

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RIVERMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Woodley, Reading

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109894

Headteacher: Mr J Mathieson

Lead inspector: Mr S Hill

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 257327

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	378
School address:	Loddon Bridge Road Woodley Reading
Postcode:	RG5 4BS
Telephone number:	0118 954 0770
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Marks
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large primary school in Woodley, near Reading. It caters for nearly 400 pupils aged between four and 11 years. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but overall their social circumstances are better than average, and only about 3 per cent are entitled to free school meals. Their attainment when they start school is also wide ranging, but is average overall. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The number of pupils with special educational needs is slightly lower than average, but the number of pupils with statements of such need is average. The special educational needs cover a wide range, but most have moderate learning difficulties or social and emotional difficulties, or have difficulties on the autistic spectrum. The school works closely with the special school on the same site, and often admits their pupils when they start to be re-integrated into mainstream schooling.

Most pupils are of white British origin, but about 10 per cent come from a wide range of other backgrounds. Although about 5 per cent of pupils have a mother tongue other than English, none are at an early stage in learning to speak English, and their fluency is comparable with that of their classmates.

The building is unusual in that it is an "open plan" conversion from an old secondary school. Many teaching spaces run into each other and are shared by different groups of pupils, rather than being clearly divided into separate classrooms. Pupils from Years 1 to 6 are organised into mixed age classes that span two age groups. Since the last inspection, the school has begun to admit children in the term before their fifth birthday, rather than the term after. A new teaching space for these youngest reception children has been built.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21277	Mr S Hill	Lead inspector	Mathematics Religious education History Geography
1305	Dr B Rance	Lay inspector	
22434	Mrs S Bradshaw	Team inspector	Provision for children in the foundation stage <sup>1</sup> English as an additional language
31975	Mrs K Andrews	Team inspector	English Art and design Music
22510	Mr C Banbury	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs Personal social and health education and citizenship

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<sup>1</sup> The foundation stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school, which provides **good** value for money. Pupils achieve well, and attain standards that are above average by the time they leave. They enjoy school, behave well and learn effectively because of good teaching. The school is well led and managed, and provides a good curriculum.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well whatever their ability, including those with special educational needs, and those who are academically able.
- Standards are good in mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education, and very good in art and design.
- Teaching and learning are good, so pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave well.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership to the school, well supported by the deputy head, an effective staff team and a good governing body.
- The school provides a rich, varied and interesting curriculum, which ensures pupils' enthusiasm.
- Pupils are cared for very well and links with parents are very good.
- The checking up on standards and teaching, in subjects other than English and mathematics, is not sufficiently systematic.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching spaces for two classes, which restrict what teachers and pupils can achieve in lessons.
- There is a need to adapt aspects of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, to cope better with the wide range of attainment in the Year 1 and 2 classes.

Since the last inspection, the improvement in the school's provision has been satisfactory. Pupils continue to achieve well, and standards remain above average, despite the fall in the ability of the intake. Good progress has been made in all the key issues identified for improvement then, although there is still a need to further improve the monitoring of teaching.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **good** and standards are **good**. The variations from year to year in the standards achieved, illustrated in the table below, are mainly due to the variations in the abilities of the different year-groups, and the different numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The significant improvement in the scores in English last year is also partly due to the school's recent concentration on improving standards in writing. The "similar schools" scores for 2003 show that pupils did very well in comparison to how they did in tests at the age of seven.

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

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

Results of tests at the age of seven in 2003 were well below average, because there were large numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Over the previous few years, results had been broadly average.

Currently, the achievement of children in the foundation stage is satisfactory, and most are likely to attain the expected standards (the early learning goals<sup>2</sup>), in all areas of learning, by the time they go into Year 1. They are achieving best in their personal and social development, and are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this aspect.

