

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FAIRLIGHT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114487

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Wesby

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 2-5 February 2004

Inspection number: 256097

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:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	352
School address:	St Leonard's Road Brighton East Sussex
Postcode:	BN2 3AJ
Telephone number:	01273 601270
Fax number:	01273 624616
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Robert Cristofoli
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 306 full-time pupils on roll and a further 46 children who attend the nursery or reception classes on a part-time basis for either the morning or afternoon sessions. There are more boys than girls. The school is larger than most other primary schools. Around a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number, around two per cent, speak English as an additional language but nearly all are fluent English speakers. Very nearly a third of pupils are entered on the school's record of pupils with special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Many of these pupils have speech or communication difficulties and several have social, emotional and behavioural problems. A small number have medical or physical troubles. Nearly two fifths of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. The pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are relatively disadvantaged. A minority of pupils come from the immediate area but most come from further afield. This is because the school has spare capacity to accept pupils from different areas across the city. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part way through this phase of their education is high. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The school has begun to participate in the 'Excellence in Cities' project, which is a national initiative designed to improve the achievement of pupils in city schools. In 2003 the school was presented with the 'Artsmark' award for its particular contribution to promoting the arts.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology, physical education, English as an additional language.
9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector	
23009	Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	English, geography, history, special educational needs.
22768	Jean Thomson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, information and communication technology, music, religious education.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This school provides a sound education for its pupils** and satisfactory value for money. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is sound and they make satisfactory progress although standards are generally below average by the end of Year 6 because most children start school with below average attainment. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory and good for children in the Foundation Stage. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are well below average. The headteacher is strongly supported by staff and governors and together they provide sound leadership and management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The teaching in the nursery is very good and, as a result of the very good provision, children receive a very good start to their schooling.
- Children continue to achieve well in the reception classes because teaching is good and the co-ordinator with responsibility for children in the Foundation Stage provides very good leadership and management.
- Pupils in Year 2 last year did well in the national tests and pupils now in Year 2 are doing particularly well in mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good.
- The school has established a hard working team of teaching and support staff and there are examples of good teaching in all year groups but there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that limit standards being higher.
- Although the school has accurately identified the most important areas for improvement, there is a lack of a clear focus on how to raise standards across the school.
- Insufficient attention is paid to helping lower attaining pupils to master key skills in reading and writing.
- Attendance is poor and the school has not succeeded in developing an effective relationship with the less supportive parents.
- Standards in religious education fall below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and are not high enough because the teaching of this subject is ineffective.

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. However, the circumstances of the school have changed; the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is lower than it was in 1998 and the school now faces more challenging circumstances. More pupils now enter and leave the school, especially in Years 3 to 6. Attendance has worsened and a small number of pupils are badly behaved. As a result of these factors the standards that pupils attain are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection. Standards in ICT have improved but they have declined in religious education. The school has successfully tackled the main weaknesses identified in the last inspection although the long-term vision for the school is still not entirely clear.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. The E\* grade indicates that the school's performance was among the lowest five per cent nationally.*

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

**Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** Children's achievement in the nursery and reception classes is good but it is unlikely that they will attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are likely to attain standards that are below national averages in reading, writing and science but average in mathematics. The school's overall performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 was above average when compared with similar schools. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are on course to attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are below national averages. Pupils' achievement is uneven but most make satisfactory progress, although standards are generally below average by the end of Year 6. Whilst the performance of the school is average when compared with similar schools, standards could be higher, especially in English, mathematics and science. The achievement of many pupils is adversely affected by changing schools part way through this phase of their education. The poor attendance of a significant minority and lateness to school impedes the achievement of some pupils.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.** They have very appropriate attitudes to their work and most are willing to please. Behaviour is satisfactory and generally pupils work and play happily together. Attendance is poor and a minority of pupils are often late in arriving at school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is sound. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.** There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teaching in the nursery is very good and it is good in the reception classes. Children's learning in the Foundation Stage is effective. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall; in many lessons it is good so that pupils' learning is sound but teaching is unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons for the oldest pupils and they do not always learn enough. Teachers plan lessons carefully and this helps pupils to develop skills systematically. However, teachers tend to overlook careless errors in spelling and writing and are too tolerant of mistakes. Their expectations of the quality of work that pupils should produce are sometimes too low. The school has identified areas for improvement accurately but it is not so clear about how to raise standards. This constrains advances in pupils' learning and the standards they attain. Computers are not used enough in classrooms to support teaching and learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The headteacher has established a sense of purpose throughout the school and seeks to improve standards on many fronts. Many new initiatives, such as 'Excellence in Cities', have begun and the school is poised to make further advances. Governors provide sound support but many are new and have yet to have a major impact on school developments. Subject leaders do not always receive enough guidance about how they can raise standards in their areas of responsibility. Finances are managed prudently but the school receives less than the national average amount of money per pupil and this has led to a lack of good quality resources. Statutory requirements are met.

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

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires about the school expressed their satisfaction with standards and the quality of education provided. Pupils are also happy with their school and over 90 per cent stated that usually they like being in school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Support subject leaders in producing effective action plans that describe precisely how standards will be raised.
- Iron out the unevenness in the quality of teaching and learning, especially in English, mathematics and science, so that it consistently matches the quality of the best and adopt a rigorous approach to teaching key skills in reading and writing, especially to the less able groups.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.
- Raise standards in religious education.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Children's achievement is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Standards are likely to be below national averages in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 but average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 standards are likely to be below average in English, mathematics and science.

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

- Children settle quickly and achieve very well in the nursery and their achievement in the reception classes is good.
- Although the school's performance in national tests is generally well below average when compared with all schools nationally, its performance when compared with schools that have pupils from similar social backgrounds is average or above.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and those with the most complex learning difficulties achieve well but the middle and lower groups do not always achieve as well as they should.
- Standards in ICT have improved significantly.
- Standards in religious education are not high enough.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils' achievement, although satisfactory overall, is uneven because for many the continuity of their learning is interrupted by changing schools and by absence. This affects pupils in Years 3 to 6 to a greater extent than the younger pupils. Pupils arrive at the school from 'Pupil Referral Units' where they have often been placed to give them extra support in managing their behaviour. A significant number of pupils are taken in by the school having been excluded from other schools in the city or because they have become disaffected by the education they received in other schools. This school, unlike other neighbouring schools, is obliged to accept them as it has spare places. Also the performance of each year group is affected by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group. In the reception classes and in Year 6, for example, a particularly high proportion, around two fifths of pupils, have special educational needs. Many of these have complex problems in learning and social adjustment. These factors have a major impact on pupils' achievement and on the school's overall performance in national tests.
2. When compared with all school's nationally, this school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 has generally been well below average. Inspection findings show that standards are below average by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing but they are broadly average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the school did well in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003. In reading and mathematics standards were above average in 2003 when compared with similar schools and average in writing. All pupils attained the national target of Level 2 in mathematics in 2003, a result that ranked among the top five per cent of schools nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (14.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.8 (12.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

