

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **JEROME PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Norton Canes, Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124175

Headteacher: Mr J T Eaton

Lead inspector: Mr C D Loizou

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 256557

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	246
School address:	Hussey Road Norton Canes Cannock Staffordshire
Postcode:	WS11 9TP
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Evans
Date of previous inspection:	30 November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Jerome Primary School is an average size school with 246 pupils on roll which includes 33 part-time Nursery children. Most of the children admitted to the school in the Nursery and Reception years live in the immediate area. The Nursery provides part-time education (mornings or afternoons) for up to 39 children aged three. In addition, there are seven single-age classes which include a Reception class for four-year-olds, most of whom transferred from the school's Nursery. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies but is below average overall. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than the usual time of admission to the Reception year or transfer to feeder secondary schools is low compared with most schools. Most pupils are of British white heritage with a small number who are of mixed heritage. All the pupils speak English as their main language so there are no pupils who require additional support. Eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average (eight per cent) and two per cent (above average) of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; mathematics; information and communication technology; music; physical education
13485	Paul Widdowson	Lay inspector	
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; art and design; design and technology; religious education
32827	Jackson Marshall	Team inspector	Science; geography; history

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory education**. The headteacher and senior staff are having a positive impact on raising standards. Teachers have developed a good ethos in which the pupils feel confident and can thrive. Consequently, the pupils achieve satisfactorily in most subjects. The teaching is satisfactory and is improving well. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards in mathematics are improving well because the teaching is effective across the school
- The pupils do well in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education
- Although the teaching is satisfactory overall there is room for improvement, particularly in the way teachers assess how well the pupils are doing and when setting learning targets
- The pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well taught and supported
- Links with parents are good and parents think highly of the school
- The pupils try hard, enjoy school and behave well, but attendance rates could be higher

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1998. It has effectively improved the quality of pupils' writing. The quality of information and communication technology has improved well as has the quality of teaching and learning where a significant amount of teaching was found to be unsatisfactory the last time the school was inspected. The school has also made good progress in improving the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The **pupils achieve satisfactorily** and attain average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The results of the 2003 national tests show an improving trend and the recent stability and improvements to the staffing and teaching continue to maintain this picture of improving standards. However, the national tests results show that there are weaknesses in the teaching and learning of science across the school.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The children in the Nursery and Reception years are provided with a good education and so they achieve well by the time they start Year 1. Most of the children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on the 2003 test results, which show that too few of the Year 2 pupils reached the higher levels in writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, in all subjects, standards are in line with those expected and the pupils do particularly well in design and technology, music, physical education and the expressive and performing arts and sport. However, science standards should be higher as the pupils underachieve in science.

The personal development of the pupils is a strength of the school. There is **good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Consequently, the pupils think highly of the school and have good attitudes to school and learning. Behaviour is also good but levels of attendance are below average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory.** The teaching is satisfactory overall and there is good teaching in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. The work provided for the pupils is usually matched to their needs and abilities but assessment is inconsistently applied so that target setting is not well established or consistently applied. Teachers have high expectations and make lessons interesting and varied but some lessons are not demanding enough of the pupils. The pupils respond positively and try hard. Educational visits, resources and a good range of enrichment activities promote learning and engage the pupils.

The school provides a wide range of visits and visitors that enrich the curriculum for all of the pupils. Good procedures ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils. Parents think highly of the school and are well informed about the curriculum and their children's progress. The school is committed to its parents and to the needs of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs do particularly well as a result.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** Senior staff regularly monitor teaching and learning and analyse assessment information but the use of assessment is inconsistent and not well established across the school. Governance is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. The governing body has good capacity to improve and receives reports about standards and the impact that the teaching is having. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to sustain the trend of rising standards. The management of the school is satisfactory overall and the management by the key senior staff and subject co-ordinators is good.

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

The parents hold the school in high regard. They are involved in the life and work of the school and are well informed. The pupils have good attitudes to school and learning and the school involves them increasingly in decision making.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In order to improve the quality education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- improve the quality of teaching in science and the science curriculum to raise standards
- improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that more lessons match those of the best seen in the school
- use the assessments made of the pupils consistently to provide learning targets that are understood by the pupils and are closely matched to National Curriculum levels
- improve attendance rates to bring them closer to national averages

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are rising and after a brief period of decline by the end of Year 6 they have recovered so that they are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards are securely in line with national expectations in English and mathematics but are too low in science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are in line with expectations there are weaknesses in science compared with other subjects
- Mathematics standards are rising well throughout the school
- The pupils make good progress in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education
- The pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported in lessons

#### Commentary

1. When the children start school, their attainment is wide ranging and is below average. They make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and so achieve well in all areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. Most of the children reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning, although some of them exceed the standards expected by the time they start Year 1.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.3 (14.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.9 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.5 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (26.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.0 (25.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.7 (26.5)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. At the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards were well below average, and in reading they were in the lowest five per cent of similar schools nationally. However, the 2003 results were an improvement on previous years with a trend of improvement that is continuing as the school's results show that standards in the Year 2 tests are rising in line with the national trend. The most significant and marked improvement has been in mathematics. The low standards last year also reflect the significant proportion of

pupils who have special educational needs which depressed the overall picture compared with other schools.

3. The results of the 2003 tests at the end of Year 6 improved well on the previous year after a brief period of decline. The most significant decline in standards was those in science and although this has begun to see an improvement, standards in science are not high enough. Last year's results show average standards in English and mathematics and below average standards in science. The results also show that the pupils made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics since Year 2 but poor progress in science.
4. The current improvement in standards is a reflection of greater staffing stability and improved teaching. In mathematics, the improvement has been markedly better than in other subjects because of clear and purposeful leadership and sharper assessments of the pupils' progress compared with most other subjects. The headteacher has now a secure staff team that has established a strong and shared commitment to raise standards further.
5. The pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6 their progress accelerates. This is one of the key reasons for the sustained improvement in standards. The teaching is having a positive impact on this trend of improvement but, after a period of disruption to the staffing, teachers have yet to establish a consistent approach to assessment and how best to use assessment information in their planning. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is already having a positive impact on the pupils' achievement in Year 2 and acts as a good role model for classroom practices that improve the achievements of the pupils.
6. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. They are well supported in lessons and are provided with tasks that are well matched to their abilities and needs. The level of attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is very low. However, the pupils make good progress and achieve well. Where they work very closely with teachers and support assistants, they make very good progress.
7. In other subjects the breadth of the curriculum is such that the pupils achieve well in the creative and expressive arts, including music, physical education and art and design. Design and technology has improved well since the last inspection and so the pupils do well, with a significant number achieving standards that exceed national expectations for their age. Information and communication technology has improved well, so that the pupils now achieve satisfactorily compared with their achievement at the time of the last inspection.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance at the school is unsatisfactory and well below the national average although punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance is well below average
- The pupils find lessons interesting and have good attitudes to learning
- There are very good relationships with pupils and with adults across the school
- Pupils willingly take on responsibility
- The behaviour policy is effective and has had a significant impact, ensuring good behaviour across the school

### **Commentary**

8. Attendance at the school is unsatisfactory because of the high level of authorised absence caused by parents taking their children on holiday during term time. Punctuality is good and the

pupils enjoy coming to school and find the lessons interesting. Teachers are encouraging and supporting so that pupils are keen to learn. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have good attitudes to learning which impacts well on the standards they achieve. They are enthusiastic and keen to participate in discussion, which develops speaking and listening skills as well as the pupils' self-confidence.

