils and build well on previous lessons. Assessment is used very well in English and well in mathematics and science. Pupils are fully aware of their individual targets which helps them move on. Teachers have good knowledge and expertise in most National Curriculum subjects at all levels. Pupils with SEN receive good quality support from classroom assistants to achieve the individual targets on their IEPs. A good example of this was seen in a very good design and technology lesson for pupils in a class of Years 4, 5 and 6. They were preparing a design for a soft toy, the teacher made good provision in her explanations, choice of vocabulary, demonstration and well devised tasks to ensure the lesson suited and was relevant to pupils of all ages and ability. Well directed support by classroom assistants ensured that all pupils including those with SEN and more able pupils benefited from the lesson. Those with SEN received good one to one support throughout and more able pupils were encouraged by the teacher to give a prominent three-dimensional effect to body parts of their design. Teaching is usually lively and enthusiastic and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers and classroom assistants manage any incidences of challenging behaviour from a very small minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties very well. Combined with the good relationships that exist between pupils and staff at all levels, this results in good behaviour overall and ensures that good learning takes place and that learning is not disrupted. Lessons are not always well balanced particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers sometimes spend too much time on the introductory part of lessons which means that lessons lose pace and pupils do not have enough time for their independent tasks. There is little evidence of teachers planning extended writing opportunities in subjects such as history and religious education, although good opportunities for drama are often given. Although skills in ICT are taught satisfactorily, pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to develop them further across subjects of the curriculum. Some recently acquired resources, such as a digital microscope to develop science with the use of ICT have not yet been brought fully into use.
15. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Staff have a good understanding of what children know and can do and activities are matched well to their abilities. However, procedures for evaluating and recording pupils' progress on a frequent and regular basis are not systematic. Assessment is good for all pupils including those with SEN in Key Stages 1 and 2. The quality of pupils' IEPs is good and identifies the targeted areas of learning in English and mathematics for each pupil. The school assesses pupils' levels of attainment in English and mathematics promptly on starting school for those pupils who start part way through. Teachers are very conscious of the need to fit pupils in correctly to lessons based on what they already know and can do. This is more difficult for other National Curriculum subjects, such as science where pupils may have learned about topics in a different order. To overcome these difficulties the school provides booster classes both during and after school for pupils in literacy, numeracy and science to bring them up to the average level or above by the time they sit the national tests. The school tests pupils regularly and keeps assessment data up-to-date for pupils who move from the school part way through and to

track the progress in the case of the rare pupil who stays in the school from reception to Year 6.

## The curriculum

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of worthwhile opportunities that cater well for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of the pupils. Opportunities provided to enrich pupils' learning are good. The provision takes into account, as far as is possible, the very high mobility of pupils and is sensitive to their individual circumstances.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed the curriculum to address pupils' specific needs;
- The school is successful in its efforts to include all pupils equally in all aspects of learning;
- Pupils who have SEN are supported very well;
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good;
- Provision for the youngest children's outdoor play is limited;
- The school has not established an effective process to develop the potential of its gifted and talented pupils;
- Some lessons are unnecessarily long.

### Commentary

16. Virtually no pupil attends the school through their entire primary years. Inevitably, when they arrive many have had different experiences from others in their class. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that the needs of the different aged pupils in their class are met. During and after school, booster classes help to ensure that the oldest pupils have covered the necessary topics before they take the national tests for 11-year-olds. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, as well as religious education and there are daily well organised sessions of collective worship. Pupils from Year 2 upwards travel to Thirsk for swimming lessons. All required policies have been established for aspects, such as alcohol and drug misuse and sex education.
17. Curricular provision now ensures that standards have risen in ICT and religious education. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have had additional training in both subjects and computers have been updated and renewed in ICT and resources such as artefacts and locations for visits to places of worship identified.
18. The curriculum pays due attention to the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. The school timetable is designed with blocks of time that occasionally lead to some lessons being too long, particularly during the introduction part. For example, some English and mathematics lessons last well over an hour. Over-long lessons occasionally result in pupils becoming restless and less urgency from the teacher. Teachers are beginning to combine subjects in their lessons, for example, using laptop computers in science and drama in history and religious education lessons. The headteacher is currently exploring ways to ensure that pupils view their learning as a whole and not as separate subjects. Further planning is required to help pupils develop their writing in subjects such as history and religious education.
19. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. These pupils receive effective support through individual education plans designed to address their immediate needs and help them to achieve as well as they can. Teaching assistants are sensibly deployed and very effective in how they help these pupils to learn. Regular meetings are held to assess pupils' progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is highly organised and ensures that the progress of individual pupils is monitored and that parents and when necessary outside specialists are involved in discussions. Following a Speech and Language Therapy course the SENCO worked successfully with staff and teaching assistants to improve their approach to the teaching of speaking and listening. This development helped to remove one pupil from the SEN register.