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*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils are likely to attain standards that are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 showed that the school's performance when compared with similar schools was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the national target of Level 4 in English and attained the higher Level 5 standard was well above average when compared with similar schools. There has been a considerable improvement in the proportion of pupils who attain the national target of Level 4 in mathematics and science in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 since the last inspection, but not in English. The school's assessments indicate that standards by the end of Year 6 are likely to be slightly higher in 2004 than in 2003 in mathematics, about the same in science but significantly lower in English. This is mainly because the key skills of reading and writing are not taught with enough thoroughness in all classes. This is especially so for the slower learners. The more able pupils do well, as do those with high levels of special educational need. It is the middle and lower groups that do not always achieve as well as they should.
4. Teachers strive hard to support pupils' achievement. Most pupils make sound progress and achieve at a reasonable rate given their low starting points. There are many challenging features in this school that impede achievement but the school manages to maintain pupils' satisfactory achievement because teaching is sound and much of it is good. Consequently the standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the standards attained in schools that have pupils from similar social backgrounds.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.8 (25.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.0 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.1 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. Pupils with the highest level of special educational need achieve well in relation to their targets because teaching meets their needs well and the curriculum is suitable simplified for them. The school does not identify or make provision for any gifted or talented pupils, but is about to do so as part of the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative.
6. Children's achievement is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. The very high proportion of children with special educational needs in the reception classes results in slower learning for most. However, the learning environment is well structured and the teaching is good so pupils make good progress. Despite the good teaching, pupils are unlikely to attain the early learning goals in social, personal and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world because most join school with low attainment. They are likely to attain the early learning goals in creative and physical areas of learning.
7. Pupils achieve well in ICT and attain average standards. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average. The recent addition of a computer suite and improved equipment have contributed to improved standards. Also there is now a greater degree of expertise among staff than there was.
8. The standards that pupils attain in religious education are below average and should be higher. There is little to show for the courses that pupils have followed as set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Few demonstrate much knowledge or understanding of Christianity or the major world faiths that they have been studying.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is poor. Pupils' attitudes, and behaviour are satisfactory. Relationships are good. The sound provision for pupils' personal development is yet to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. The personal and social development of many children in the Foundation Stage are poor.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high levels of racial harmony.
- Many children in the Foundation Stage have poorly developed skills in personal and social development and this restricts their achievement.
- Poor attendance and time keeping adversely affect pupils' learning and limit their achievement.
- There have been a relatively large number of exclusions caused by unacceptable behaviour.

### Commentary

9. There are pupils from a fairly wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. It was clear during the inspection that all pupils mix well together and that there is a good degree of racial harmony throughout the school. For the most part all pupils work and play happily together.

#### *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	256	58	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	25	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	6	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	14	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	41	0	0

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

10. From children's earliest days in school staff work hard to develop children's personal and social skills. They meet with a large measure of success but many children have poorly developed social skills and find it difficult to relate to others, to co-operate, to collaborate and to initiate ideas. They are not always sensitive to the needs of others. Many find it difficult to consider the consequences of their actions for themselves or for others. Their personal and social development is limited and this adversely affects their learning and constrains their achievement.

11. Poor attendance and ineffective timekeeping are not adequately addressed by the school and some parents. This has an adverse effect on pupils' achievement and progress. A significant minority of parents fail to send their child to school regularly and on time. Some teachers fail to explore the reasons for poor time keeping, but the headteacher frequently challenges all absences and takes positive action to ensure that all absences carefully monitored. There has been a significant increase in absenteeism caused mainly by parents failing to comply with the requirement to send their children to school each day.
12. The school has worked hard to encourage better attendance but accepts that still more could be done to raise attendance by further improving the system for rewards and adopting a closer working relationship with less supportive parents.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.5	School data	1.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

13. The school has had to resort to excluding pupils from the school due to unacceptable behaviour. This is because the school has admitted several pupils who exhibited disturbed patterns of behaviour that posed a hazard to other pupils or behaviour that proved unacceptable because it interrupted the learning of others. The school's behaviour policy is beginning to have a positive effect. As a result, behaviour is generally satisfactory and in recent months the number of exclusions has diminished.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is sound. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the curriculum is taught systematically and according to legal requirements.

**Teaching and learning**

The satisfactory teaching promotes generally sound learning and leads to satisfactory achievement. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Although teaching in Years 1 to 6 is mostly satisfactory, the quality is inconsistent; it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The teaching of ICT is mostly good and in religious education it is unsatisfactory. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Much of the teaching is good because teachers and classroom assistants are hard working. demonstrate a strong commitment to their work and function well together as a team.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their teachers and relationships are good.
- Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, prepare them well and assess learning regularly.
- Teaching assistants support the learning of pupils with special educational needs well.
- Teaching of ICT is good in the lessons taught in the computer suite and this helps pupils to achieve well but learning is not followed up sufficiently in the classrooms.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that limit standards being higher.
- Basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy are not taught rigorously in all classes, especially in the groups and sets for the slower learners, and teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to detail and so the quality of pupils' learning is diminished.
- The teaching of religious education is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

14. In the majority of the lessons seen during the inspection teaching was at least good. Teaching for children in the in the nursery is very good and it is good in the reception classes. Most of the teaching in Years 1 to 2 was satisfactory and nearly a half was good or occasionally very good. Most of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 was satisfactory; a third was good or occasionally very good but in a small number of lessons it was unsatisfactory. Teaching for most pupils is at least satisfactory.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	11 (18 %)	24 (39%)	25 (40%)	2 (3%)	0	0

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

15. Teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to provide for the widely varying needs of pupils in each class. They share a strong commitment to maintain high levels of care and to assist pupils in their learning. This teamwork is rooted in good relationships that help to foster a relaxed environment in which pupils feel comfortable about asking questions, expressing opinions and asking for help when they have failed to understand what is required of them. They are even-handed and treat all pupils fairly. All groups have equal access to an appropriately supportive learning environment although expectations of the slower learners are not always high enough. Also gifted and talented pupils have not been identified so the school cannot be sure that it is meeting their needs. A co-ordinator for managing provision for gifted and talented pupils has recently been appointed but has not yet organised specific learning facilities for such pupils.
16. Pupils returned questionnaires that indicated a strongly positive view of the teaching they receive. The substantial majority feel that they get help when they are stuck but a quarter feel that lessons are not always interesting. Over a third are unhappy with the behaviour of others. Inspection findings show that behaviour is generally satisfactory. However there are a few disruptive pupils, especially in Year 6, who present very challenging behaviour and this is a barrier to effective teaching and interferes with the learning of others. The school is addressing this problem through the appointment of learning mentors who are being trained to support these pupils. This is associated with the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative. The appointments are very recent and are not yet having any impact. Another barrier that affects the quality of teaching and learning is the high proportion of pupils in some classes who have poorly developed social skills. This is particularly evident in the reception classes where children find it difficult to settle for long or work productively with others. The teachers have worked hard on improving social development and have met with a large measure of success. Nevertheless teaching in these classes is particularly exhausting. The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires are pleased with the teaching their children receive.
17. Teachers plan lessons in great detail. Teachers describe in their plans precisely what they intend that pupils will learn during the course of a lesson. In most classes these learning intentions are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson and reviewed at the end to assess how much has been learned. Teachers also prepare lessons thoroughly so that all the equipment needed is readily accessible during the lesson. This helps lessons to flow without undue interruption. One shortcoming of the lesson planning is the omission of the key vocabulary that is to be introduced and used during the course of the lesson. The new words and associated concepts to be learned are not always shared with pupils during the introductory session and this results in careless use of vocabulary and some misunderstanding. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers keep careful records of pupils' attainment and progress. However, assessments and evaluations of pupils' work are not

always used to respond to individual learning needs. Hence opportunities are sometimes missed to make use of the errors or misunderstandings that have been identified to fill gaps in learning.