Achievement is good between the ages of five and 11 years. Standards in Year 2 are now above average in English, mathematics and science. In Year 6, standards are average in English, above average in science, and well above average in mathematics. The average standards in English represent good progress, as these pupils' standards were well below average when they took national writing tests at the age of seven. English standards in Years 4 and 5 are good. Standards are good in ICT and religious education, and very good in art and design at the ages of seven and 11 years. Examples of work seen in all other subjects sampled across the curriculum were at least satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. Social development is a particular strength. Relationships with each other and with adults are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, and work very well collaboratively. Their behaviour is good and, although a small minority sometimes misbehave, teachers handle this well and maintain good standards of discipline. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is **good**. The teaching of the foundation stage is satisfactory, except in the important area of personal, social and emotional development, where it is good. Teaching is good from Years 1 to 6. A particular strength in teaching is the careful match of work to pupils' needs, so that learning is good. An occasional exception is in a few sessions when the whole class work together in literacy and numeracy lessons. In Year 1 and 2 classes, occasionally sessions are not suitable for all the pupils, because of their wide range of attainment and maturity. Relationships are very good, so that pupils like their teachers and work hard to meet their expectations. The curriculum is good. Meaningful links between learning in different subjects help pupils to learn effectively, and maintain their interest. Very good links with parents and good links with the community contribute to pupils' learning. Links with the nearby special school are particularly strong, and benefit pupils in both schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** and this is a major factor in the good curriculum and achievements. The headteacher gives very clear leadership to the school, and has maintained standards and the school's individual character despite many recent changes in staff. He receives effective backing in this from the deputy headteacher. Team leaders ensure a coherent programme of work in each year group, and subject co-ordinators provide good leadership to colleagues. The deputy headteacher plays a major part in drawing these strands together. However, except in mathematics and English, the checking up on standards and teaching is not systematic enough to give clear information on which to base further improvements.

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

Parents are positive about the school. They particularly appreciate the good teaching, the high expectations and the good management. A minority of parents feel they would like more information about how their children are getting on. Pupils really enjoy school. They get on well with their teachers and each other, are interested in their lessons and work hard. They appreciate the fact that the school values their views through the school council.

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<sup>2</sup> These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Extend arrangements for checking up on standards and teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Investigate ways of improving the teaching space available to two of the classes.
- Modify the class sessions of the literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 1 and 2 to cope better with the wide range of attainment of the pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Achievement is good.** Pupils come into the school with average levels of attainment, and generally achieve standards that are better than average. They achieve satisfactorily in the foundation stage, and well across the school as a whole. Standards are particularly good in art and design. Overall good achievement and standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and have improved in religious education.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in art and design are well above the national expectation.
- Standards are good in ICT and in religious education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities.
- Pupils make good use of their language, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, although sometimes opportunities for this are missed.

#### Commentary

1. The combination of records kept by the school and results of national tests confirm that pupils achieve well during their time in school. Results of national assessments at the ages of both seven and 11 have varied from year to year, in line with the different aptitudes of the pupils. However, evidence clearly shows that each group makes good progress. For example, the group who took the tests at age seven in 2003 had larger than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, and so did not do as well as usual. In the previous few years, results had been broadly average. The current Year 2 pupils are achieving well, and their standards are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. They are expected to gain above average scores by the time they take the national assessments in the summer.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.7 (15.8)	15.7(15.8)
Writing	12.4 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The current Year 6 pupils were well below average in their scores in writing when they were seven, and have done well to be now attaining in line with the national expectation in English. They are now fluent writers, who express themselves clearly, and competent readers who tackle texts with confidence and enthusiasm. In science they are achieving above average standards, with a good understanding of a range of topics, and good skills in performing experiments. In mathematics, their area of relative strength when they were seven, their attainment is well above average, and many pupils successfully tackle difficult work in areas such as probability, for example. This all represents good achievement.
3. The 11-year-old pupils who took the tests last year did very well. In all three subjects they were well above average in comparison with those pupils nationally, who scored similarly at the age of seven. Government figures confirm that this puts the school in the top 25 per cent nationally in terms of the 'value added' to pupils' standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.0 (28.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.1 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- Standards in art and design are good and pupils' work, in a wide range of different media, is better than is usually found. Pupils show a good understanding of a range of different techniques and styles. In religious education pupils not only have a good understanding of the beliefs and traditions of different religions, but also develop a good understanding of the importance of religious belief in everyday life. Standards in ICT are strong throughout the school, and pupils use computers with confidence and skill. They learn in specific ICT lessons how to use different programs, and have good opportunities in other lessons to practise and apply what they have learnt. As a result, they achieve well.
- All pupils, irrespective of gender or ethnic background share in this good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans because of good support from staff, and work which is carefully targeted to their needs. They are fully included in all work across the curriculum, and make progress similar to that of their peers. Similarly, pupils with high ability achieve well and attain high standards. The good teaching supported by the good leadership and management, as well as the stimulating curriculum, are the major factors in promoting pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make particularly good use of their language and literacy skills. In lessons across the curriculum they listen to teachers and to each other well, and work together effectively in groups to share ideas. They read with confidence from a range of texts, such as in history when they readily find information from books, posters or from the Internet to support their learning. They write well about what they learn, and are good at taking notes to summarise what they have found. In religious education, not enough use is made of writing skills in expressing complex and subtle ideas. They use their maths skills well in other subjects, for example, in analysing the different uses of buildings in different towns, in geography. ICT skills are used well throughout the curriculum, for example in designing posters for the Christmas Fair, in researching information from the Internet or CD ROMs in history. Occasionally opportunities are missed, such as the failure to use a desktop publishing package when doing 'newspaper' articles.