9. Pupils settle quickly in lessons and listen to instructions given by the teachers. Lessons start promptly and the pupils understand what they are expected to do. They work well on their own and in small groups where they share resources and ideas and help each other.
10. In the playground, the pupils are well behaved. Pupils of all ages and boys and girls play well together and there is no sign of rough or aggressive behaviour. They are polite and friendly, and welcome visitors into their school. They move around the school in an orderly manner and open doors for each other and for adults. Lunch time is a social occasion where pupils behave well and display good manners. The teachers' high expectations and the effective deployment of support and supervisory staff create an orderly and friendly environment where pupils respect each other and adults.
11. The pupils have a range of individual classroom responsibilities and in Year 6 help set up the furniture for assembly and supervise and support the younger children in the dining hall and in the playground. The school operates a good and effective house system. A boy and a girl house captain are elected by the other pupils. This has a positive effect on the personal development of the pupils. There is an expectation that house captains supervise and look after the younger children in their respective houses and set a good example to the rest of the school. In Year 6, the pupils are linked with a reading buddy in Year 2, which not only supports the development of reading skills but also leads to friendships, which support the pupils' personal and social development. There is a residential visit in Year 6, which combines outdoor activities and geography, history and science work. This helps develop independence and self-confidence, as well as supporting learning in other subjects.
12. The pupils who have special educational needs are developing confidence and positive self-esteem as they follow the good role model of their classmates. They relate well to the teachers and support assistants, developing an enthusiasm for their work and an increasing ability to concentrate. The support staff who are closely involved with the pupils who have special educational needs encourage them to grow in independence and self-awareness. The lessons always have a strong component of social training, for example, how to share and how to work in pairs or groups. Parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of the school's work.
13. There is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a clear set of values and beliefs, and a respect for others is encouraged. The pupils have a clear understanding of the school's expectation of good behaviour and consider the rules to be fair and necessary. They understand the difference between right and wrong. They are taught about their own culture through history and topic work. There are good displays on the walls showing visits to a heritage centre to study World War II. The pupils are taught about other faiths in religious education and in Year 6 they have constructed models of Sikh temples and are planning to visit the Birmingham Central Mosque. The school has good links with the local church, which they visit for Christian festivals.
14. Moral and social development is good. A personal, social and health education programme has recently been introduced into the curriculum and special class discussion times, or 'circle time' as they are known, are used very effectively to discuss a range of moral and personal issues including feelings and emotions. These include behaviour, bullying and dealing with concerns about transferring to secondary education. The pupils are encouraged to support a range of charities, which help them to understand those who are less fortunate than themselves.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	7.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions last year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is satisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good
- The teaching of mathematics is good and has resulted in the pupils achieving well in mathematics with standards rising rapidly across the school
- The teaching of science is unsatisfactory because standards are not rising well enough
- Assessment is not an established and consistent practice across the school, resulting in some tasks that are not well matched to the abilities of the pupils

### Commentary

15. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, with many lessons observed during the inspection that were good or better, there is room for improvement. There are some inconsistencies in the quality and range of teaching and learning across the school. The teaching is good in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) because assessment is used well to help learning and to provide tasks that are well matched to the needs of the children.
16. Teachers have a shared commitment to provide all the pupils with good opportunities by planning practical and interesting activities and tasks. However, inconsistent and inaccurate assessments of the pupils' progress lead to some lessons that do not challenge all the pupils. The school underwent a period of instability with staff absences and the use of supply or temporary teachers. The evidence from pupils' workbooks reflects this and shows that the quality of teaching was inconsistent with some work that was unchallenging. The most obvious inconsistencies in the pupils' workbooks are in science. Some of the work is copied or only serves to revise what the pupils already know. Consequently, the impact that the teaching is having on science standards is patchy.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5 (11%)	25 (56%)	14 (31%)	1 (2%)	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.*

17. There is a significant proportion of good and high quality teaching, which has the effect of accelerating the achievement of the pupils, as well as some less effective and mundane teaching. Inconsistencies in expectations and the quality of assessment and target setting have resulted in the pupils making patchy progress over time, particularly in science. Recent appointments and staffing stability have resulted in much improved standards in most subjects. The teaching of mathematics is good because of strong leadership in the subject and well-informed training for teachers. Good staff training has also resulted in improvements in English but science teaching is not yet consistent or established enough to have a sustainable impact on rising standards.
18. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is usually good, with nearly three in four lessons that were seen during the inspection being good or better. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching observed was more inconsistent and judged to be satisfactory overall because just over half of the lessons seen were good or better but nearly half were only satisfactory with a small amount that was unsatisfactory. The teaching is stronger in Years 5 and 6 and this results in accelerated achievement amongst the large majority of pupils.
19. In most year groups, good teaching was observed but the lack of a coherent teaching and learning policy and recent staffing instability have not helped the strongest teachers to support those who need guidance and direction. It is evident from the pupils' workbooks, in the context of a series of lessons, that the pupils are now making satisfactory progress in most subjects. The main difference between satisfactory teaching and good or better teaching is expectation. In the most effective lessons, the tasks set are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. In less effective lessons there is some time wasting and tasks often serve to revisit what the pupils already know.
20. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory and that in numeracy is good. The focused teaching of pupils by ability in Year 5 and 6 is helping to improve standards. This has come about because of the combination of more effective teaching and a better match of work to the pupils' needs. This is much sharper in mathematics because the leadership of mathematics is supported by highly effective teaching and so the co-ordinator leads by example. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught using the national strategies and most lessons follow a common format with opportunities for the pupils to apply their skills to extended forms of writing in English and to problem solving in mathematics.
21. The pupils try hard and are attentive in most lessons. The most effective lessons are purposeful and full of challenge and pace. When the pupils are challenged and tasks made interesting, the pupils respond with enthusiasm. For example, in a very good Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils completed a range of challenging tasks in a mature way and enjoyed taking responsibility for their learning. The lesson culminated in all of them tackling a range of problems involving the investigation of number patterns. In Year 6, the pupils enjoyed measuring angles and the teacher used ICT well to illustrate how to use a protractor. In Year 2, the teaching is usually good and highly motivating for the pupils. This was clearly evident in the way the pupils enjoyed reciting poetry and experimented with rhyme when investigating Valerie Bloom's poem, 'Water Everywhere'. Less effective and unsatisfactory teaching is mainly characterised by a lack of challenge or mundane activities such copying text or repeating facts that are already known without enough challenge and extension tasks planned to occupy the

pupils more gainfully. Two in five lessons seen during the inspections had elements of these less effective characteristics.

22. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. Teachers ensure that the pupils with special educational needs experience success in front of their peers. Class teaching is good when teachers draw in the weaker pupils by including them in questioning. This is evident when they provide them with challenging tasks that develop the specific skills and attitudes written in their individual education plans. Good communication between teachers and classroom assistants ensures that the support given meets the pupils' needs well.

## **The curriculum**

Curricular provision overall is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for enrichment which include a good range of extra-curricular activities
- A strong curriculum for the Foundation Stage leads to good progress
- Good provision for special educational needs leads to good progress and inclusion for all pupils
- There are not enough opportunities for practical learning and investigation in science
- The learning targets in teachers' lesson planning for higher attaining pupils are not precise enough

### **Commentary**

23. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and teachers use them effectively to guide their planning. This is particularly evident in the planning for information and communication technology that covers all the elements of the programmes of study laid down, giving the pupils suitable opportunities to raise standards. The imbalances that existed in other subjects at the time of the last inspection have been improved. For instance, in art and design and design and technology, teachers plan a much wider range of relevant and stimulating activities. The planning for music and physical education has become a vehicle for good progress and above average standards. The weakness in planning for extended writing has been addressed, enabling writing standards to improve, particularly by the end of Year 2.
24. The headteacher believes in giving pupils as much practical experience as possible. The curriculum is therefore well enhanced by a wide variety of activities in and out of school times. For instance, after-school games strengthen the curriculum for physical education, and music and design and technology clubs provide the pupils with opportunities to learn valuable skills and apply these to other subjects. The teachers plan visits and invite visitors into school to enhance the pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, the Year 3 visit to a Tudor hall, or the Year 6 tour of Norton Canes to improve art and design skills gave pupils vital experiences to use in later lessons. Good arrangements for personal, social and health education, covering safety, sex education and awareness of misuse of drugs, enable the pupils to develop in maturity and this is a significant success of the school in recent years. However, the curriculum for science is lacking the elements of strong investigative and experimental learning. This inhibits the pupils' progress and achievement in science and so standards could be higher.
25. A good curriculum in the Foundation Stage is based on the same principles of practical learning. It covers all the prescribed areas of learning for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. It is planned effectively to enable the children to enjoy investigating and learning through structured play experiences.

26. Provision for special educational needs is good. Teachers adapt the curriculum for the pupils who have special educational needs by preparing work that is specially matched to their needs in most lessons. They write individual education plans for each pupil. The learning targets in these plans have become much more precise since the previous inspection. They enable the support assistants to set work accurately and measure progress effectively. The staff use the plans well as working documents. Teachers' planning often includes activities to extend the higher attaining pupils. The learning targets provided for the pupils do not always identify and provide precisely what will move pupils on in terms of the attainment levels set out in the National Curriculum.
27. The pupils are very positive about their learning experiences. They enjoy the ingenuity with which teachers highlight the links between different subjects. This is a good aid to pupils' understanding, and mutually strengthens the key skills in each subject. The overall effect, however, is not monitored and this leads to some inconsistencies in pupils' quality of learning across the school. Overall, resources contribute adequately to pupils' learning and progress. Some subjects have gaps, for instance in the number and range of books for English teaching. Learning is enhanced by pleasant accommodation set in a secure and sheltered site. Teachers and pupils have learned to adjust to some cramped classroom conditions. The pupils behave very sensibly and do not allow noise distractions to interfere with their concentration. The number of experienced and qualified teaching assistants is greater than in many schools of this size. They make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils who have special educational needs.

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

The school provides a caring and supportive environment for all its pupils. There are effective procedures in place for child protection and anti-bullying. Health and safety provision is good and there are clear procedures for dealing with accidents. Induction arrangements for children coming into the Reception class are good. Pupils' views are respected and teachers take account of their views and concerns.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance is recorded accurately and is well monitored
- Pupils receive good support and guidance for personal and social development

### **Commentary**

28. The school has effective policies and procedures in place for first aid, child protection and anti-bullying. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and help the pupils to approach teachers or support staff with any problems or concerns they may have. This is very evident in class discussions during circle time where pupils feel confident to express their feelings and emotions on a range of issues, including personal problems.
29. The pupils understand and support the need for school rules and feel that they are fair and necessary to ensure that the school operates as an orderly society in which pupils can learn well. The school has an effective policy in place to eliminate oppressive behaviour and there are effective procedures in place to deal with any reported incidents of bullying. The result is that parents, pupils and teachers rightly do not perceive bullying as a problem. This was very evident in the playground where all pupils play well together. The pupils regard the playground as providing a safe and friendly atmosphere where older pupils support the younger ones.
30. Personal development is monitored informally by teachers and is commented on in the pupils' annual reports. Any issues on personal development are discussed at parent-teacher consultation meetings.

31. The school undertakes a Foundation Stage profile on individual children. This is good practice as it effectively assesses the achievement of the children in the Reception year. Target setting in Years 1 and 2 provides the pupils with an understanding of their learning targets and progress. These are shared and discussed with parents at parent-teacher consultation sessions.
32. Induction procedures for pupils coming into the Reception class are good. The children coming in from the school's Nursery are very familiar with school routines and activities and those coming from other nurseries and playgroups are also given good opportunities to visit the school and join in activities. The school also organises an open morning for parents and pupils. This practice ensures that teachers get to know the children before they start school so that they settle quickly into the routines of the Reception class. There are good induction arrangements with the local high school and other secondary schools to which pupils transfer also ensures a smooth transition onto the next stage of education.
33. The school provides good support and guidance for all its pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. The policy of including every child in what the school has to offer is very effective and ensures there is no discrimination. Teachers adapt the curriculum for the pupils who have special educational needs by class work specially matched to their needs in most lessons. They write individual education plans for each pupil.