18. Teaching assistants are well trained to work with pupils with the greatest level of special needs under the guidance of the co-ordinator of provision for these pupils. They supervise the use of individual spelling and reading programmes that often include using the computer. This work, combined with very good assessments to note how well pupils are learning and what they need to do next, provides effective support. However, when there is little or no support from assistants, teachers do not modify work sufficiently to meet the learning needs of the slower learners or those with less acute learning difficulties. Consequently the achievement of these groups varies according to the quality of support they receive.
19. The computer suite provides good learning opportunities and here the teaching is good; these factors promote pupils' effective learning and good achievement. Skills are taught methodically and pupils are enthusiastic about this subject. Their positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their good progress.
20. The quality of teaching is variable; it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The variable quality of teaching results in inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' learning, especially in English, mathematics and science. As a result of this unevenness in teaching and learning, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could and therefore standards are not always as high as they should be.
21. Key skills associated with literacy, such as the sequential development of a comprehensive understanding of phonics, the systematic development of a large number of words recognised on sight and the development of an understanding of spelling rules and patterns, are not taught rigorously. Common errors in reading and numeracy are not noted and used as short-term targets for development. The learning of the slower learners in particular is impeded by this lack of a systematic approach. Teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to details and often assume a level of understanding that is not necessarily established. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, several pupils did not know that hundreds must be expressed by using just three digits and wrote '1034' for one hundred and thirty four. There is sometimes a lack of precision in the teaching and careless errors remain unchecked. This is particularly the case with spelling when opportunities are often missed to explain the structure, the derivations and the pattern of spelling particular words. This lack of rigour and insistence on high standards leads to work being accepted that is not the best of which pupils are capable. The headteacher and some subject co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly. They have identified the development of writing skills and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching as issues to be resolved.
22. The teaching of religious education is unsatisfactory because teachers try to cover too much. Consequently the various strands of the subject are not taught in sufficient depth so many pupils do not have a clear idea of the material they have been taught and do not retain knowledge and understanding.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities enhanced by residential visits for older pupils. The accommodation and resources satisfactorily support pupils' learning although the undersized playground and the small halls are barriers to learning. The good curriculum for children in nursery and reception, their very good accommodation and resources and the high quality staff are strengths of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The well-developed curriculum in the nursery and reception classes results in effective learning and a positive start to school life.
- The curriculum is good for pupils with the greatest levels of special educational need and they achieve well.
- There are weaknesses in the planning of English and in the resources available, which are a barrier to learning.
- The accommodation imposes limits on the provision of physical education.
- The new computer suite is enabling a better ICT curriculum to be taught.
- The curriculum for teaching pupils about their multi-cultural society is underdeveloped.

## **Commentary**

23. In the nursery and reception classes an imaginative curriculum is provided that is very well resourced. The provision of equipment, apparatus, staffing and accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and everything is used well. The detailed planning ensures all areas of learning receive the right emphasis. Learning is practical and fun. Adults watch pupils closely and adapt the curriculum according to their individual needs and so pupils achieve well.
24. Pupils with special educational needs have very good individual educational plans drawn up, often with help from specialist support services. Support staff and teachers are well trained in adapting the curriculum for those with the greatest need, including the effective use of individual computer programs and some small group or individual work outside the classroom. These pupils achieve well, providing they attend school regularly, in relation to their specific targets. However, in many lessons the curriculum is not adapted sufficiently for all pupils with special educational needs to achieve well. Evidence is, for example, consistently low marks in spelling tests and an inability to read worksheets and books because the text is beyond their capability.
25. The curriculum for teaching spelling is not effective and as a result, many pupils are poor spellers. There are insufficient books to enable all groups of pupils to become fluent and effective readers. Within the graded reading scheme, there are too few books at each stage to consolidate skills, and there are insufficient good quality non-fiction books in the library, which affects pupils' ability to use books for independent research. It also means that other subjects cannot contribute effectively enough to developing pupils' literacy skills. Recently monthly creative writing sessions and a new handwriting scheme have been introduced, but it is too soon to judge their impact on raising standards.
26. The residential visits which give pupils chance to take part in exciting outdoor pursuits, such as canoeing and orienteering, are beneficial as the provision of the physical education programme is severely hampered by the very small playground and lack of regular access to a sports field. Although the school has two halls, both are small and are cluttered with dining furniture. Events such as the Brighton music festival and interschool sports provide good extra-curricular opportunities for those participating.
27. The new computer suite, built by the site manager, is already proving effective, enabling whole-class teaching and resulting in greater achievement by pupils.
28. The school has a sound multi-cultural policy designed to heighten pupils' understanding and awareness of different cultures. However, pupils do not demonstrate much awareness about how to live in a multi-racial society, although they do gain some understanding about other countries and customs through different curriculum areas, such as geography and religious education. There is scope for strengthening multi-cultural education and for promoting a greater understanding of the different ethnic groups in our society.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The quality of care and provision for pupils' health and safety and child protection are satisfactory and ensure the school community learns in a safe and secure environment. Most parents and pupils

are pleased with these outcomes. The school monitors pupils' achievement and their personal development satisfactorily. Parents and pupils value the role of the school council, which provides pupils with a voice and enables pupils and teachers to work together in their care of the school community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' school council is an effective tool for communicating information.
- The school ensures that a safe learning environment is maintained and that careful records are kept on pupils' development.
- Supervision at lunchtimes is not always effective and some staff are unsure about what action to take, particularly when investigating disputes.
- The very high level of exclusions is a concern, both for the school and for parents.

### **Commentary**

29. The school works systematically with the school council and regularly seeks, values and, where appropriate, acts upon pupils' views. The council is getting stronger and makes a significant contribution to the learning, welfare and well-being of the school community.
30. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and the school works hard to maintain healthy and safe working conditions. Detailed records are kept on pupils' achievement and notes are kept about their personal development. Teachers use their knowledge of individuals to provide sound guidance and advice.
31. During lunchtimes a significant number of pupils engaged in lively and boisterous behaviour, which was not regularly challenged or investigated by both teachers and lunchtime staff. This ineffective level of support and guidance affected the learning and enjoyment of others.
32. The school is concerned by the high level of exclusions but has to resort to excluding pupils in order to maintain a clear position on what forms of behaviour are unacceptable. Parents are also concerned but most accept that the school only exercises this sanction in extreme circumstances. Staff deal effectively with excluded pupils and with their parents. They are given good advice, support and guidance and positive action is taken to ensure the smooth reintegration of pupils into school.

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

The partnership between the school and other schools and wider community is satisfactory and appropriately supports pupils' achievement. However, the relationship with some parents is unsatisfactory and contributes to poor attendance.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Whilst the substantial majority of parents are pleased to support the school, there is a small minority of parents who do not.
- The good communication between staff and the parents of the youngest children help them to settle quickly into the nursery routines.
- The work of the 'Friends of the School' plays an important part of school life and helps to motivate and encourage staff and pupils.