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

Pupils' attitudes are **very good**. Overall pupils' behaviour is **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The majority of pupils are very positive about school and enjoy learning.
- The behaviour of most pupils in and around the school is good.
- Children in the foundation stage achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- Attendance is good because pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive in good time.
- The behaviour of a minority does not match the good standards of most pupils.

## Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy school, taking a pride in what they accomplish in lessons, and joining in all the school's activities with enthusiasm. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to others, work very well in twos and threes and share resources sensibly. Very good relationships exist between pupils and with all adults involved in teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most pupils respond well to this. Pupils behave well in and around the school. They value their surroundings and develop very good personal qualities. Occasionally a few pupils are restless or inclined to be silly in class. These are dealt with firmly and fairly by staff and pupils are quickly settled back to work. Chances to share their good work in assembly each week and to enjoy Golden Time provide effective incentives for effort, good behaviour and quality of work.
8. Young children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the reception class. Significant attention is given to establishing routines so that children can understand what is expected of them. They develop particularly good relationships with all the adults who work with them in this secure environment. They work very well together, learning to take turns, listen to each other and concentrate on their work.
9. Good opportunities to support pupils' spiritual development are provided, particularly in assemblies, religious education lessons and during 'Circle Time'<sup>3</sup>. Pupils are regularly given time to reflect on particular themes and are confident when expressing feelings and thoughts. Pupils know right from wrong and they respond positively to the high expectations staff have of them. The annual residential visit contributes to pupils in Year 6 developing their personal qualities to a high level. The very good standards of pupils' social development can be seen in all lessons, as pupils work together very well sharing ideas and supporting each other. Pupils are given tasks both in class and around the school that develop their sense of responsibility well. The school council is very effective in promoting pupils' involvement in the school's development, and its members display mature, responsible attitudes. Improved provision for the development of pupils' cultural development is evident since the last inspection. Visits to museums and to other local places of interest support pupils' understanding of their own culture. They develop a greater understanding of people from other cultures and religions, particularly through religious education.
10. In comparison with national statistics, pupils' attendance was above the average in the last academic year, although it was not quite so good as the previous year. The procedures for promoting attendance are good, and because the school tries to ensure that they have an explanation from parents of pupils' absence there are only occasional instances of unauthorised absence. Pupils enjoy school, so very few arrive late, and the day gets off to a prompt start.

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.8
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.1
National data:	0.4

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

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<sup>3</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions will occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

Only one pupil was excluded, for very good reasons, last year. This was for 44 consecutive days, from lunchtimes only, for about half a term (This counts as 22 days of exclusion). The pupil was later fully re-integrated back into school.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	319	22	0
White – any other White background	15		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	3		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	8		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2		
Black or Black British – African	2		
No ethnic group recorded	17		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of care for pupils is very good. The school provides an interesting and exciting curriculum, which contributes to pupils' enthusiasm for their lessons. Good teaching and good provision for pupils' personal development support good achievement. Very good links with parents lead to their positive views about the school.