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

The school has established a good partnership with parents. The school has good relationships with parents and they are very supportive of the school and the work it does. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school and the work it does
- Parents support learning both in the classroom and at home
- The quality of information provided for parents on school activities and pupils' standards and progress is good
- An active friends association supports the school

### **Commentary**

34. The school provides good information to parents through the school brochure, the governors' annual report and regular newsletters. The school has established good relationships with parents who are always welcome to discuss issues with staff if they have any problems or concerns.
35. The school keeps parents well informed as to how well their children are getting on. Parent-teacher meetings are held every term and parents have ample opportunities to discuss their children's attainment, progress and personal development with teachers. These meetings are always well attended. One afternoon a week is also specifically designated for parents to talk to teachers after school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved with target setting.
36. A number of parents regularly help in the classroom, specifically with reading and supporting small groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy. The school runs courses for training parents who help in school and this has led to some parents going on to become classroom assistants. The majority of parents support their children at home, which has a significant impact on attainment and progress. A homework diary ensures that parents have the opportunity to communicate with the school if they cannot always personally visit.

37. The school has an active friends association which holds regular social and fund-raising activities. Money raised has recently been used for the Jubilee Garden, which was built with lottery funding and involved both the staff and parents in its construction.
38. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs value the commitment of the staff in caring for their children. The school has sought to build up an increasingly close relationship with the parents, who are all invited to the important review meetings. Since the previous inspection parents have become fully involved in the procedures at every stage. They find the school's information about the progress of their children very helpful.
39. The school has good links with the local church, which pupils visit for Christian festivals. This includes Harvest Festival where gifts are distributed to elderly residents in the community. The school has a good range of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum, particularly in art and design, science, history and geography. The pupils, staff and members of the local community are currently involved in producing a banner depicting the history of mining in the area as part of the Norton Canes Heritage festival. This banner is to be displayed in the village community hall. The school has good links with Norton Canes High School, which pupils have visited for science activities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory. The overall management provided by the senior staff and management team is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the school has a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils and especially to their social and personal development
- The leadership of key staff, in particular the English and mathematics co-ordinators, is good
- Whilst relationships between the governing body and senior management team are good, governors are not systematically monitoring the work of the school

### **Commentary**

40. The headteacher has managed a period of staffing instability and turbulence in recent times. With his appointment last year, and recently the appointment of the deputy headteacher, a more stable and secure management team has now emerged. Good lines of communication exist in the school with regular meetings of the teaching staff, though support staff have few opportunities to meet together. The senior management team and the rest of the staff share the headteacher's aim to provide an education for every pupil that concentrates on their whole development, not only academic success. This is evident in the good quality provision provided for pupils with special educational needs and has been reflected in the school's focus on improving the foundation subjects, such as design and technology, in addition to English and mathematics. Given the difficulties managing the disruption to staffing, the headteacher has not had time to plan strategically to raise standards and achievement in all other subject areas and aspects of the school's work.
41. The deputy headteacher and key stage co-ordinators make a significant contribution to the school in their support of the headteacher and also act as good role models for both their teaching and management skills. In particular, the English and mathematics co-ordinators lead by example as very good classroom practitioners. Where there are good management systems for monitoring teaching and tracking pupils' progress, for example in English and mathematics, standards have been raised, but these are not yet used effectively enough in all subjects.
42. Whilst all co-ordinators understand their roles and responsibilities they presently have limited time in which to carry out these commitments unless their subject has been highlighted in the

school improvement plan. As a result, inconsistencies are present. For example, not all foundation subjects have been brought into line with national guidance. With increased release time for co-ordinators now planned for the coming year, the rigorous approach to improvement seen in some subjects is being targeted in other subjects. The headteacher is aware of the importance of professional development and links this closely to the school improvement plan. Further opportunities for teaching and non-teaching staff to see best practice need to be developed and include the new leadership's own development too.

43. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator initiates and manages the training of the support staff well. Their expertise is growing steadily so that they interact with the pupils confidently and use the learning programmes effectively. The co-ordinator ensures the complex timetable for the support assistants runs smoothly. He has devised a good balance of support style. In-class support helps to include the pupils in sometimes difficult activities, and to keep up with their peers. A Year 5 boy in an English lesson, for example, felt quite confident in a challenging lesson about 'causal connectives' because of the discussion he had had with his helper. Other support is given in the quiet areas, where individuals and small groups can interact with a stronger sense of security.
44. The governing body provides satisfactory support for the school and it fulfils its statutory responsibilities through committees and main governing body meetings. Governors have developed a good relationship with the school and senior management team. In discussion with governors it is clear that they have a sound grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators keep governors well informed about the school's work and present findings to the governing body based upon the analysis of the pupils' performance and assessment data. However, the governors rely too much on staff for information about the school's progress and are not sufficiently involved in the school's development planning from the outset. Governors are supportive and some governors, including the special educational needs governor, have made informal visits to the school to observe lessons at first hand. Governors feel they are able to act as a critical friend to the headteacher and senior management, as they did recently regarding staffing. This degree of challenge is being extended to other areas but the governors have not in the past taken part in rigorous school self-evaluation and monitoring of school improvement.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	530,214	Balance from previous year	8,483
Total expenditure	528,490	Balance carried forward to the next	10,207
Expenditure per pupil	2,230		

45. The management of the finances is satisfactory both in the longer term and on a day-to-day basis. Recommendations from the most recent auditors' report have been implemented. Expenditure is matched to achieve the objectives of the school improvement plan. The school is planning to use some of its reserves for building improvements and governors are starting to use best value principles in making their decisions. The administrative support in the school office is good and this helps the school to run smoothly and parents are pleased with the way they are received when visiting the school.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception years) is **good** overall.

Three-year-old children are admitted to the Nursery on a part-time basis at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fourth birthday. They transfer to the Reception class the following September. Most of the children in the Nursery transfer to the Reception class each year.

There is a wide range of ability but the standards on entry are below those normally expected and particularly so in speech and language development. All the children, including those quickly identified as having special educational needs and those with high attainment on entry, achieve well. The majority of children are likely to attain the standards expected nationally in all the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Teachers and nursery nurses are very aware of the children's stage of development and their individual needs. They plan as a team to make sure that themes and experiences are not repeated unnecessarily, and that skills are developed from one year to the next. Themes and areas of learning are linked together well so that key skills are continually reinforced. Nursery nurses show initiative in the way they support children. Each member of the team knows what they are expected to do and when, making efficient use of time. There is a good balance between activities directed by the Reception teacher and those selected and explored by children. They are well chosen to match the children's levels of maturity. There are high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes so no time is wasted. The Foundation Stage classes (both Nursery and Reception) are well led and managed. The teacher in charge monitors planning and the performance of the children regularly. There has been good progress in all areas of learning since the last inspection.