### **Commentary**

33. Most parents have reported that they are pleased with the quality of education provided by the school, but this work is affected by a small number of unsupportive and uncooperative parents

who are unwilling to address their child's poor attendance. Consequently pupils' learning and the work and reputation of the school are adversely affected.

34. Children are helped to settle happily in the nursery when they first start school. This good beginning helps to create a satisfactory relationship between the school and parents. However, it is only a small minority of parents who support the school actively through organising fundraising events or by helping voluntarily in classrooms. The school participates in liaison with other schools and sporting fixtures with local schools are keenly fought. The exchange of information with the various schools to which pupils transfer is satisfactory.
35. The 'Friends of the School' are led by a very caring and supportive chair who is supported by a very active, although small, group of committed and loyal parents. Together they raise substantial funds for the school which are used efficiently to purchase extra learning materials and equipment. The association also organise various social events, for example, discos for pupils. These events help to ensure that pupils, their teachers and parents work together harmoniously and this supports pupils' personal and social development well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has initiated many improvements since his appointment and parents have recognised an improving trend. Subject leaders do not have enough guidance on how to raise standards across the school. The work of the governing body is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has introduced a series of improvements that are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards.
- The co-ordinator with responsibility for organising and developing provision in the nursery and reception classes provides very good leadership and management.
- The co-ordinator for provision for pupils with special educational needs provides good leadership and management.
- The site manager makes a major contribution to school improvement.
- Responsibilities for improving curricular provision have been delegated appropriately to subject leaders but they do not always have enough guidance on how to raise standards.
- Finances are managed carefully and resources are directed towards improving the areas of highest priority in a carefully considered way so that the school is able to provide satisfactory value for money.

### **Commentary**

36. Since his appointment less than three years ago, the headteacher has introduced a series of initiatives designed to improve the quality of education provided for pupils and to raise standards. He has improved systems that help to ensure that the school runs smoothly and efficiently. He has entered enthusiastically into the recently initiated 'Excellence in Cities' project and has high aspirations for the school's continuing development and improvement. He has managed to recruit an enthusiastic team of teachers, many who are relatively new to the school, and has achieved a good balance of experience and new expertise. There is now greater emphasis on raising standards. Performance management systems have been improved and teachers are supported through a regular appraisal of their performance. The roles of subject leaders in terms of their accountability for the standards that pupils attain have been clarified. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the way in which the school is run.
37. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. Teachers maintain a high quality learning environment and the very well-developed systems of assessment are used effectively to help pupils make further advances their learning.

38. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Largely as a result of the exceptional effort and energy provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator, the pupils with the more acute special educational needs achieve well. Furthermore, she expertly manages provision for the increasing numbers of pupils with learning and emotional difficulties who join this school from other schools. She does not have enough time to fulfil all her functions as well as she would like. The post is part-time and the co-ordinator is also responsible for other areas, such as provision for pupils whose mother tongue is not English. Supporting pupils with particular needs often involves a great deal of social work. She has insufficient time to monitor the teaching and learning of pupils in the classrooms and so there are too few opportunities to identify areas for improvement and to enhance provision in Years 1 to 6. Consequently, whilst those pupils who are in greatest need are supported well, provision for the more moderate cases is not as supportive as it should be.
39. The site manager provides exceptional support. He assiduously follows a rolling programme of internal decoration that keeps the school looking bright and attractive. He institutes successful schemes for raising money for the parents' association and helps to keep school running costs down through a programme of preventative maintenance. He is highly committed to the school and is highly valued by staff, pupils, parents and governors.
40. The school improvement plan describes how each area of the curriculum will be reviewed and evaluated over the next three years. It is a comprehensive plan that addresses all areas systematically. It is underpinned by a set of action plans written by subject leaders. Appropriate priorities are identified such as, 'To raise the achievement of boys in reading and writing'. The success criteria are also described, 'Boys to improve in reading and writing each year, reflected in SATs results'. However, the plans are not explicit about how these improvements are to be brought about. The actual steps to be taken in each year group are not described. This vital stage in the process is missing and so plans lack clarity and direction. The subject leaders do not always know how they are going to improve pupils' performance because they have insufficient guidance on what exactly they should do to have a major impact on raising standards across the school. Also they have very little non-class contact time during which to evaluate at first hand the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The school has accurately identified its most pressing priorities for improvement but the next step, actually taking effective action designed to raise standards, is not yet clearly defined.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	912 421
Total expenditure	904 873
Expenditure per pupil	2 485.91

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5 012
Balance carried forward to the next	7 548

41. The school is able to spend significantly less money than the average in similar schools nationally. The governing body debates allocations carefully when setting the balanced budget. Taking into account pupils' satisfactory achievement, the mainly satisfactory teaching and the careful use of limited resources, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

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

As at the time of the last inspection, the leadership and management of provision for children in the Foundation Stage are strengths of the school. The children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average and a large number have difficulty in learning effectively and have been identified as having special educational needs. There is a good ratio of adults to children to meet their needs, including the needs of children with English as an additional language, but there is no specialist provision for the high number of children with speech and language difficulties. Several staff members have had training in 'Makaton signing', a system often used to communicate with people who have difficulties in speaking or hearing, and use it appropriately as an extra means of communication. Despite their learning difficulties and their low attainment on entry, the children achieve particularly well in the nursery because the teaching is very good and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. Children continue to do well in the reception classes, because the teaching is good, and sometimes very good, and activities are well matched to children's particular learning needs.

The teachers, nursery nurse and support staff work very well as a team. They plan activities meticulously with close regard to national guidance on the curriculum for this age group. Very good use is made of the accommodation inside and the children have access to a separate, secure outside area with very good resources. The children are carefully assessed when they enter the nursery and detailed records are kept of children's individual progress. These are used very well to plan the next stages in learning. Standards are similar to those identified during the previous inspection.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and the high expectations set by staff but are likely to reach below average standards by the end of the reception class.
- Very good relationships with parents have been established and teachers maintain close contact with parents and carers to promote children's development.

#### **Commentary**

42. The standards that children attain in personal, social and emotional development are, by the end of reception, below those generally expected for their age. The clear boundaries, and the consistent role models set by the adults ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that they understand the correct way to behave. A reception teacher uses photographs of the children sitting, listening and putting up a hand to ask questions to model acceptable behaviour. This has proved very effective in helping children to understand what is expected of them. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes use familiar rhymes and jingles to gain children's attention and co-operation. Good routines have been established. When the teacher asks, 'Are you listening?' the children reply, 'Yes we are!' The teacher then says, 'Show me.' The majority of children have learned to respond appropriately. Snack time in the nursery provides a very well-structured social event where courteous role models encourage appropriate responses such as 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me'. Adults intervene quickly when minor disputes arise and successfully show children how to share and take turns so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. When two children in the nursery argued over who should drive the bus, the teaching assistant created the role of a bus conductor who then happily issued tickets to the passengers. The very supportive relationships ensure children feel secure and confident enough to seek help when required.