20. No plans are in place to show how the school meets the needs of its gifted and talented pupils and no formal register is kept. However, more able pupils are given additional and well prepared work in lessons which stretches them successfully and talented pupils, such as budding football and netball players and musicians (recorder players and singers) have opportunities to attend a range of after school clubs. Dance workshops are organised at the local high school. Members of the choir sing for the elderly in the community, perform in school pantomimes and enter competitions. Recently they sang on the local radio.
21. Provision for pupils' PSHE is good and is an area to which the school gives an appropriate priority ensuring that pupils settle in and learn effectively. Transfer of pupils' records into the school can take a considerable time and the school feels these are sometimes not reliable. Consequently the school makes their own assessments of pupils soon after they arrive in order to group them most effectively so that as little time as possible is lost in making progress. The school is developing a programme of PSHE along with its cluster schools and has sought training from national experts who are to provide staff training shortly. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and its effect on others during 'Circle Time'. This contributes well to the overall good behaviour and positive relationships in the school. Well established links with the police have been developed. For the older pupils topics, such as drug education are explored with local officers through the Drug Awareness Resistance Education programme.
22. The school provides well for pupils to have learning experiences beyond the school day. Infant children can attend the football club and choir. Older children have a range of clubs some of which run all year and some for shorter periods. These include football, netball, recorders, cycling awareness, booster classes, and pantomime and drama rehearsals. While a minority of parents expressed concern over the range of activities available, the provision is judged to be good.
23. Good use is made of external resources for the benefit of all pupils, for example, recent visits have included science museums, Newby Hall to explore a sculpture trail and an orienteering trip to Duncan Park near Helmsley. A visit to the local airfield was arranged to learn about the Global Eagle's (gyro copter) planned round the world flight. Pupils also use the army base facilities for football coaching. Outdoor education is provided on the residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
24. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall and this is an improvement from the last inspection. However, the classroom for children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is small given the range of experiences that are expected and provided. Currently there is a lack of a sufficiently large range of outdoor play equipment. The previous inspection commented on the library and that arrangements at the time did not encourage pupils to browse or study. Discussions with a number of the oldest pupils indicate that this is still the case despite better resources.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The school provides good support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff know the children and their families well and respond sensitively to their needs;
- Child protection procedures are effective;
- There is good consideration for health and safety;
- The support for children with SEN, those in reception and for children arriving mid year is good;
- There are good systems for consulting pupils and involving them in the school's work.

## Commentary

25. Pastoral care for pupils and their families is strong helped by the good links with army personnel. Staff care about pupils' academic and personal needs and help children settle quickly by providing them with special friends when they arrive at the school and assessing them on entry so their learning is appropriate. The child protection coordinator has appropriate expertise and has ensured that all staff have had recent training to keep awareness levels high. Risk assessments are in place for many aspects of the school and minimise risks to children. Governors are involved in regular audits of the buildings and good use is made of the expertise available from the local education authority to keep practice up-to-date. The children are shown how to keep themselves safe at appropriate points in the curriculum. This has included learning and writing about the dangers in a kitchen in a literacy lesson and involvement in cycling awareness. This valuable work is also extended by visitors into school. Longer-term health issues also receive attention such as the importance of exercise and sports and the provision of healthy snacks for breaktime.
26. The school provides good support for children in reception and there are good induction arrangements for them which allow staff to get to know the child's background and assess them rapidly. Children with SEN receive good support in the classroom and good use is made of their individual statements. Staff also set targets for all pupils in English and mathematics to help them understand how they can improve and they make appropriate use of these.
27. The school council provides each child with a voice in the school and they all have the opportunity to be on the council in rotation. They learn to take responsibility for putting forward their classmates' views and also to look after others in the playground. The school has also sought all pupils' views in questionnaires which the school has analysed and acted upon. For instance, matters of pupils' perceptions of behaviour in the school at different times and places. This resulted in pupils helping to prepare rules for dining tables. They can also voice concerns and ideas when they come together in class discussions during 'Circle Time'.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are good. The links with other schools and colleges are also good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to support the parents;
- The school is outward looking and has established strong links with the army base and with local schools to improve pupils' learning;
- Some parents have negative perceptions of discipline and information they receive from the school.

## Commentary

28. Parents' views of the school are positive overall. They are happy that their children are taught well, expected to work hard and that staff treat them fairly. A significant number of parents have some concerns about specific aspects of the school but their fears are mainly needless. Behaviour is good overall and children with behavioural difficulties are well managed. The school has sought parents' views, for instance about healthy break time snacks and water coolers in the classroom. The school is open at the beginning and end of the day for parents to come in and staff make themselves available wherever possible. Much good information is provided for parents, such as in newsletters and topic information displayed on school notice boards and sent home. However, the information in the end of

year reports to parents on each child's progress, targets and next steps of learning varies between classes. Two parents' meetings occur each year when parents can also find out how their child is getting on. Parents are also welcome to arrange an informal chat with their child's class teacher at any convenient time and many do so.

29. Parents are encouraged to listen to their child read regularly. Courses are also run to help parents know how to help their child such as the 'Keeping up with the Children' course. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help in the class or on trips or with swimming and some do on a frequent and regular basis.
30. The school has fruitful links with the army base which has provided many governors over recent years. The Padre visits weekly to lead assemblies and these are very helpful and well received. The army provides facilities which the school doesn't have such as the use of the sports hall and a minibus for residential visits. They also support events well so that they promote the work of the school and contribute to the pupils' learning.
31. Being an active part of the A1 cluster of schools increases the range and quality of what the school can provide. Training for staff is made available more cheaply by acting as a cluster and sports tournaments are organised between schools. The cluster schools also hold multicultural days. The high school runs days which the feeder primary schools request, such as an athletics day or a performing arts day enhancing opportunities in these areas. It also holds induction days so that pupils can get used to their new teachers and school to facilitate transition. Teachers from the receiving high school also visit Dishforth to get helpful information about their new pupils. This makes for pupils considering themselves well prepared and subsequently a smooth transfer.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The school is well managed and governance is good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is very well supported by senior teachers and other staff, but subject leadership could be improved.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and is focused on raising standards;
- All staff set good examples to pupils and are committed to running a school where each pupil matters. The school ensures that all pupils are involved in all school activities;
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school, what it does well and the challenges it faces; they are responsible and fully involved in moving the school forward;
- Subject leaders do not have sufficient overview of standards and teaching and learning across the school in all of the subjects that they lead.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher has maintained the good leadership in place at the previous inspection. Since then the school has successfully tackled all the key issues identified at that time. Despite a heavy teaching load of three days each week in a class of mixed Year 2 and 3 pupils, she keeps the school well focused on raising standards and ensuring that pupils achieve well, consequently pupils' results have been maintained as broadly average over the past three years despite the very high turbulence of the school roll. Along with senior staff she has a very clear vision for the school and the small staff works tirelessly to achieve it. For example, the school has a good ethos where each pupil matters. New pupils settle in quickly, pastoral care is well thought out and sensitive to pupils' circumstances. Staff create a positive, caring learning situation for all pupils where they are supported well and encouraged to take part in all activities both in and out of school. Priorities for school improvement are appropriate and well focused on curriculum developments as well as

teaching and learning, the quality of pupils' personal development and their care and support. These priorities are informed by reviewing and monitoring the school's work together with staff and governors, analysing pupils' performance in tests, and having a good knowledge of their progress both informally and from thorough assessments in English, mathematics and science. Staff work as an effective team and consequently have a shared understanding of what they are working towards. They set good examples in their relationships and behaviour towards pupils to ensure that they are happy in school. Pupils who have insecurities and emotional needs are well cared for and supported.