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

The provision is **good**.

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

- The children achieve well because the teaching is good
- Children enjoy coming to the well-organised, secure and stimulating classrooms
- Personal, social and emotional development is a key priority and is successfully supported throughout
- The children are not always provided with tasks that help them to show initiative

#### **Commentary**

46. The teaching is good and children achieve well in all aspects of this area as a result. The majority will reach the standards expected for children this age by the time they start Year 1. The Reception teacher, classroom assistants and Nursery nurses provide a secure, stimulating and welcoming environment where classroom routines are consistently applied. This means that children settle down quickly. Consequently, the children soon develop self-confidence. The staff demonstrate that they value every child. The children achieve well because the work done in the Reception year builds on that done in the Nursery. Assessments of the children's performance in all areas of learning are made to help the staff track how the children are doing. This helps the Reception teacher to continue tracking the performance of the children and so achievement is continuous. In all activities opportunities are taken to help children become aware of the rights and values of others. Activities are organised carefully to allow children to develop independence and learn to make choices but a minor weakness in some activities is that they are too prescriptive and do not always provide choices for the

children to enable them to show initiative. Each child is given an opportunity to take responsibility for small but important tasks. Where children have specific behavioural, personal, social or emotional difficulties, temporary or long-standing, they are given good support to help them develop in maturity. This includes good support for children with learning difficulties or delayed development in communication skills.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

The provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good early assessment identifies individual children's specific needs
- There is good support given to those with low attainment in early speech and language skills
- Many opportunities are provided for children to listen, speak, share and enjoy books, and develop early writing skills effectively

### **Commentary**

47. Activities are well planned and teachers successfully improve the children's speaking, listening, and the development of specific vocabulary. Communication with adults and with other children, early reading and writing skills improve as the children experience a range of language-related tasks. In the Nursery, books and well-told traditional stories and nursery rhymes are used to engage the children's interest and provide a basis for discussion and role-play that extend their language effectively. Specific literacy lessons every day in the Reception class help the children to learn the sounds and shapes of letters. The more able children in Reception are beginning to use these skills to spell simple words. Children are encouraged to develop early skills of writing and learn that writing can be for many purposes through, for example, 'Jasper's Beanstalk', (the story of a character in a familiar story), that links very well to this term's spring theme involving the growing of plants from seeds. The majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals by Year 1 in this area because they make good progress in their learning. The children's development in speech and language is assessed as early as is reasonably possible. Children with speech and language development that is much lower than that expected for their age are given additional support and this is particularly effective in the Nursery because parents and teaching assistants are usually on hand to work alongside children who need extra support.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children achieve well because the Nursery nurses and teacher provide tasks that build on previous learning
- Number work is closely related to familiar stories, songs and nursery rhymes and this helps the children to quickly associate numbers with language
- Good use is made of role-play and resources to reinforce the children's knowledge of shapes, space and measures

### **Commentary**

48. Although children enter school with some knowledge of number names they are insecure actually counting objects and relating to quantities. Spatial awareness is also below that normally expected for the majority of children. In the Nursery, the children are taught number rhymes and games to help them remember the names and order of numbers and begin to see

how numbers are used. This is built on in the Reception class as the children begin to order numbers, match the number of objects in groups and then associate the value of numbers by checking their place on a number line. Good opportunities are provided for children in both the Nursery and Reception years to develop spatial awareness through construction activities, using shapes and making patterns. Counting activities are often linked to their stories and, to add interest, teachers provide associated objects such as plant pots when growing seeds and then link them to traditional stories about 'beanstalks' and 'giants'. Following a whole-class numeracy activity, the Nursery nurses respond well to the children's recall of numbers and are able to reinforce this with challenging activities using familiar nursery rhymes and resources. Although the children reach the standards expected overall in mathematical development, a significant number of lower attaining or children with special educational needs are unlikely to attain all the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

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

The provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of resources, visits and role-play to improve the children's knowledge of their immediate environment and locality
- Good opportunities are provided by the staff to extend the children's knowledge of the world about them

### **Commentary**

49. Knowledge of the world is built into every activity because the Reception teacher and Nursery nurses are fully aware of activities and resources that help to extend the children's understanding and experience of the world about them. The staff successfully develop in the children a spirit of curiosity. Consequently, the children acquire a good range of basic knowledge, for example in their understanding of the passage of time. The Chinese New Year has formed the basis of learning about another culture and a large number of objects associated with that culture have been looked at and handled. Children work with a variety of materials to find out how to join things together. They use the computer and explore different programs. The children achieve well and are likely to attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The staff plan appropriately challenging activities and provide a good and balanced programme that improves the children's physical development

### **Commentary**

50. During the development of imaginative and secure areas for all Foundation Stage children, there are good opportunities for safe adventurous activity, with good access to outdoor areas. The staff provide many different types of experiences and the children are carefully supervised when doing outdoor activities. They develop co-ordination using bat, balls and other small items. They learn to push and pull wheeled vehicles, co-ordinating their movements to avoid obstacles on an imaginary 'road'. In the hall they become more aware of the space around them when running and moving in different ways. Children generally have good physical development for their age and show good hand-eye co-ordination when manipulating small

items. Many construction toys and activities are provided. Children gradually develop the skills of managing their own clothes, manipulating buttons, zips and laces in the Nursery, and this is extended further in the Reception year so achievement is continuous. They learn to use a variety of implements and tools such as scissors. In this aspect of the area of learning children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many opportunities are provided for the children to work creatively and use their imagination

### **Commentary**

51. The school provides a stimulating environment in both the Nursery and Reception years. There are good opportunities for creative and imaginative activity including role-play. Reception children dress up for role-play and enjoy making toy gardens in the sand tray or use their observational skills to paint sunflowers after looking at a copy of the famous painting by Van Gogh. In both the Nursery and Reception class, the children enjoy singing songs each week and playing musical instruments and are able to keep in time when using a range of percussion instruments. In both classes, the children use different media such as chalk and paint freely and create collages from a large choice of materials. The children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve well, although standards are below average in Year 2
- Good teaching enables the pupils to develop their speaking skills well
- The data and information from assessments are not always used effectively to provide tasks that match the abilities of the pupils
- Good support by classroom assistants raises standards of lower attaining pupils
- Pupils generally do not have a well-developed knowledge of their own learning

### **Commentary**

52. Standards by the end of Year 2 are below average. However, the pupils achieve satisfactorily because they are coming from a low starting point on entry to the school. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. The pupils make good progress in lessons and also achieve soundly in relation to their results when they were in Year 2. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they get from classroom assistants.
53. The planning for literacy provision has improved since the previous inspection. It enables many teachers to deliver well-structured and interesting lessons. The staff acted effectively on the findings in the previous report and put in place a much wider variety of language experience. The teachers built extended writing sessions into their planning. This has caused standards in writing to rise, particularly in Year 2. No more writing is copied from the board, except in science where there is room for improvement. As teachers focused on the skills of writing, spelling, punctuation and handwriting have improved. However, the lesser attention given to

reading has resulted in a decline in standards over the last few years. The new co-ordinator has carried out a rapid analysis of the reasons for this, and put in place a programme of measures to halt the decline. Earlier and more precise tracking of progress gives teachers a better picture of how pupils are improving.