43. Parents are invited into the nursery when their children are offered a place. The nursery teacher shares information on their development and provides parents with welcome packs to complete with their children before entry. This has proved very helpful in building trust and a partnership in learning. The teacher takes notice of children's favourite toys and introduces them into the nursery environment. A parent and toddler group has been recently established, so that the nursery teacher can get to know parents and their children before they enter the nursery.
44. Although the children do well it is unlikely that they will attain the early learning goals in this area of learning before the end of the reception year. This is because from the onset many have had limited social and personal skills and many are still at a very early stage in their personal, social and emotional development.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress and achieve well but most children will not attain all the early learning goals by the end of reception because they are still at an early stage of developing language skills.
- Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills.
- There are too few opportunities for children to practise independent writing.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching and learning are good. The many opportunities that children are given to talk and listen help them to achieve well. All members of staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questioning and consistent insistence that children listen to the contributions of others. Children in the nursery and reception classes listen well during registration and choose different foreign languages to greet the teacher. The nursery teacher uses cards that include pictures of classroom activities that she uses to talk about the structure of the session and the children 'read' the activities from the picture clues. There is a strong emphasis on clear diction. For example, the nursery teacher tells the children she is using 'good listening' for the 's' sound when each individual is invited to say whether he or she is playing inside or outside. The reception teachers plan work with children in pairs to assess whether they can re-tell the story of 'The Bear Hunt', using a picture map and small toy figures. Such well-structured sessions help children to recall the sequence of the journey and the physical features. A few children demonstrate a wide vocabulary and use expressive language. Imaginative role-play areas encourage the children to talk together. Children in reception take on the roles of shoppers and shopkeeper, take toy animals to the vet and in the nursery serve each other in the Chinese restaurant. Nanny Jean, a great-grandmother who works voluntarily in the school, has her own chair and visits three times a week to chat with the children and help them to develop their language.
46. Teachers create opportunities for children to listen to stories and read together. Teaching assistants read with children individually or in small groups. Children enjoy books and most are eager to respond to questions about, for example, what might be going to happen next in a story. They are able to connect events with their everyday experiences. There is good emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children read and write. Some children in the nursery are beginning to recognise initial sounds of words and select their name cards. Some of the older children in the reception classes read familiar words in simple texts. They talk about events in a sequence of pictures and help the teacher to construct sentences to describe what is happening. The children are given opportunities to write independently. In the nursery, for example, there is a book to write messages in the telephone kiosk and wet sand for mark making in the outside area. There are writing areas in the reception classes to encourage the

development of writing skills. However, the variety of resources to capture the children's imagination is limited and does not provide sufficient interest to encourage children to write in a range of ways.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures children achieve well.
- Every opportunity is grasped in all activities to promote children's mathematical development.

### **Commentary**

47. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. After registration in the nursery the teacher uses number cards for the children to select the correct one for the total present. She makes deliberate mistakes, for example, selecting the number 61 when 16 was needed. Some children are quick to spot the difference. The nursery children use different sized containers in the sand tray. The teacher asks them to estimate how many small bottles of sand can be filled from a larger bottle. They are challenged to think about the differences between, for instance, full and half full, taller and shorter. They find this difficult. With support, they use lines and crosses to represent scores in a game throwing bean bags.
48. The reception teachers introduce a good range of activities or children to choose from to encourage use of mathematical language in play. They show the children how to pretend and how to play. For example they demonstrate how to select items in the shop and use the correct coins for the marked prices. They use very good strategies for counting, for example, asking the children to close their eyes and listen to coins being dropped into a container. The challenge is increased when a few children are able to count on from the previous amount. Some children even ask the teacher for a mathematical challenge and she then asks if they want it to be 'hard, or really hard.' Their growing confidence and enjoyment of mathematics is shown by their response of, 'really hard!' Children are given opportunities to recognise simple patterns and shapes with very good resources for practical experiences. Very good use is made of the computers in the nursery and reception classes to extend or consolidate learning.
49. The teaching is good and frequently very good, but the children are constrained by limited social and personal development and have gaps in their learning. Most are working at levels below those expected for their age and it is unlikely they will attain all the early learning goals by the end of reception.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and frequently very good and so children learn effectively and achieve well. They are likely to reach below average standards by the end of the reception class.
- Interesting activities are planned and imaginative teaching promotes effective learning.
- Staff use questioning very successfully to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.
- The outside area is used well to give children first-hand experiences.

## Commentary

50. Teachers plan a good variety of appropriate, interesting activities to stimulate the children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. This happens best when adults in the classes support the activities by talking with the children and asking them questions. For example, a teaching assistant distributed hard hats to the children on the climbing frame in the outside area. They became fire fighters and she talked to them about how they would tackle the blaze with their hoses. Another pretended to be a garage attendant, putting in petrol for the wheeled vehicles. This helps the children to gain an understanding of how things work and why things happen. They plant cress seeds, talk about the progress of growth and use it as a filling for the sandwiches they eat at snack time. Parents come in to cook with the children, for example a mother made different types of bread. The quality of the questions made the children think about the need for clean hands; care when things are hot; how mixture changes as a result of cooking.
51. Children in the reception classes think about why ice melts. The teachers prepared the ice in a variety of frozen shapes and added plastic animals, which were slowly revealed as the ice melted. The children were fascinated and this promoted a sense of awe and wonder. They enjoyed the feel of the shapes and, with the help of teachers' questioning, start to think about why it is melting so fast. One boy exclaimed excitedly, 'It's letting water out because I'm touching it!' Computers are used widely in the nursery and reception classes, with a very good variety of programs to build ICT skills and explore a range of learning.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve particularly well and most are likely to attain average standards by the end of reception.
- There are examples of very good teaching that promotes very effective learning.
- The outside area is used well for children to practise skills associated with manipulating tools skilfully and for adventurous activities.

## Commentary

52. Children achieve well because they have very good opportunities within and outside the nursery and reception classes to develop skills and co-ordination. The very good range of outdoor equipment is used well to climb, balance and slide. Large wheeled toys are handled competently and children have good opportunities to handle balls and small equipment to develop their manipulative skills. Nursery children squeeze and roll dough and clay. They enjoy the use of music, for example, dancing to Australian music and using certain songs as a signal to move sensibly to the carpet. In a very good lesson in the hall reception children became sleeping bears, like those they had heard about in a story. They followed instructions, waking with the smell of spring and showed good understanding of space. They took turns as monkeys to hide behind the other children as leaves when the leopard came. They confidently and enthusiastically copied the actions modelled by the teacher.
53. Teaching and learning are very good. Skills are taught systematically and assessment systems are very good. Teachers record what children can do and what they find difficult. They then gear teaching to match children's learning needs accurately. Teaching is purposeful and imaginative. Children respond well and learn effectively because they find activities stimulating. Teachers plan both indoor and outdoor activities carefully so that children are guided towards developing the skills that help them to attain the early learning goals.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, and often very good. The children achieve well and most are on course to reach average standards by the end of the reception class.
- Children have opportunity to participate in a good range of creative activities.
- The specialist music teacher provides good opportunities for children to develop their musical skills.