33. The full-time teacher who teaches in Years 5 and 6 supports the headteacher very well. She has a good understanding of the pupils' circumstances and shows a strong commitment to the school and its pupils by leading booster classes for the oldest pupils both during and after school. As a class teacher, governor and subject leader for mathematics, science and design and technology, she carries a heavy work load successfully and plays a major part in school development.
34. Management of the school is good although the headteacher has limited time for her management duties. The school runs smoothly on a daily basis in the hands of the friendly and capable administrative assistant. Target setting and the monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress are kept up-to-date to cater for the frequent comings and goings of pupils. Targets are set twice during the year for pupils in Year 6. Pupils' records are fastidiously maintained in order to be ready for transfer. They need to be ready for transfer at short notice and sometimes several at the same time. Policies for behaviour, teachers' planning and assessments are reflected consistently across the school. Staff training and development are good. Teachers and support staff undertake frequent staff training and initiatives to support teaching and the school's own priorities for development. The school is supportive of part-time and temporary supply teachers. The headteacher is the leader of staff performance management which is up-to-date and identifies targets for each teacher. Teachers and administrative staff are confident with the use of ICT. As a small staff, each member, including two permanent part-time and one long-term supply teacher, carry a management role of at least two subjects and in the case of permanent full time staff more. Consequently, they have little time and opportunity to formally monitor their subjects. However, no planned rolling programme of monitoring of pupils' books or of monitoring lessons take place. This means that apart from in English, subject leaders do not have a clear idea of standards and the quality of teaching in their subjects. To some extent the headteacher gets around the problem of monitoring teaching and learning in English and mathematics with the use of external monitoring by the local education school's advisor.
35. The management of SEN is very good. The well qualified, experienced special education needs co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and closely monitors the progress pupils are making in English, mathematics and personal development. She provides good guidance for teachers and teaching assistants, attends courses to further develop her expertise and regularly checks on pupils' progress. Pupils are identified quickly and their IEPs are of good quality clearly identifying the small steps pupils need to achieve in English and mathematics to move on. Targets are realistic and build on what pupils' already know and can do. As a result, pupils with SEN achieve well based on their previous performance. The school maintains close contact with parents of these pupils and reviews take place regularly but with even more frequency for pupils with behavioural difficulties.
36. Governance is good. The governing body plays an active part in the life of the school and is fully supportive of the headteacher and staff. All statutory duties are met. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas where it needs to improve and of its day to day work. They receive good information from the headteacher and as a result, discuss and debate effectively on matters regarding the direction and improvements of the school, such as library provision and developing an outside environmental area for studies in science. They are involved in the annual evaluation of the school improvement plan and review of test results. Governors who are local and long standing are able to keep up-to-date

on their training as individuals. In the case of parent governors circumstances dictate that they rarely complete their full term. An example of this was a governor who had been in post for around 18 months and was present at the inspector's meeting prior to the inspection but was being posted out the very next day. Consequently there is a need for a regular programme of whole governing body training.

37. Financial management is good and is approached in a sensible way. The school has a bursar who meets four times each year with the governors and provides interim statements on a regular basis. The school is very aware of the high mobility of pupils and how unpredicted postings in and out of the base affect the variability of school funding. Consequently it manages and plans the budget carefully with the benefit of the pupils always uppermost. Spending decisions are fully discussed and governors ensure that the school gets the best value. For instance, last year the school appointed a part-time teacher with variable hours for September. More pupils arrived unexpectedly and she was made full time, but in January families were posted out and her hours needed to be cut back to part time. The school is currently working within sensible budget margins and gives good value for money.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	261920
Total expenditure	271145
Expenditure per pupil	3116

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35649
Balance carried forward to the next	26424

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle into the well established routines in the reception class quickly;
- The creation of a secure, relaxed yet purposeful learning environment in which children flourish and can do their best;
- The teaching and learning is good; staff work well together as a team;
- Pupils achieve particularly well in their personal, social, early reading, and writing skills;
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They set very good examples to the children;
- Resources for outside play are limited.

### Commentary

38. Most children have attended a nursery before starting in the school. Good induction arrangements are in place for reception children. Children have a wide range of attainment which varies from year-to-year and child-to-child, but their attainment overall is broadly as you would expect for their age when they start. The reception and Year 1 pupils are taught together in one class. During the introductions and conclusions of lessons children in the reception join in with pupils in Year 1, although they frequently work separately with the teacher or the teaching assistant during independent activities. Their work is planned to meet the needs of the curriculum for children in the Foundation stage, based on the Early Learning Goals. As the year progresses, those who are ready, begin to work on National Curriculum activities, in a group based on their ability. The Foundation Stage has been temporarily led and managed satisfactorily by a temporary teacher since the beginning of the school year. The permanent teacher is due to return from maternity leave shortly.
39. Children in the reception class are well motivated to learn. They are confident and friendly and take delight in showing their work. They are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach in their **personal, social and emotional development** by the end of reception. There are no children identified with SEN in the reception group. Children respond well in various social situations, such as assemblies, lunchtimes and when taught as part of a larger group in literacy and mathematics. They show independence in fetching and tidying away materials as they need them and at the end of sessions. Pupils in reception work well together and mix freely with each other and Year 1 pupils in their activities behaving well. They enter into role play games such as at the 'Flower Shop' and imaginative games when playing with construction toys and in the sand tray. They become fully involved in their activities both those structured by the staff and those that they choose independently.
40. **Pupils' achievement in communication, language and literacy** is good, as a result of good provision. They reach the expected goals by the end of reception. They take part well in conversations and are attentive when listening to stories and looking at 'big books' with the teacher. They develop their early reading skills well in a small group with the teacher using clues from pictures and recognising letters and sounds to read and understand a simple text. Children are developing an enjoyment of books by choosing their own from a carefully categorised selection. Although few children have well developed writing skills when they start school, they quickly learn to write their first and second names and to form letters successfully. They have good pencil control and enjoy labelling words for a diary they are learning to keep. Staff talk to pupils and intervene appropriately in children's role play