54. Parents' workshops have generated more interest in reading at home. Regular homework contributes good opportunities for pupils to use research skills. A more systematic reading programme has been adopted, introduced as early as the Reception year. This is working particularly well in Year 1, where the pupils have acquired a good knowledge of their phonemes (letter sounds), graphemes (breaking down parts of a word into syllables) and consonant clusters (letter sounds) as an aid to deciphering unfamiliar words. With more boys than girls in Year 2 the buddy system with Year 6 is especially useful in convincing boys that reading is 'cool' or a good activity. The Year 6 boys do this well, giving the younger pupils good tutorials, with a positive impact on raising standards for both year groups.
55. Under this good leadership teaching in English has improved. The teaching observed was good. The work in pupils' books indicates that this is fairly recent and that teaching over time was satisfactory. Teachers engage pupils well because they have very good relationships and value the pupils' ideas. A valuable strength is that teachers give pupils ample opportunities to speak, and are careful to include all abilities during a lesson. Therefore standards are improving in speaking and listening too. Despite some disturbance from outside the classrooms, due to the close proximity of class spaces, the pupils keep their attention on what is being said. Teachers plan work on several levels to match the ability range. That for the lower achieving pupils is very closely matched. The tasks to extend the top end do not link closely enough to that part of the attainment criteria needed to lift them to the higher than average levels. The school now has a sound system of record keeping of the assessments made of pupils' work but this data is not used effectively to set learning targets that relate to National Curriculum levels. The lack of a formal tracking of standards hinders pupils' knowledge of their learning. Consequently, the pupils do not know what levels they have achieved or what levels they are approaching.

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

56. Teachers make sure that the pupils practise and use their language skills. For instance, Year 3 pupils used reading well to research information about the Tudors from books and computer programs. Year 4 pupils used writing imaginatively in the role of a character witnessing the Crucifixion. Good writing occurs in design and technology, where pupils record their design briefs and evaluate their work well at the end of a project. Word-processing is well covered in information and communication technology. However, in science, writing is not as vital or personal. Often it is copied from other sources. Literacy links with other subjects are not yet monitored in a systematic way and the school has identified this as an area for improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve well and standards are rising well. Currently, standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally
- The teaching is good and teachers set tasks that are well matched to the abilities of the pupils
- The leadership of the subject is good, analytical and effective in raising standards. However, target setting is not sharp enough to provide the pupils with a thorough knowledge of their learning

## Commentary

57. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the pupils achieve well. There has been a good improvement in standards throughout the school in the last two years after a short period of decline. This has led to a steady and sustained improvement in standards by the end of Year 2 in particular. In Year 6, standards declined last year but have recovered well this year, reflecting the school's alert and effective management of the subject. The mathematics co-ordinator and headteacher have changed the way pupils are grouped for mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and this has had an immediate impact on standards and achievement. Consequently, a larger proportion of pupils, who are grouped by ability for mathematics for two days each week, are achieving standards that exceed those expected by the end of Year 6. The shortfall in last year's test results came about because the proportion exceeding the standards expected for Year 6 pupils was below the national average. The proportion reaching the standards expected for Year 6 pupils was above the national average.
58. The number of higher achieving pupils in Years 1 and 2 exceeding the standards expected for their age is now above average by Year 2. This is increasingly becoming a similar pattern in Years 3 to 6 so that standards are improving well in mathematics. This improvement has come about because of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching which is now more consistent across the school than found at the time of the last inspection. Consequently, the pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in lessons. They are becoming increasingly confident at calculating and manipulating numbers both mentally and in written forms.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons begin briskly and teachers use tasks and resources well to quickly engage all the pupils. Teachers explain carefully what the pupils are going to learn. Lessons are carefully planned so that different ages and abilities have work that is challenging. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and this shows in the way they make the work interesting and exciting. Small groups and individuals with special educational needs have work that is appropriate and challenging. The skilled support given by teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.
60. Towards the end of lessons teachers check the pupils' understanding and reinforce the planned learning. There are opportunities for pupils to explain their understanding and share how they solve any problems. Work is marked regularly to check the accuracy of the pupils' work and the progress they are making.
61. Leadership of the subject is good and is very analytical. Mathematics is well managed because the co-ordinator makes good use of assessment information to help teachers to track the progress that pupils make. The next stage of development is to make target setting more accurate so that teachers are better able to support the pupils and to help the pupils themselves to be better informed of their progress and learning. This is an area for development across the school and is recognised by the headteacher and staff. The co-ordinator analyses the results of tests throughout the school and has monitored teaching and learning and the level of resourcing. This has led to the identification of priorities that focus on raising standards further and improving the pupils' problem-solving skills.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

62. The pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology. For example, they can plot reference points on maps using their understanding of axes and co-ordinates and can record information researched in science using graphs, tables and simple matrices. The pupils' good understanding of numeracy is applied well when computers are used to develop an

understanding of spreadsheets and the related graphs as well as programs to practise and develop skills, such as measuring angles.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Limited use of assessment has led to a lack of challenge, especially for the more able pupils
- The pupils' experimental skills are unsatisfactory throughout the school
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are not high enough and are unsatisfactory compared to similar schools
- The co-ordinator has identified the main strengths and weaknesses