### Commentary

54. The role-play areas in the nursery and reception classes capture the children's imagination and are resourced very well. The simulated food in the Chinese restaurant is very authentic and has been photographed so that children can select from a menu book. They enjoy dressing up to eat in the restaurant, because, 'You have to look smart to eat here.' They beat time on a tambourine to names of, for example snacks, playing 'hot potato' and passing it round. The nursery teacher encourages them to think about colour when they are painting, as for example when they experimented with mixing colours to make the purple of the tulips.
55. The specialist music teacher provides a wealth of activities to build music skills. In a good lesson observed in the music room, reception children moved in the style of animals suggested by the piano music. The teacher used cards to explore sounds suggested by the pictures, which the children made with voices and bodies. This built into a story with the children providing sound effects. They loved a game during which they gave sung responses to each other at the same pitch.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of the more able pupils is very good.
- Some of the teaching is good and occasionally it is very good but some is unsatisfactory.
- Developments are being hindered through lack of resources.
- Teachers miss chances to provide opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate key literacy skills in other subjects.

### Commentary

56. Standards are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards have declined since the last inspection, reflecting the lower standards of pupils on entry to the school. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well because teaching meets their needs and they have good attitudes to learning and attend regularly; one third of pupils do not do as well as they should due to poor attendance rates, the high number of less able pupils joining from other schools, and teaching that does not fully meet their needs. Those with high levels of special educational need do well because their needs are carefully analysed and detailed individual educational plans are made for them. Pupils achieve well during the newly introduced guided reading sessions as the impact of recent staff training and improved resources begin to take effect. .

57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but the quality is inconsistent and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Features of the very effective teaching were that all pupils became engrossed in lessons and therefore learnt very well. They were challenged appropriately by the high expectations of the teacher. Very good relationships enabled all pupils to feel confident in offering ideas and the classroom assistant was used effectively to help slower learners to achieve as well as all the others. Meticulous planning helped the lessons to flow with good pace. In a lesson that involved analysing argumentative text about mobile phones, the teaching was unsatisfactory because the teacher posed questions and then answered them himself. This made insufficient demands on pupils. Also the text was too difficult for many to understand. Explanations were not clear enough for pupils to be able to identify verbs in the present tense. The lesson lacked pace. Pupils lost interest, became confused and their concentration lapsed. Therefore they did not learn enough. There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of how well teachers diagnose what pupils know and what they need to learn next, and how well this is recorded. Sometimes, for example, targets are recorded on individual target or guided reading sheets or at other times on the home/school book. There are also inconsistencies in how well assessments are used to pitch teaching at levels which match pupils' widely varying stages of development.
58. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection through the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, separate creative writing lessons and a handwriting scheme. However the school's programme for teaching spelling and reading does not meet the needs of below average pupils and there are too few non-fiction books in the library and at each level of the reading scheme for this sector of pupils to become effective, independent readers. There are insufficient dictionaries and the school can no longer afford the 'Topic Boxes' that used to be provided by the library service. Consequently, despite good teaching of library skills, many pupils are not developing the competence needed to use books effectively for independent research.
59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinators have formed a good general overview of provision. They have started to monitor classroom practice, sample pupils' books and look at assessment data to identify areas for development. They are now in a good position to iron out inconsistencies in standards of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement.

### **English across the curriculum**

60. Literacy is not satisfactorily developed across the curriculum despite good features such as writing in different styles, as for example, diaries in history or reports of science experiments. This is because opportunities to consolidate and extend key skills, such as presentation, handwriting and spelling, are not grasped with sufficient rigour in other subjects. Too many worksheets are used, preventing pupils from learning to use books effectively, to find information and become independent learners.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and as a result pupils learn effectively, make good progress and attain average standards.
- The slowest learners as well as the fastest are supported well so that their achievement is often good, but pupils in the lower sets in Years 3 to 6 are not always sufficiently challenged because expectations of their performance are too low.
- Technical vocabulary is not always explained clearly enough and the quality of work produced is uneven because teachers do not pay enough attention to detail.
- In the better lessons, technology is used well to support teaching and learning.

- Assessments of pupils' performance are thorough but are not always used effectively to set targets designed to drive up standards.

## Commentary

61. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because teaching is good. Most attain average standards. As most started Year 1 with standards that were below average, this represents good achievement. By the end of Year 6, most pupils attain standards that are below national averages but in the national tests in 2003 the school's performance was average when compared with similar schools. Standards have declined since the previous inspection, reflecting the lower attainment of pupils on entry to the school.
62. In one very good lesson for pupils in Year 1, the teacher used excellent questioning techniques that made pupils think hard about how to use equal balance scales to rank different parcels in order from lightest to heaviest. The most able pupils quickly realised that one parcel had to be weighed against all the others and that they could repeat this for all parcels in order to make deductions so that they could find the correct order. The teacher's explanations were so lucid that the slower learners also understood clearly how to use the scales. The teacher facilitated an exciting practical session that captured the pupils' interest. This contrasted strongly with lessons for older pupils that were dominated by teachers' explanations followed by uninspiring activities.
63. Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory and for some groups it is good. In most lessons pupils are supported well, often with the able assistance of classroom assistants. This helps them to achieve well. Also the teachers are acutely aware of the learning needs of the faster learners and usually provide activities that match their learning needs. As a result this group also achieves well. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are placed in ability sets so that it is more straightforward to gear teaching to the needs of the widely varying stages of development that are evident in each class. This system works particularly well for those pupils in the higher sets.
64. In Years 3 to 6, those pupils that are in the lower ability sets are, quite naturally, not expected to learn as rapidly as those pupils in the higher sets. However, this has tended to lead teachers into underestimating the quality and quantity of work that these pupils are able to produce. In several lessons they spent too long on consolidating learning and rehearsing skills that they had already mastered. In one lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils were required to make three-dimensional models to reinforce their understanding of shape and space. This was achieved satisfactorily but opportunities were missed to extend learning by introducing activities designed to promote new learning. Also the terms 'dimension' and 'dimensional' were used frequently by the teacher without any pause to investigate the meaning of these terms and to arrive at a satisfactory definition. Discussions with pupils showed that they did not understand the meaning of 'dimension'.
65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but teachers do not always pay enough attention to detail. Teachers do not include in their lesson plans the key vocabulary that will be used in the lesson. At the beginning of lessons the key words to be used are not always written on the board nor carefully explained. Consequently many pupils have a hazy idea of mathematical vocabulary and what terms mean. Also they often misspell the key words because the spelling of terms has not been analysed during the introduction to the lesson. When marking work, poor spelling is often not corrected. It is not uncommon, for example, for pupils of average ability on Year 6 to spell 'graph' as 'grath'. The presentation of work is uneven from class to class. Some teachers, for example, follow the school's policy of starting a piece of work by writing the title while others do not. Some pupils habitually write the title whilst others are not in the habit of doing so. This lack of attention to detail detracts from the quality of the work that is produced.
66. The school has begun to use computerised whiteboards in some classrooms to improve the impact of teachers' presentations. The use of these boards is often complemented by the use

of overhead projectors. In the lessons where these machines were used well, they add an extra element of clarity and help to sustain pupils' concentration. There are some good examples of computers being used to illustrate data resulting from investigations but computers being not used systematically to support teaching and learning in all classes.

67. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is experienced and has a good understanding of the subject. He analyses data from tests with great precision and clearly identifies strengths as well as specific weaknesses in pupils' performance. This information is passed to teachers who then adjust their lesson planning so that there is greater concentration of particular areas of the subject in order to resolve the weaknesses. However, assessments of pupils' work are not used to set specific short-term targets for pupils, such as, 'I must learn  $7 \times 8 = 56$  by Friday'. In English pupils have their targets in the front of exercise books, which gives them an understanding of what they need to do to improve. This good practice does not happen in mathematics.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

68. There are some sound examples of the consolidation and extension of mathematical understanding in other subjects. In history, for example, several classes have date charts that cover the past two thousand years and that plot events that they have been studying, such as the Tudors and the Victorians. This helps to extend pupils' understanding of number and chronology. In design and technology pupils use their measuring skills well when designing and making houses, purses and slippers. Pupils bake bread as part of their work in design and technology and here they read menus which helps to consolidate numeracy skills but there is little other evidence of the use of weights and measures used in purposeful activities such as cooking.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's performance in national tests and assessments for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- There are examples of imaginative teaching as well as dull teaching that lacks inspiration.
- The subject manager has a clear focus for improvement.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning and lessons are not always purposeful.
- The higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.

### **Commentary**

69. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but most are likely to attain standards that are below average by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6. Standards have declined since the last inspection and this reflects the fact that attainment on entry to the school is now lower than it was. Planning for lessons does not include enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The same tasks are often provided for all pupils regardless of their widely varying stages of development. This particularly restricts opportunities for the faster learners to achieve as well as they should. This lack of challenge for the more able pupils is also evident in analyses of pupils' work.
70. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. In the lessons seen during the inspection teaching varied between unsatisfactory and very good. In lessons where teachers' subject knowledge was secure, and planning showed a clear focus, pupils learned well, concentrated hard, showed interest and were enthusiastic. Where there was no clear focus for learning and too few opportunities were provided for first-hand, practical

experiences, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used ICT to find the warmest and coldest places in the classroom. They conducted a fair test to collect data and used their results to draw conclusions. However there were too many passive learners who were inappropriately challenged.

71. In a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, detailed planning led to a purposeful lesson where pupils achieved well because the teacher succeeded in capturing their imagination. The teacher provided snails, slugs and worms for the pupils to observe. They were intrigued to study how they moved without a skeleton. Information books were used well for research and this provided a useful link with pupils' work in literacy. By the end of the lesson pupils had achieved well, they knew that slime comes from the foot of molluscs and one pupil observed that, 'Even if it goes over a razor blade it will be saved by the slime.' In two Year 6 lessons in parallel classes one was very good because the pupils were challenged with interesting practical activities. Pupils were highly motivated and interested by the homework challenge to draw a maze and direct a light beam through it using mirrors. In the other class the lesson was unsatisfactory and lacklustre because the teaching was pedestrian and pupils had to listen for long periods of time without any opportunity for practical work. There was some disruptive behaviour from pupils with special educational needs and insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has a clear focus for improvement. She has used the assessment procedures well to identify those pupils capable of higher attainment. Resources are deployed well throughout the school. Each classroom has a science corner with displays and equipment for pupils to carry out practical activities, for example on light and sound. There are insufficient resources for some pupils when science lessons are timetabled at the same time in parallel classes. There is no systematic use of computers in lessons. Formal curricular links with the secondary school have not been established to ensure continuity in learning, particularly for pupils in Year 6. Through the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative, plans have been made to develop greater liaison.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection because the level of expertise amongst staff has improved, skills are taught systematically and equipment has been upgraded.
- Teaching is mostly good and the computer suite is used regularly by all classes so that most pupils achieve well.
- Computers are not used consistently to support learning in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

73. The school has built a well-equipped computer suite that is used regularly to teach computer skills. This, together with an effective programme of staff training, has made a major contribution to the improvement in provision since the previous inspection. Teaching in the computer suite is effective. This helps pupils to achieve well and most attain average standards by the end of Year 2. Despite difficulties involving pupil mobility and absenteeism, most pupils continue to achieve well Years 3 to 6 partly because much of the teaching is good and partly because pupils' enthusiasm for the subject promotes good attitudes to learning. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain average standards. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average.
74. Teaching in the computer suite is good. Good teaching is characterised by a clear introduction, using the computerised projector, so that clear challenges are presented for pupils to work on. Teachers assess pupils' progress during the lesson by checking the accuracy of their operations and establishing further areas for the development of skills. Teachers' planning for

further learning builds well on skills that have been attained previously. Pupils develop a good range of skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 select different font styles and sizes and use colour well to improve the presentation and impact of the imaginative poems they have word processed. They talk about adding borders and understand the use of a spell checker. They use painting programs to experiment with the flood fill tool and have experience of using a variety of CD Roms. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use databases with confidence to create graphs based on their research, for example, about favourite animals or the most popular books. Skills are extended in Years 5 and 6 where pupils enter data on a database and check for anomalies when creating graphs from data on temperature readings. They create spreadsheets, enter data and calculate formulae, for example, for buying plants up to a specific value. They compete with each other to amend and interrogate the stored information to achieve a purchase as near as possible to £25. Although teaching is mostly good, the higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Also, the timing of sessions in the computer suite is inappropriate as sessions for older pupils are often too short so that the pace is rushed and pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

75. Leadership and management are effective in promoting pupils' good achievement. A revised planning framework has helped to promote the systematic coverage of all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

76. The computers in the classrooms, as opposed to the computer suite, are not used sufficiently during classroom lessons. There is no systematic planning for the teaching of ICT to be included in other subjects and, although this is not impeding the acquisition of computer skills, it is not giving the right message that computers are part of day-to-day work. The lessons in the computer suite often build well on the curriculum taught in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 used their ICT lesson to use a search engine to locate an appropriate website to research for relevant information for a literacy project.

### **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected and is reported in full below. Work in geography and history was sampled.*

In **history**, there are few visits, but where they do happen, such as when Year 1 visited a toy museum, they generate great interest and result in good achievement. Their class museum and photographic record demonstrate this well. Teachers use videos, CD ROMs and the Internet well as methods to give pupils a good understanding of life in other times and they encourage pupils to use these resources to find things out for themselves.

The new co-ordinator has started a portfolio with the aim of gathering examples of good work from each year group. However many of the examples have incorrect spellings and untidy handwriting that demonstrate that history is not supporting the development of pupils' literacy skills as well as it should. The co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped because, as she does not teach history and has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching in lessons, she is unable to ascertain the strengths and areas to develop within classroom practice.

In **geography**, teachers enhance the curriculum well by finding incidental ways to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example the colourful wall displays in corridors based on fables from places as diverse as India and Japan, demonstrate that pupils know about various aspects of life and the environment in those countries. In a mixed Year 3/4 class pupils exchange e-mails with a student on a round the world trip thus gaining a good understanding of the physical and social geography of different continents through eyewitness accounts. The practical curriculum for younger pupils such as taking a walks in the locality and receiving postcards from Barnaby Bear makes geography meaningful for them.

One factor affecting provision in both history and geography is that the school no longer receives 'Topic Boxes' from the school library service and lacks sufficient good quality books in the library for pupils to use for independent research. Evidence indicates that standards are broadly average as they were at the time of the previous inspection and that these subjects make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection, they do not meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
- The cultural diversity of pupils at the school is celebrated well through the subject.
- Teaching is ineffective and so pupils do not have a clear understanding of the significant features of the world's major faiths.