activities, so extending their vocabulary. Children learn to listen carefully and understand the need to pay attention not call out and interrupt when others are speaking.

41. **Pupils' achievement in mathematical development is satisfactory.** Children develop their knowledge and understanding through practical activities in number, shape, space and measures and are on course to reach the goals expected of them by the end of reception. For example, they talk about the shape of everyday objects and use different shapes in their construction work and art work. The teacher plans interesting activities to help children recognise shapes and consequently they quickly learn to recognise triangles, circles and squares accurately. They learn the values of different coins and to recognise these using coin stamps. They proudly fill a purse shape with different coins and explain how much they have in the purse and how to make up amounts to 10 pence using different coins. Opportunities are taken by staff to develop number and addition of money during role play activities in the 'Flower shop' and at other times such as counting programs on the computer recognising two digit numbers such as 16, and 18. More able children are challenged appropriately and work alongside Year 1 pupils to show what coins they need to make up a variety of different amounts such as six and eight pence.
42. As part of their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, pupils achieve well in developing their understanding of how seeds grow. The classroom buzzed with activity and excitement as children planted seeds and had fun preparing their 'Mr Greenheads' from compost, grass seeds, old tights and felt. They were able to explain in detail what they were doing and what they needed to do to make the seeds grow. They were proud of their finished 'Mr Greenheads' and one child said, 'I will put it outside in the rain or water it with a watering can to make the hair grow'. A good number of children have computers at home and acquire skills there that staff build on. Most pupils work the mouse, click accurately and drag objects to new places. Some know how to print out their pictures and work independently. They all operate listening centres accurately and use headphones for listening to stories and instructions on the computer.
43. As part of a very successful activity session, pupils were observed painting colourful pictures, rolling out dough and cutting different shapes and making paper flowers from a variety of materials. In their **creative development** reception children used their imagination well, and show well developed skills of cutting and sticking. They chose materials appropriately and showed a good understanding of shape and colour and confidence for making their paper flowers. They enjoy singing, particularly to round off the end of sessions with rhymes and number rhymes and in assemblies.
44. During the inspection the weather was very poor and pupils were unable to go outside and it was not possible to observe an indoor lesson of **physical development**. Physical activities are planned for satisfactorily both for outside and in the hall and pupils usually have free access to the outdoor play area weather permitting. However, resources of wheeled toys, such as tricycles are limited and the small, hard surface is rough and in need of repair. Pupils have good access to a range of resources such as, jigsaw puzzles, construction kits, paints sand and water, and large scale climbing apparatus. They develop good co-ordination and manipulation of materials in their activities when they sort objects such as coins, cut, sew, stick and thread beads.
45. Teaching and learning are good overall in the Foundation Stage and pupils move smoothly into the early stages of the National Curriculum. The provision has improved since the last inspection. They are now given exciting practical opportunities for learning, procedures for induction are good and children are helped to settle in quickly. Routines are well established and although small, the classroom is well resourced, attractive and stimulates children's learning.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers show good expertise in catering for the wide range of pupils' age groups and abilities. They provide for them well;
- Pupils are confident and speak clearly voicing their own views and opinions sensibly; standards of reading are above average at Years 2 and 6;
- Most pupils achieve well and have good attitudes towards the subject. The subject is well led and managed;
- Pupils do not use the library as much as they could for research.

#### Commentary

46. The very small numbers of pupils taking the tests from year-to-year make it difficult to draw reliable conclusions from the results. However, the results in Key Stage 1 over the past three years indicate that pupils reach average standards in comparison with schools nationally. Inspection evidence shows that pupils get off to a good start and that they achieve well. Results for pupils at Year 6 over three years have shown more variation but have maintained an average, broadly similar to that of all schools nationally. This is reflected in current inspection findings in writing although pupils achieve better in reading at both key stages. The school's tracking system shows that pupils do well and make good progress from the time they start in the school until they leave. In the current group of 11-year-olds pupils show good achievement in all areas of English and almost all are likely to achieve at least the standard expected for their age.
47. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. More able pupils in Year 2 read confidently and independently alongside pupils in Year 3, reading and understanding the meaning of words, such as 'persuade'. One pupil explained that this means 'getting someone to do what you want them to'. Reading is taught well in Years 1 and 2. Pupils learn letter names and sounds and to use pictures to help them understand the meaning. They choose from a broad range of reading books which are well classified to their reading ability levels and are moved on quickly when they need to. Pupils take reading books home each day and most parents are very supportive and hear their child read frequently. Pupils of all abilities in Year 6 reach good standards in their reading skills and enjoy their independent reading. They show a good understanding of difficult vocabulary, plot and characters, reading confidently with expression and without hesitation. Pupils enjoy a wide selection of books and have favourite authors such as J K Rowling and Roald Dahl and Terry Deary. They show positive attitudes to reading with a good knowledge of non-fiction books. They know how to scan a book for information but do not use the resources available to them in the school library for independent research of topics as much as they could.
48. Standards in writing are currently in line with the national averages at both the ages of 7 and 11 overall. This is similar to the findings at the previous inspection. Writing is an area that the school has prioritised recently and the good teaching in this area is beginning to pay off. For instance, pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand that a piece of longer writing such as in a letter is improved when paragraphs are used and try to do so in their work. In 2003 pupils' results in writing at the age of 7 were above average. More able pupils in Year 2 do very well in writing and produce above average standards. They construct sentences well, striving to make their work interesting by using descriptions and punctuating sentences accurately with capital letters, full stops and question marks. Teachers in the infant and the