### Teaching and learning

**Teaching and learning are good.** Teaching varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. Overall, teaching is satisfactory at the foundation stage, and is good overall in Years 1 to 6. The good teaching is the main reason for pupils' good achievement. Assessment is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are good at matching work to pupils' needs, making effective use of the school's good assessment systems, so that all are fully included in the school's work.
- Very good use is made of teaching assistants to help pupils learn.
- Pupils are managed well, resulting in good standards of discipline.
- Teachers successfully promote collaborative work by pupils.
- Teachers try hard to make lessons interesting and pupils respond enthusiastically.
- Aspects of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are not always adapted sufficiently to cope with the wide range of attainment in Year 1 and 2 classes.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	3 (6%)	21 (44%)	22 (46%)	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.*

11. The work in pupils' books and the skills and understanding that pupils have indicate that teaching is somewhat better than the bare statistics above would indicate, and is good overall. Examples of good teaching were observed in virtually all classes during the inspection. The clear leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, team leaders and subject co-ordinator helps sustain the good quality teaching seen at the last inspection. The monitoring of lessons, by the headteacher and the mathematics and English co-ordinators, has helped to identify strengths and weaknesses, and given staff feedback to help them improve.
12. A major strength in teaching throughout the school is the careful use of assessment to match work to pupils' needs. As a result, in the vast majority of lessons, work is challenging and maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Pupils who are good at a particular subject get harder work, which leads to standards above the national expectation in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils who struggle with a particular subject are given work, which they can cope with, and very good use is made of the skilled learning support staff to provide help when it is needed. The provision of different work, and of extra help for those who need it is a particular strength of group work, in literacy and numeracy sessions. Information from assessment is used effectively to place pupils in ability groups for English and mathematics, to provide appropriate booster work, to target support and to successfully track each pupil's progress and set targets for further development. Assessment has been used particularly successfully in providing challenge for higher attaining pupils.
13. Conversely, an occasional weakness in teaching comes in literacy and numeracy sessions, when all pupils from a Year 1 and 2 class join in discussion sessions with the teacher. It is sometimes very difficult to pitch the work to challenge all pupils and yet to be understood by all concerned. Often teachers succeed well by dint of carefully targeting questions to individuals, and by keeping these sessions short. Good use is made of extra adults to sit with pupils who are struggling, and through individual discussion help them to be involved. Such discussions, however, can sometimes be a little distracting to other pupils. However, despite teachers' best efforts, there are occasions when, for example, the explanation by an able Year 2 pupil of how to add 246 and 90 mentally, goes completely over the head of a Year 1 pupil who still struggles to add 4 and 5 using counters. At such times, the learning of one group or other suffers.
14. In lessons throughout the curriculum, teachers work hard to introduce work in new or exciting ways, make good use of practical experiences, and use a wide range of interesting resources. Good links with other areas of the curriculum are made in lessons in most subjects. This all helps generate interest and enthusiasm from pupils, ensure that they concentrate well and try hard, and contribute considerably to their good achievement. Collaborative work is a particular strength and is developed systematically throughout the school. This ranges from pupils in the infants working in pairs to discuss gifts, which have meant a lot to them, to older pupils working together in history lessons to research information from a variety of sources. The wide range of opportunities helps all pupils to be fully involved in the work, helps them clarify their ideas, develops their speaking and listening skills well, and makes a strong contribution to their very good social development.
15. The school is a very orderly and disciplined place, where pupils are able to work in a positive atmosphere. This rests jointly on two main factors. Teachers and other staff have very good relationships with pupils, treat them with affection and respect, and know their needs well. As a result, pupils like and respect their teachers, are keen to please them, behave well and work hard. Even those pupils who find conforming to expected standards difficult, are quickly brought into line by staff when they are silly, because they do not like to upset their teachers. These good relationships combine with well-established routines and expectations, which are understood by all. Pupils know just how they should behave in different situations, and are generally keen to comply.

16. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are given work that is appropriate to their needs and the support they receive, from teachers and learning support assistants, is very effective. This enables the pupils to be independent and confident. Procedures for checking on and supporting pupils with special educational needs are very good. They are carefully assessed and this helps targets, especially in their individual education plans, to be clear and measurable.
17. Marking of pupil's work is thorough and used effectively to inform pupils where and how they need to improve their work. Good use is made of homework to support the curriculum, and the establishment of homework diaries has put this on a clearer footing to help parents and pupils understand just what is expected.

## **The curriculum**

Curricular provision is **good** overall, and is very good for older pupils. The enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The wide and interesting curriculum noted at the previous inspection has been maintained.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are good and there are good links between subjects, especially in the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good especially when they are taught by learning support assistants.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of education both within school and when they transfer to secondary school.
- There are very good links with the special school, which is on the same site.
- The accommodation of two classes sometimes hampers teaching and learning.
- There is no provision for extra curricular clubs for pupils younger than Year 3.

## **Commentary**

18. At the time of the last inspection a key issue was that the school should keep the good links across subjects as the literacy and numeracy strategies were introduced. The school has been very successful in introducing these strategies and retaining the good links across subjects. The headteacher has been the driving force in maintaining this successful feature. Despite the many recent changes in teaching staff, the exciting curriculum has been maintained and developed. The skills taught in literacy and mathematics are being used effectively in other areas of the curriculum. ICT is used effectively in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
19. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has devised very good ways of identifying these pupils. They are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their development and they receive good support from teachers and especially from learning support assistants. Pupils are fully and successfully included in all aspects of school life. Extra care is taken in helping them prepare for the move to secondary school.
20. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education both within the school and when they transfer to secondary school. Very good links have been established with the neighbouring special school. There are exchanges of pupils on a regular basis. This is very successful in widening pupils' social skills through meeting and working with a wide variety of people. Joint training opportunities are also provided for the staffs of the two schools.
21. Provision for the enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. A number of visits are arranged linked to different subjects, which excite and enthuse pupils, and promote good achievement. A variety of visitors, come to school to talk to pupils. The range of extra curricular clubs is satisfactory. A strength is the large number of pupils who get the chance to learn the guitar.

Sporting activities are restricted to pupils in Years 5 and 6 and there is no provision for enrichment activities for pupils in Key Stage 1.

22. The school is large and spacious, having been enlarged since the previous inspection by the addition of a room for reception pupils. There are large and small halls, libraries, a computer suite and a separate art area. The classes are based in 'open plan' areas that are generally used flexibly and very effectively. There are, however, two classes accommodated in areas that are also used throughout the working day as thoroughfares. Whilst staff and pupils cope well with this situation, it inevitably makes teaching and learning more difficult, and times for quiet working and Circle Time can be virtually impossible when other classes are working very actively, or there are a lot of people passing through.

### Care, guidance and support

The care that the school takes of pupils is **very good**, as is the provision for pupils' support and guidance. All these aspects are managed well, and staff work as an effective team to maintain the high standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures for child protection and ensuring the welfare of pupils.
- Staff develop very positive relationships with pupils over the two year period in each class so that they can care for them and guide their personal development.
- Pupils with special educational needs are identified effectively and sensitively supported.
- Good account is taken of pupils' views in running the school.

### Commentary

23. Child protection procedures are in place with the headteacher having the role of designated person. All members of staff understand their responsibilities in this regard. There is a suitable health and safety policy in place and a thorough risk assessment of the premises is carried out and updated every term. Risk assessments are also carried out for a range of other activities from lighting candles in the school to going on school trips. All procedures for ensuring that pupils are kept safe are in place and are implemented conscientiously.
24. Teachers, teaching assistants and all the other staff in school know the pupils and their families' very well. This aspect is strengthened by the arrangement for most pupils to work in classes with two age groups. This means that most pupils work with the same team of adults for two years, and relationships are very strong. Staff always speak to the pupils in a calm tone and caring manner. Through good assessment of pupils' academic progress, the use of 'Circle Time' and 'Bubble Time', staff are able to share in the pupils' personal development. (*Bubble time is when pupils have the chance to speak to adults by themselves, if there are issues, which they want to talk about away from their classmates.*) This is clearly shown in the perceptive comments in teachers' reports to parents. For pupils with special education needs the guidance that pupils receive, in co-operation with parents and through the individual education plans, is also very good.
25. The views of pupils are routinely canvassed through Circle Time and the school council, which all pupils, not just the elected councillors, take very seriously. They have produced an impressive list of things that they would like to see improved in the school, and using funds provided by the parents association they decided on the equipment that should be bought for the playground.