### Commentary

63. Standards in science are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, the pupils in Years 3 to 6 make unsatisfactory progress and should be attaining higher standards, as they have shown they are capable of doing in both mathematics and English. Standards of scientific enquiry are unsatisfactory throughout the school. The present scheme of work does not allow for the systematic acquisition of experimental skills by the pupils. In a Year 6 lesson, whilst the pupils were enthusiastic about discovering whether particle size affected the rate at which different sugars dissolved, the session was highly teacher directed as the pupils lacked the necessary skills and were unable to explain how to conduct a fair test. This lack of ability to undertake their own scientific enquiries is not in line with the current increasing importance placed nationally upon this aspect of science. Progress in science since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.
64. The quality of science teaching across the school is inconsistent. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the pupils are often expected to copy work directly from the board. Even pupils' writing-up of experiments uses the same wording. This has not enabled these pupils to clarify their thoughts and understanding of science through the process of writing nor does it help them to practise explanatory writing to improve their English attainments. Little effort is made by the teachers to provide differentiated activities to challenge and extend, particularly those pupils who have the potential to exceed the standards expected for their age. The quality of teachers' marking is patchy and does not consistently provide a meaningful assessment tool for teachers to inform future planning or show the pupils the next step in their learning. In a Year 5 lesson, the teaching was good because the teacher used good subject knowledge of forces and effective ongoing assessment to accurately target her questions. As a result, she was able to correct any misconceptions pupils may have had about the force of friction and pupils made good progress during the lesson as a result. It is as a direct result of good teaching in Years 5 and 6 that pupils are expected to meet national expectations and so the pupils' achievement accelerates in these years. All teachers' planning shows that teaching assistants are used effectively so pupils benefit from working with focused support.
65. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The current co-ordinator has rapidly built up a picture of science in the school since recently joining the school. This has been achieved by both analysing data and monitoring in all classes. Following this process all the staff received individual feedback and an overview of priorities for the subject. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and has drawn up an action plan to address the main issues. One of the main barriers to pupils' learning is the current scheme of work which the co-ordinator is in the process of adapting to better reflect the needs of the pupils and national expectations. Evidence of the impact of any of these initiatives is limited at this early stage in the development of the subject. Resources for teaching science are poor and there is often insufficient apparatus to allow all pupils to carry out experiments.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection because standards have improved and are now in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- Teachers and support staff are using ICT to support learning in other subjects but some opportunities are missed to extend the pupils' skills to more advanced techniques because much of the work being done focuses on basic ICT skills

### Commentary

66. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has improved its ICT resources well since the last inspection and now has a special ICT room that is well equipped. In addition to this, teachers and pupils use a broader range of computer resources and programs and this has had a significant impact on motivating the pupils, particularly in helping them to see at first hand simulations that reinforce their learning in subjects such as mathematics and science. The teaching of basic skills is good because the computer room is a good facility and enables whole classes to receive intensive support which builds on previous learning. Standards are in line with national expectations because the pupils use their ICT skills well and apply these skills to other subjects. This is evident in word-processed extended forms of writing and numeracy work using spreadsheets and graphs. In lessons, the pupils are confident and adept at applying basic ICT skills, can often edit written work with confidence using spelling banks and can self-correct text by refining and editing. Year 3 pupils were observed making reasonable progress editing sentences and improving punctuation using a word processor.
67. There is satisfactory leadership and management and the range and quality of resources are satisfactory. Resources have improved well since the last inspection and are increasingly being used to support the pupils' learning across a range of subjects.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in other subjects and the introduction of projectors in some classes has further harnessed the use of new technology in lessons. There is some good practice that enables the pupils to apply their ICT skills. In English, for example, the work pupils do involves editing and refining extended writing using word-processing skills, and in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education, word-processed work is also evident and often enhanced with graphics imported from the Internet or pictures using the school's digital camera. In mathematics, the computer is used well to project examples on the whiteboard so the Year 5 and 6 pupils can develop a better understanding of how to use protractors when measuring angles. Satisfactory use is made of the digital camera to support art and design and to enhance the work pupils do when undertaking local visits or walks around the community. Teachers' planning across the curriculum is good and, as they become more confident and knowledgeable, they increasingly use ICT to enhance learning and improve the pupils' skills in a broad range of other subjects.

## HUMANITIES

During the inspection two lessons were observed, one in geography and one in history. Consequently it was not possible to make a judgement about provision in these subjects. In **history**, discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of their work indicate that standards are broadly in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers provide good opportunities to extend pupils' learning by visits and themed days. These experiences, such as Year 5's visit to Hednesford as part of their work on World War II, help to bring the subject alive for pupils and contribute well to

developing their understanding of the past. Talking to pupils shows they are developing a sense of chronology and can sort different periods of the past correctly. As a result of good teaching Year 2 pupils were able to express a preference about when they would like to live, based upon their knowledge of life in Samuel Pepys' London. The pupils regularly use computers and the Internet to research information in their work. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and pupils' work, identifying areas for improvement as well as whole-school issues that need to be addressed.

Evidence from discussions with pupils, work scrutiny and a lesson observation indicate that pupils' attainment in geography is in line with national expectations throughout the school. The pupils talk enthusiastically and confidently when questioned about the subject. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have enlisted parents to help their children to complete a diary or research about Barnaby Bear and Suitcase Suzy. Younger pupils are given the opportunity to develop their knowledge of the local area, Year 1 study the British Isles whilst, by Year 2, the pupils learn about countries around the world. Although school resources are limited, teachers make good use of their local surroundings. For example, the pupils in Year 3 learnt that people can hold different views about environmental change from studying the impact of the M6 toll road, interviewing local people for their reactions and studying aerial photographs. Some teachers make purposeful links to other subjects to consolidate pupils' learning. Increasing these links and providing staff training have been identified by the co-ordinator as tools to raise achievement in the subject.

## Religious education

Provision in the subject is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Team-teaching based on staff expertise is an effective strategy
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities for speaking
- Work in the subject is not formally assessed

### Commentary

69. Standards are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils achieve well and make good progress because the teaching is good and is well organised. The co-ordinator has introduced team teaching, which is based on the subject strengths of pairs of teachers. This was observed in two lessons, one in Year 2 and one in Year 5. The strategy worked effectively, promoting confident teaching and displaying good subject knowledge. The teachers shared their enthusiasm with the pupils. Consequently, the pupils listened with heightened interest and considerable involvement. The teachers are anxious to overcome a weakness noted in the previous report, that pupils were passive and did not relate their learning to their own lives. By giving pupils, young and old, opportunities to voice their opinions, the teachers built up considerable involvement of the pupils. The pupils feel that their views matter and are valued by the teachers. Consequently, they enjoy the lively debates, which make the learning vivid and relevant.
70. Work in the pupils' books indicates that teaching over time is satisfactory, in that it does not have the range or intensity seen in lessons. The new approach is recent, but is already paying dividends. Standards are in line with those expected for the pupils by the end of Year 2 and 6. Over time progress is satisfactory. In lessons progress is good and the pupils achieve well. In one lesson, Year 5 pupils achieved much better than expected. The teacher had bombarded them with a variety of information sources about Martin Luther King. The quality of the resulting debate was deep and wide-ranging and easily up to the standard of a strong Year 6 class. The pupils wanted to know more and asked very pertinent questions.
71. The curriculum has been developed from a number of sources and gives satisfactory structure to the programmes of study. It is enhanced by the addition of a good number of visits and

visitors. This brings further relevance and interest. There is no formal structure to measure pupils' progress. However, the quality of learning has contributed much to the overall spirituality and ethos of care and sharing in the school, which was said to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection.