junior classes give all pupils interesting opportunities to write in different styles for instance, stories, letters, descriptions and factual writing, such as 'How snakes are born'. Pupils are becoming confident writers and move on quickly in their learning. In the junior classes pupils continue to write for a variety of situations and reasons. They write chronological reports, extended stories, retell a text in the first person and practise note taking to write in the style of a well known author. More able pupils are challenged appropriately, produce work of good content and achieve above average standards whilst lower attaining pupils reach the standard expected nationally apart from in their presentation and handwriting which is untidy. Generally presentation and handwriting of more able pupils is neat and legible but presentation is inconsistent for pupils of average and lower ability. Although a joined cursive style of writing is taught in the juniors, teachers often accept untidy work without comments or reminders in their marking. The standard of spelling and punctuation is variable in the junior classes and is average overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use computer programs to help them learn to spell basic and complex word patterns but computers are used less for written work in the junior classes. Teachers' marking is usually supportive and indicates to pupils what they need to do to improve in their work. Pupils have individual targets for improvement in their English books and are very aware of what they need to work on to improve.

49. The quality of teaching is good overall and this is reflected in the good progress that many pupils make in the short time they are in the school. Features of the effective teaching are the careful planning and thorough preparation and assessment of individual pupils' work to ensure that the tasks pupils are given match their ages and abilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge of teaching literacy and have worked hard recently on ways of teaching writing. They give good explanations of different ways and styles of writing and provide tasks to help pupils structure and 'scaffold' their written work. However, the introductory parts of lessons are sometimes too long and pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher. Pupils with SEN receive very good support for their work from teaching assistants led by the SENCO, who has a good understanding of pupils' needs and is familiar with supporting pupils with dyslexia and dyspraxia. Booster classes held during and after the school day are effective in helping those pupils 'bubbling under' the expected levels and these play a significant part in helping pupils who have missed out on parts of their learning as they move from school to school.
50. Teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in speaking and listening. They use good levels of general and subject related vocabulary in all lessons and expect pupils to respond appropriately. They value pupils' oral responses, give them opportunities to present their work to others in the class and wider school. This helps them develop confidence in speaking before larger groups. For instance, pupils in Years 2 and 3 engaged in a lively discussion about who they could write to and persuade, to give them old spectacles to send to Vision Aid Overseas. Drama opportunities are a feature of lessons in other subjects, such as history and religious education. Discussions in lessons, such as PSHE give increased opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills.
51. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and of the school targets in literacy. She analyses results and pinpoints areas to develop and for in-service for teachers' professional development as part of the school improvement plan. The school has been involved in initiatives, such as 'Philosophy for Children' to raise levels of pupils' thinking and speaking skills and is involved in a 'Talk for Learning' project.

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

52. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop subject specific vocabulary in other subjects, such as geography, mathematics, science and music. However, opportunities are often missed for pupils to practise their writing skills through other subjects and greater emphasis on this is needed in teachers' planning.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Pupils with SEN make good progress because of effective teaching and the support provided by teaching assistants;
- Increased opportunities to use ICT would help to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

### Commentary

53. Standards inevitably vary from year-to-year owing to the differing lengths of time most pupils attend the school. For example, only one pupil has attended for six years without interruption. However, current inspection findings show that standards are in line with what is expected.
54. Pupils in the infants achieve well and reach the standards expected by the age of 7. Junior pupils achieve steadily despite often having attended a number of schools. Members of staff have attended appropriate training to ensure that lessons are effective and in line with current approaches. As a result, lessons are well planned, carefully structured and purposeful. Teachers explain the objectives for the lesson ensuring that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. However, the balance of time spent on the various activities within the lesson could be better. Pupils sometimes are expected to sit and listen for too long. This reduces the length of time available to work individually or in small groups or the time required to discuss their learning. Teachers' daily lesson timetables also produce some mathematics lessons that are longer than necessary.
55. Teachers have discussed and agreed common approaches to the various methods of calculation and consequently these are being taught on a secure understanding of the stages required for pupils to grasp addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. For instance, when younger pupils are asked to add two numbers such as 125 and 403, they separate the hundreds, tens and units before adding. This helps them understand that the position of a digit within a number is important and they do not simply learn tricks with numbers. Teachers ask pupils to explain their own methods of calculation. This helps them articulate their thinking and raises their awareness that there is often more than one way to arrive at the correct answer. Teachers also suggest alternative possible ways in which a calculation could be carried out, extending pupils' understanding further.
56. The subject leader is aware that in the past pupils have been given insufficient opportunities to use the skills they have acquired to solve mathematical problems and this is an area the school is working to improve. Some very good work was observed in Years 3 and 4 when pupils not only solved numerical problems but also actually wrote some for others to solve. In this class the 'Problem of the Week' generates a great deal of enthusiasm and the pupils are very keen to solve it in the hope of winning the weekly prize.
57. Most pupils benefit from lively, imaginative and challenging teaching. Learning is seen as fun and touches of humor are possible as relationships are very good. Pupils in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class learn about right angles not just by talking and drawing but actually turning their bodies, moving around the room and programming electronic toys to travel in a specific direction. This practical approach to learning helps them to understand and remember their learning. Teachers ask probing questions to make pupils think. They consider the various ages in their classes and frequently ask multiple questions at the same time. In the Year 5 and 6 class, for example, the teacher asked pupils to estimate the amount of liquid in a partially filled bottle. Whilst the Year 5 pupils were estimating what fraction contained liquid the Year 6 pupils, along with one or two in Year 5, were also calculating the actual volume of liquid and then expressing it as a decimal. This type of work demands careful planning and it is evident in all classes.