### Commentary

77. The school follows a nationally recommended planning framework that provides a thorough course for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the school attempts to cover too much and so aspects of the curriculum are not covered in sufficient depth and therefore pupils do not develop a secure understanding of Christianity or the other major world faiths. Consequently pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. By the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6, standards are below the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. This signifies a fall in standards since the last inspection.
78. The school celebrates the different cultures and beliefs represented in the school. When following the planning framework teachers ensure that there is an appropriate emphasis on Divali or the Chinese New Year, for example, at appropriate times during the school year.
79. Discussions with pupils and inspection of work already completed indicate that the curriculum is too broad. As a result, teachers attempt to cover too much and consequently do not teach topics in sufficient depth so learning is often superficial. As a result teaching is unsatisfactory, because it is largely ineffective. Pupils' understanding of important features of the world's major faiths is confused. They have limited appreciation of places of worship, special books and the significance of festivals to particular religions. They are unable to compare and contrast any of the major faiths with Christianity or explain and value the differences. However, there are examples of creative teaching. In Year 2, for example, the pupils learn about religious festivals of major faiths and classes were observed celebrating the Chinese New Year by preparing a feast with traditional food. They enjoyed the experience of tasting the food, but, in one class the majority questioned identified the dragons they were making as the animal significant for this Chinese year rather than the monkey. In Year 1 pupils visit a local church and in Year 2 a synagogue. Financial constraints and the cost of travelling impede visits to a wider range of places of worship. A class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 looked at stories in the Old and New Testament but were unable to identify which are special to Jews and which to Christians. In a Year 6 class they thought about the important qualities suggested by the names for God in the Qur'an but the majority of pupils were unable to describe any other aspects of the Islamic faith they had studied.
80. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management because the co-ordinator has only recently been appointed. Good plans have been devised for developing the subject. Recent changes in subject leadership have yet to have an impact on standards. New assessment procedures have been devised and, with a more focused curriculum, are designed to provide a good review of coverage and indicate the next steps in learning. A portfolio of pupils' work is being assembled in order to provide teachers

with a clear exemplification of standards. There are no regular procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning. Insufficient use is made of computers to support teaching and learning, by for example, providing simulated opportunities to visit a gurdwara or a mosque.

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

*There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects individually. However, work was sampled in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.*

81. The school has been granted the prestigious 'Artsmark' award in recognition of the opportunities it provides for pupils to develop creative skills in drama, music, art and design, design and technology, dance and movement. One innovative feature of the school is a special afternoon of creativity for all pupils each Tuesday. Voluntary helpers and teachers band together to provide a good range of activities. Where these are focused on teaching specific skills, pupils learn effectively. In one session pupils enjoyed learning how to make a video film that involved them in presenting a series of jokes. This did much to encourage confidence. In another session a group was learning to paint in the Fauvist style and in the music room a large band of pupils were developing a repertoire of songs which they sang exceptionally well and with great enthusiasm. Where specific skills were not taught and pupils were permitted to follow any activity they wished, learning lacked purpose and little of value was created. This initiative is new and has yet to be evaluated to identify areas for improvement.
82. **Art and design** is well established in the school's curriculum and pupils are introduced to a good range of different media. They have, for example, painted on silk, made clay tiles and experimented with printing techniques. A visiting artist has worked with different year groups to extend their experiences. Pupils in Year 6 remember studying the work of Salvador Dalí and Escher. They walk to local art galleries in the city to study the work of different artists and craftspeople. There is very little evidence of computers or digital cameras being used to enhance learning. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and leads developments enthusiastically. She has too few opportunities to review and evaluate standards across the school so her impact on raising standards is limited.
83. In **design and technology**, the cycle of design, make, evaluate and improve is well established. In Year 5 pupils designed musical instruments and followed their designs carefully during the making process. They had a good understanding of the need to modify their designs as a result of the evaluations they made during the course of the work. Good links were made with science when pupils discussed among themselves why a big, fat plastic bottle produced a deeper note than a small thin one, 'It's because the sound waves have more room to move about'. The co-ordinator has begun to create a useful portfolio of pupils' work to illustrate the standards that can be reached and the range of work that pupils produce. It is intended that this will help to set a standard and improve the quality of work that is produced across the school.
84. In **music**, teaching is not as effective as it might be because class teachers and classroom assistants deliver their pupils to the specialist teacher and then leave. They do not stay in lessons to help manage the challenging behaviour of some of the pupils, especially those with special educational needs. There are times when these pupils are not fully engaged and they interfere with the participation of others. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, a good pace was maintained and a good range of activities was introduced to maintain pupils' interest. They were able to recognise high and low notes and could control the pitch of their voices. They performed simple rhythm patterns individually and as a class. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils were developing an understanding of pentatonic scales. The children who go to the music club are very enthusiastic. Several play woodwind and string instruments. Many pupils read musical scores and play tunefully and rhythmically in two parts. There is also a recorder club. During the weekly arts afternoon the children in the music room sing songs exceptionally well and with great enjoyment.

85. The subject is well led and managed. The specialist teacher links the music lessons with other areas of the curriculum covered in year groups. For example, Tudor songs are taught to pupils in Years 3 and 4 as part of the work covered in history, and pupils in Year 5 make and play musical instruments to enhance their science topic.
86. Facilities for **physical education** are poor and so the school has concentrated on developing a curriculum that focuses on urban sports. There is only a very small playground, no school fields and the two halls are small and cluttered with dining room furniture. The teachers worked hard to teach hockey in the hall but the lessons did not flow well because the space was restricted and the hockey balls kept disappearing beneath stacks of tables and chairs. The school makes every effort to teach the full curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 go swimming, the local Blackland Farm centre is used for adventurous activities and parents organise school football coaching as well as matches against other schools. There are after-school netball clubs, a dance club and tennis coaching sessions. There are more after-school activities than at the time of the last inspection. The last inspection report concluded that the full statutory curriculum was not taught because outdoor and adventurous activities were omitted but there is now clear evidence that the full curriculum is taught, although some aspects, such as games and gymnastics, are covered superficially because the facilities are so poor. The school does make very good use of the playground by staggering break times and by timetabling its use according to a tight schedule. The co-ordinator is new but has good specialist expertise and high aspirations for improving standards.

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

Work in this area was sampled.

87. In the lessons seen there was a strong emphasis on developing pupils' confidence as well as their understanding of the importance of developing responsible attitudes and a greater sensitivity to problems associated with bullying. 'Circle time', a special time when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss personal and social issues, is well established in several classes. In one very well planned lesson in Year 1, good strategies were used to develop self-confidence, as for example passing a box around. The teacher told the pupils that when they opened the box they would see somebody very special inside. When they opened the box they saw themselves reflected in a mirror. This helped the pupils to affirm their own special individualities and provoked a good discussion about why everybody is special in their own particular way. The sound relationships and racial harmony across the school help to enable frank discussions that support this area of learning well. The school council is well established and is actively involved in decision making. This promotes citizenship well. The school provides pupils with a sound programme of sex education and drugs awareness. The school sees personal education as an important part of its work and it is particularly keen to promote self-esteem and pupils who feel confident.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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