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

Two lessons in art and design, two in design and technology and two in music were observed. A wide range of completed work was also inspected. Only one **physical education** lesson was observed so it was not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning across the school. The evidence from teachers' planning and the achievement of a significant number of older pupils in sport, gymnastics and dance show that all requirements are met and that standards are above those expected by the end of Year 6. The lesson seen was also testimony to this as it was a good games lesson and the large majority of Year 6 pupils displayed cricket and all-round games skills above those expected of pupils this age. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has improved physical education resources very well.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

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

- There is good teaching in lessons and this gives pupils independence and confidence
- There has been good improvement to the teaching and to resources since the previous inspection and the pupils achieve well as a result
- The staff have not fully adopted national guidance and refinements to the art and design curriculum

#### **Commentary**

72. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with national expectations and the pupils achieve well. The pupils have made good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Provision has improved well since the previous inspection. Under satisfactory leadership, the teachers have constructed a sound planning scheme. It includes a good emphasis on basic skills across a wide range of topics. Three-dimensional work is suitably represented. The pupils learn skills in a secure sequence of small steps. Teachers give the pupils many good opportunities to follow their own ideas by selecting themes, resources and techniques for themselves. The pupils value this independence and use it well. Consequently, they have a very positive attitude to art and design work and concentrate well.
73. The teaching observed in lessons was good. Teachers organise their classes well, give short, clear and interesting lesson introductions and disperse materials efficiently. They have good subject knowledge and prepare relevant resources well. Year 6 pupils, for example, gained a good insight into how artists handle perspective because the teacher had prepared a lively booklet to display just that. Teachers give the pupils good opportunities to talk through their own ideas and interpretations before starting. A Year 3 class was full of ideas for designing their 'maquette' sculptures, learning how to construct and balance their pieces by trial and error. The pupils enjoyed explaining to their classmates where they had gone wrong. This was not only good speaking practice, but also involved a lot of mathematical ideas. The computer features in some art and design work, such as Year 2 work on Mondrian. Teachers are becoming creative in linking other subjects, but these links are not charted in a systematic way. Teaching over time remains satisfactory because the planning is not close enough to the national guidance set out in the document 'Curriculum 2000'. It does not focus on the idea of pupils 'collecting information', that is, artefacts, ideas and knowledge, before they start.

74. The pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the work they do in art and design. They experience success and thereby build up a more positive self-image. They are generous in the help they give to each other. A busy Year 6 art and design lesson therefore is not just a hive of industry but also contributes well to the pupils' cultural awareness. It is also a spiritual experience of calm, reflection and sharing. The pupils are ever ready to have a go, but they work without a knowledge of the levels they have left behind, or of the ones they are striving for because assessment is not yet well established to help inform the pupils of the different stages of their learning.

## **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and all pupils achieve well
- There is a good balance in the planning that covers all the strands within the curriculum for design and technology
- There is a good focus on the teaching of basic skills which are well linked to other subjects in the curriculum

### **Commentary**

75. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection and the pupils achieve well as a result. By the end of Year 2 standards are above those expected. By the end of Year 6 standards are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages. The improvements to the design and technology curriculum and teaching are due to good leadership. The co-ordinator has adopted a sound scheme of work based on national guidelines. This gives teachers a much firmer basis for their planning. It also ensures that teachers develop the basic skills in a smooth progression year by year.
76. The teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection, enabling them to tackle more interesting and demanding topics. In turn, this has raised pupils' interest levels and achievements. In lessons they are very excited by the practical learning involved. They enjoy design and technology very much and behave well amidst the masses of resources and tools. Teachers manage the pupils well in these conditions and organise the flow of movement very effectively. Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points and particularly in relation to their skills at the time of the previous inspection.
77. The curriculum is secure. The pupils experience a good range of challenging tasks and apply the full design process. Teachers are beginning to weave skilful links with other subjects. For instance, the Year 3 work on pneumatics enhances the pupils' knowledge of forces in science. The Year 5 models of musical instruments help to improve the pupils' appreciation of rhythm and of how sounds are made. Year 2 standards are higher than expected because the teacher emphasises the quality of the finished product more. Therefore, the Year 2 wheeled vehicles are more technically perfect than those seen in Year 6. However, both sets of pupils are equally proud of their results. One benefit of the Year 6 work is the involvement of parents in the project through homework. Teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to use and extend their numeracy skills in the careful measurement of items to be cut and fitted. In the design briefs and evaluations pupils extend their literacy skills with new writing styles. There is not much evidence of pupils using the computer for design purposes. The subject is particularly valuable for lower attaining pupils. For instance, pupils who have special educational needs often achieve as well as their peers, or better, and they are very proud of their work.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Singing is well taught
- Class teachers teach music well and the subject is well supported by the use of peripatetic staff and members of the local community

### **Commentary**

78. The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. One lesson was observed in Year 1 and one in a combined Year 5 and 6 lesson. The quality of singing in assemblies is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and standards have been maintained. Music makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies and to worship.
79. The teaching is satisfactory overall. The pupils develop a good sense of rhythm and pitch. They are able to keep a good beat, recognise a repeating pattern and sing with expression. The pupils in Year 1 benefit from good quality teaching as they practise composing short pieces of music using a range of percussion instruments. The pupils are able to observe symbols representing loud and quiet sounds as well as maintain a beat. Good use was made of evaluation to improve the pupils' performance in the Year 1 lesson seen. Music and singing make a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, providing them with good experiences to develop their skills in performing and appraising, and acquiring musical knowledge.
80. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson seen, good attention was given to composition as the pupils worked in groups using a range of percussion instruments to compose short pieces of music that were then evaluated by other pupils. Many pupils combined their performance with some rhythmic improvisation or dance and this added to their development of skills in composition as they saw themselves as 'songwriters'.
81. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The school does well to provide music provision across the school despite the absence of a fully qualified music teacher or subject specialist. The headteacher teaches singing and provides guitar accompaniment in assemblies.

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

During the inspection no personal, social and health education lessons were seen but a good programme of personal and social development is provided for the pupils. The school has a programme of personal, social and health education that is successful in developing in the pupils a sense of self-worth and pride in helping and supporting others. This is evident in the way older pupils care for younger ones and when the pupils are asked to take on special responsibilities such as helping pupils in the playground or supervising them during lunch times. The school encourages the use of drama and class discussion as part of 'circle time'. This builds self-esteem and develops a respect for the views of others. The positive attitudes shown by the pupils across the school indicate that this programme is effective.

## 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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
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).*