58. Good provision is made for pupils with SEN. These pupils are frequently given specially adapted work and they benefit from the close attention of well trained teaching assistants. Assistants make notes about the pupils' learning. This helps the teacher to plan effectively for the next lesson and ensure that they make good progress. Members of staff also evaluate their lessons making notes about individual's achievement or where further support is required. This approach to assessment ensures that pupils are sufficiently challenged.
59. Despite the teaching being generally good there are some aspects that could be improved. Although teachers make sure that pupils' work is marked there are occasions when pupils need more guidance on what they need to do in order to improve. Some pupils, such as those in the class for Years 3 and 4 are often asked to judge how confident they are about what they have learnt in the lesson. This helps the teacher to gauge the success of the lesson and helps pupils to recognise gains in understanding. This is not the case in all classes. Displays around the school show that ICT is beginning to be used effectively. However, work in pupils' books completed prior to the inspection shows that in the past very little use was made of computers. These opportunities would help pupils to appreciate how computers are increasingly being used in everyday life and extend their learning in both mathematics and ICT.
60. Opportunities for staff to discuss pupils' work with colleagues tend to be on an informal basis. The subject leader has insufficient opportunities to judge the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This means that the best teaching cannot be shared and areas for development cannot be quickly identified. The role of the subject leader has yet to be formalised in a job description so that it is understood by all.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Opportunities for pupils to use and extend their understanding of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. It is evident in science, for example, as pupils carry out investigations, or draw on their mathematics to measure and record results in tables and graphs. Similarly in ICT, pupils in Years 2 and Year 3 construct and interpret simple databases about the ways they travel to school, producing charts and bar graphs.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils undertake investigations on a regular basis. They are well supported to develop their understanding of how to plan and carry out their own tests;
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good;
- Pupils have few opportunities to use computers for science.

#### **Commentary**

62. It was only possible for inspectors to observe one science lesson. Inspection findings are also based on the evidence found in teachers' planning, through looking at pupils' books, their displayed work and discussions with staff and pupils. Teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory overall and pupils achieve the expected standards for their ages at 7. They are given good opportunities to record observations and write about what they have found out in their own words. This is helping to improve one of the school's main areas for development, to raise standards in writing. As pupils arrive at the school they have frequently not covered the same work as others in their class. Staff have to work hard to address these differences especially before the pupils take the national tests for 11-year-olds. Extra lessons both

during and after school are used to ensure that they have had the necessary experiences prior to the tests and consequently pupils' attainment is at the average level for their ages.

63. Pupils are expected to think about the questions they want to investigate, how they might test their predictions and record their results. An example of this was seen in an afternoon lesson for the mixed-aged class of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 as pupils talked about how to find out about the conditions preferred by woodlice. In this instance the need for making repeated observations was also explored. Pupils are taught to respect living things. They are helped to predict the outcome of their investigations. Scientific terminology, for example, 'predator' and 'prey' are discussed and references are made to earlier lessons in order to build on previous learning. Teaching assistants work well with pupils who have SEN, helping them to think carefully about their work and explain what they have found out. They copy the teaching style adopted by the class teacher and this helps to raise the pupils' level of achievement.
64. Pupils are being taught to understand how a scientist works and plans to carry out an investigation, making it a fair test when necessary. However, much of the time whole investigations are carried out and individual skills are given insufficient attention. For example, there is an expectation that older pupils should be able to identify the key factors in an investigation. In the lesson seen these would have involved what needed to be changed, measured or observed and what would have been kept the same. Whilst the pupils carry out investigations regularly and successfully, they are not able to readily identify key factors from their work and more able pupils could do better in this regard.
65. The identification of progression in skill development is a task for the subject leader to discuss with colleagues. This is one area in which leadership of the subject could improve. Pupils' work has only been discussed on an informal basis and no opportunities have been provided to judge the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This aspect of the role would help identify existing good practice and generate discussions as to how teaching could be improved further. Teachers' marking is variable. On some occasions pupils' work is untidy and does not match the quality of that found in their other books.
66. Until quite recently the use of ICT has been very limited. The school has the necessary equipment to measure physical changes such as temperature, light and sound but this is insufficiently used. It also possesses two digital microscopes and these too are rarely used.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and teachers display a high level of confidence using the laptop computers;
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the various programs and the use of the Internet is developing well;
- The use of computers to improve learning in other subjects is limited.

### **Commentary**

67. Inspectors saw one ICT lesson in the juniors and the use of ICT in music, geography and mathematics. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were also seen using computers as part of their activities in lessons such as English and geography. Pupils achieve steadily and standards are now as expected for pupils at the ages of 7 and 11. ICT has improved since the last inspection when standards and the quality of teaching and learning were judged to be unsatisfactory.
68. Good teaching in Year 2 and 3 is helping pupils become confident users of electronic keyboards. They use programs to give instructions so that a 'car' travels along the roads of a

computer generated street scene without crashing into the houses. The youngest children in Year 1 know how to use story tape machines and operate the various switches. In the mixed class in Years 2 and 3 pupils are learning how to access the Internet to find information about life in other countries. The use of Internet websites and CD-ROM based information is still at an early stage but the recently acquired wireless laptops are now enabling research skills to be developed. In mathematics Year 3 pupils work well in pairs as they combine a set of instructions so that a programmable toy will turn left, right, forwards or backwards. Pupils are well supported by assistants who allow them to learn from their mistakes as opposed to merely 'spoon feeding' them. The pupils are encouraged to discuss their mistakes and edit the instructions in order to achieve the desired effect. Computers, however, are seldom used to specifically address the needs of pupils with SEN.

69. The number of computers available to pupils has increased significantly since the last inspection. Currently only one member of staff does not have a personal laptop with which to prepare lessons and become familiar with the available software. As a result, staff are sufficiently confident in the use of the software to respond immediately when help is required. All members of staff have attended four half days of in-service training organised by the local education authority. The school is considering the purchase of an interactive whiteboard so that lessons can be made visually more stimulating. This would be a useful addition to the school's resources. Effective use of the new wireless laptops is becoming evident.
70. Teaching in junior classes is satisfactory. In the lesson observed for pupils in the oldest class they used a database program successfully to sort and identify a group of living things. This linked nicely with their current work in science. The teacher demonstrated good knowledge of the program as she explained the various screen displays without even having to look at the computer. Pupils across the school achieve steadily but as yet they do not use email in school, even though a number have access to computers at home and occasionally send messages to their friends at other army bases. Displayed work shows that pupils work collaboratively to word process short stories. They understand how to change the style and the size of the font; they add pictures to the text and edit their earlier writing. Junior age pupils also access the Internet when adults are present. Whilst they have been taught how to use software that allows the combining of sound, pictures, text and movement, these skills are not being put to use enough in other subjects. This would enable them to present their learning in an imaginative and creative manner. They have also been taught how to use spreadsheets but here too evidence indicates that insufficient opportunities to use ICT for solving problems in mathematics are being provided.
71. Leadership and management of ICT are sound overall. The subject leader is currently on temporary long-term absence. She has produced useful documentation including an action plan for ICT, a scheme of work based on national guidelines and a parental consent form for use of the Internet. Staff, however, are uncertain of the full range of software titles that are available. A number of useful programs cannot be used on the laptops as the license agreements are for use on single machines. No monitoring of the teaching has been undertaken recently and standards and the quality of teaching is an area to be addressed.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Teachers plan the development of ICT skills in accordance with the national guidance satisfactorily as a discrete subject. Although teachers' planning shows that many topics lend themselves to the use and application of the skills pupils learn, opportunities are not planned into topics and other subjects sufficiently well to consolidate these skills and improve pupils' learning.

## HUMANITIES

Inspectors saw no lessons in religious education, one geography lesson and two history lessons. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in religious education. They examined pupils' work in all subjects and talked to some of them about it. Inspectors also discussed these subjects with teachers.

## HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good with the very effective use of portraits and other artefacts;
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.

### Commentary

73. Pupils' achieve well in history. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the Vikings through information obtained from the Internet. They retell events such as the Great Fire of London through the use of annotated pictures that sequence the key points.
74. Evidence from lessons in Years 3 - 6 paints a good picture of work in history and teaching in the two lessons seen was made interesting and exciting for pupils. The younger juniors compared the lives of the rich with those of the poor in Tudor times. They understand how to find evidence from a variety of different sources such as books, museums an actual old house and the Internet. They can explain why the death rate was high for people living in Tudor times and why it is less now. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, when the teacher donned the working clothes of a maid and acted out the role, the pupils became very animated and asked interesting questions about what it would have been like working in a rich family's house. They became totally engrossed, as a result of the teacher's very good subject knowledge. Pupils were then challenged to take on a role themselves and find out what life would have been like for them in Tudor times.
75. The oldest pupils are helped to use portraits of famous people in order to find out about the past. For example, a portrait of Henry VIII was used skillfully by the teacher to help pupils learn about his lifestyle. Pupils are beginning to understand how artists often produced more flattering pictures than the actual reality and that some sources of evidence can be slightly misleading. They have a good understanding of how historians find out about the past and the range of evidence that they use. Pupils with SEN are well supported in history when teaching assistants encourage them to participate in whole class discussions and re-phrase questions when necessary.
76. Although there are some good examples of writing in Year 4 where pupils have compiled interesting newspaper style reports and instructional writing about life and events in Ancient Greece, the development of pupils' writing, through learning to explain historical events from different points of view, is not a consistent feature.

77. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The school has a policy and work is planned on a two year programme based on the nationally recommended guidelines. However, no routine monitoring of pupil's work or of teaching has been undertaken and no formal assessment of pupils' progress is made. As a result, the school is unsure of how high standards are or what needs to be done to raise them further.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are planned and organised well to meet the needs of all pupils;
  - Pupils have good opportunities to take part in residential visits and make comparisons of different localities;
  - The use of maps and aerial photographs are not used enough.
78. Some good work takes place in **geography** in the infant classes. To help them understand more distant places, pupils follow the travels of 'Eddy Teddy' who is a relative of Barnaby Bear, a well known character who visits different countries. As parents and friends travel abroad they take photographs of 'Eddy' as he enjoys various activities. He is well travelled having been to countries such as America, Malta, France and Singapore to name but a few. In Years 2 and Year 3 pupils, develop their geographical enquiry skills as they compare life at home with that of children in other countries such as those living in West Africa. They use pictures, photographs, real objects and the Internet successfully to gain information. They are beginning to understand that whilst they might use a battery-operated fan in hot weather, people in West Africa might use a fan made from natural materials. Pupils are interested in their lessons because of the resources that are provided and the opportunities they are given to discuss the objects they handle. They thoroughly enjoy taking on the role of the teacher, in a drama activity, as they explain to the rest of the class what they have found out.
79. The study of the formation of rivers in the juniors enables pupils to understand and use geographical terms such as bedrock, tributary, river basin and estuary. They discuss the impact of rivers on the landscape and ways in which the environment can be harmed by industrial processes. Insufficient opportunities are being provided for pupils to develop their writing skills through geographical recording. In the juniors pupils have the opportunity to take part in at least one and sometimes two residential visits, depending on their time at the school. These help to strengthen their understanding of geographical differences, for example, by comparing another place with where they live. Nevertheless, the use of maps and aerial photographs is not developed well enough.
80. Leadership and management of geography is satisfactory overall. However, monitoring of teaching and standards is not in place.
81. Teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and pupils, and pupils' work indicates that standards and teaching in **religious education** have improved since the previous inspection and are now as is expected for pupils' ages by the locally agreed syllabus.
82. No actual lessons were seen. Nevertheless, the quality of pupils' work and their responses in discussions and assemblies suggest that teaching in this area is good overall. Good quality assemblies make a good contribution to religious education. Leadership is now satisfactory. The subject leader for religious education is the headteacher and she has ensured that the subject has been a priority in the school improvement plan over recent years. The profile of the subject has risen within the school. Improvements have been brought about through thorough curriculum planning which ensures the needs of all pupils are met effectively. The school scheme of work has been re-written and units of work are now planned in line with

the local syllabus for both key stages. Other than Christianity pupils study Judaism and Hinduism. In Year 2 pupils have retold the story of Rama and Sita and understand the reasons for the festival of Diwali as well as the celebrations of saints such as Saint Nicholas and St Lucia. Teachers have had additional training from the local authority advisor for religious education. Resources have been audited, artifacts purchased and loan sources and visit locations identified. Good use is made of visits, for instance to the nearby Church room on the base and to local village churches to make the subject come alive for pupils. Drama and singing is also used effectively in this way and pupils perform for visitors in special assemblies at Harvest and Christmas. Good use is also made of displays, such as 'The Creation' to stimulate pupils' interest.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in art and design and physical education, and only one lesson in design and technology and two lessons in music. Consequently no judgements can be made about standards or teaching and learning in these subjects. However, teachers' plans were reviewed, discussions held with staff and pupils and work on display was scrutinised. These sources indicate that the work undertaken and pupils' achievement is what you would expect for their ages.

### Commentary

83. In a well taught lesson in **design and technology** pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 listened attentively to the teacher's clear instructions and hints for making an individual design for a pattern and mock up to make a soft toy. They discussed questions, such as why they needed to make their pattern on card and their mock up from paper. Older pupils were challenged to enlarge the shape of their toy to give a three-dimensional effect. Pupils were confident and achieved well showing successful designing skills for a variety of toys. They were able to discuss what they found difficult and evaluate their design and knew and were able to explain what they needed to do to make them better. The subject leader manages the subject satisfactorily and has an understanding of standards achieved across the school from displayed work.
84. In **physical education**, pupils' achieve good standards in swimming. More than two thirds of the Year 6 pupils are confident swimmers and many younger pupils swim well before this age. All pupils from Year 2 to 6 have the opportunity to learn to swim for a good part of the year and reception and Year 1 pupils are introduced to swimming lessons towards the end of the summer term. The school places a good emphasis on all the different aspects of physical education including gymnastics, dance and games. Boys and girls are provided with a range of after school clubs in football and netball. Teams enter inter-school competitions in rounders and football. Pupils have opportunities to attend dance workshops at the local high school and outdoor activities take place on residential visits. The support given by parents in running some clubs and the use of the camp gymnasium for training in bad weather is an example of the valuable contribution made by parents and the military. Physical education is managed satisfactorily.
85. The **art and design work** displayed around the school shows that pupils are given opportunities to learn about a satisfactory range of techniques, such as painting, drawing and collage and pupils achievements are typical for their ages. However, there was little evidence of the use of printing, fabric or clay work. The school follows and adapts the nationally recommended guidelines for art and design and the subject is taught in a half term block alternating with design and technology. Pupils benefit from visits and workshops by visiting artists such as a sculptor.
86. Teaching and learning in **music** has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have more expertise in teaching music than at that time and have raised the standards of pupils' achievement which is now satisfactory. The standard of singing in assemblies is good and pupils of all ages and abilities who sing in the school choir perform at an above average

standard. They sing confidently and tunefully, including part singing and display good performance skills with movement. Teaching in the lessons seen was good. In a lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3 taught by a teacher who is also a specialist music teacher, pupils concentrated well and were beginning to recognise note values and rest values in standard notation. They had a good understanding of using a keyboard to add an accompaniment to a melody and were able to recognise different styles. One child commented on her choice saying, 'It sounds like a lullaby' another said, 'Mine is a Tango.' No formal monitoring and assessment of music is in place and the subject leader is unsure of the standards of music in classes other than those which she teaches.

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

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision is planned well within the curriculum and the school makes good use of outside specialist programmes;
- The school council helps develops pupils' sense of responsibility and gives them opportunities to contribute to the daily life of the school;
- Residential visits contribute to improving pupils' social development.

### **Commentary**

87. The arrangements for PSHCE, including drugs education and sex education are good. The school works hard to strengthen pupils' PSHCE skills. Adults in the school set good examples to pupils and gives them ways and opportunities to share their concerns, boost their self esteem and understand the importance of the need for rules in a society. All classes have weekly time tabled lessons in PSHCE. 'Circle Times' allow pupils to express and discuss their opinions and air their views about matters of importance to them. The positive relationships and respect for each other that the school promotes, enables them to express their concerns, feelings and values with confidence.
88. Pupils learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy life style through science and physical education lessons. Involvements in projects given by outside specialists, such as the police and fire service provide very good information and help develop pupils' awareness in understanding and resisting the danger of drugs and other crimes. One lesson was seen during the inspection. In this very good lesson taken by the designated Ministry of Defence policeman who works with army schools in the area, pupils learned how to resist drugs and alcohol and an understanding of the importance of high self-esteem. Visits by the 'Crucial Crew' help children keep safe and save others in emergency situations, such as a fire.
89. The established school council gives pupils responsibility and a chance to have a say in the life of the school. There is generous provision of residential experiences which encourages pupils' independence as well as extending their range of learning and social settings.

## 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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	1
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*