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

The schools partnership with parents is **very good**, and the partnership with the community and other schools is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The great majority of parents have a high regard for the school.
- Parents receive regular information about school activities and they appreciate the annual report on the progress that their children are making.
- Links with the local community are good, particularly through the parent teacher association.
- Liaison with the secondary school, and the transfer arrangements between the schools, are both good.
- Liaison with the special school, which occupies the adjacent, site is very good.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They have a high regard for the teaching, the school's high expectations of their children, and the management, particularly the leadership of the headteacher. Parents feel able to approach the school at any time if they have any issues to discuss.
27. The school provides parents with good information through a variety of means, including regular newsletters. The annual reports on children's progress are good and are appreciated by parents.
28. A few parents voiced concerns about some issues. The first of these was occasional harassment of bullying, which pupils and parents say does occur from time to time. However, parents and pupils were clear that the school deals with these incidents quickly and effectively. The second concern is that of being informed about pupils' progress in school. The inspection team found that the information provided to parents is good, including parent consultation evenings that take place when pupils' individual targets are reviewed, together with the annual reports. Homework was also an area where parents were unsure of what is expected. However the school has published guidelines on this topic, are making use of a homework diary to exchange information with parents, and have made clear what is expected. Staff recently surveyed the homework diaries only to find that in approximately half of these, diaries are not being signed and parents are not listening to their children read at home.
29. The parent-teacher association is very active and regularly raises very substantial funds, which have been used effectively to improve the school's facilities. The local community is welcome at the functions that the association organises, and in this way the association also fulfils its role as 'ambassador' for the school with the community. The school premises are also use by other local organisations every evening during the week, and at weekends.
30. Liaison with the nursery and playgroups in the area before children join the school is good. An after school club is run on the school premises. It functions in close liaison with the school in providing care for pupils in term time and in school holidays. Arrangements for pupils to move on to the secondary school to which most pupils transfer are good with pupils having a taster day at that school in the summer term. There is also a strong link with the special school that occupies the adjacent site. Facilities such as the school field are shared and, when appropriate, pupils from each school visit the other for joint activities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The governance of the school is **good**. The management of the school is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**, and that of other key staff is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school.
- The governing body, deputy headteacher and senior management team support him well.
- Monitoring of performance data is very strong.

- Commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils, including higher attainers is very good.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is good in English and mathematics, but does not fully cover all subjects.

## Commentary

31. The headteacher plays a key role in the success of this school. He has a very good strategic vision, which is well focused on improvement. He has a very good knowledge of the school's curriculum and is a driving force behind the high quality cross-curricular work seen throughout the school. He has high aspirations for pupils and is a good role model for staff and pupils alike. He is friendly and approachable and staff and parents say they value his contribution, particularly in supporting the school during a period of very high staff mobility and other serious challenges. The deputy headteacher and senior management team form a committed, competent group who have very clear delegated responsibilities. They are fully involved in decision-making, including school development planning, and work well together for the good of the school. They meet regularly with their teams to reflect on and evaluate what improvements can be made to the curriculum and how best to teach it and other aspects that affect the smooth running of their teams, such as how best to involve parents in their children's learning. Subject co-ordinators provide good leadership in their subjects. Induction of new staff to the school is also very good. The net result of the good leadership and management is the good achievement throughout the school, and the involvement of all pupils in this, and in all aspects of the school's life.
32. The governing body is effective in ensuring the school's commitment to raising standards, and has undertaken useful training to support its contributions to the school's development. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and this enables the governing body to make a good contribution to self-evaluation, strategic planning, and to the everyday life and work of the school. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and minutes of meetings show that the governing body acts wisely as a critical friend to the school by not only supporting, but regularly challenging leadership proposals and decisions.
33. Management is good overall although there are still some weaknesses in the monitoring of teaching and learning, which does not cover all subjects of the national curriculum. Although much informal monitoring goes on, due to the open plan nature of the school, this is not sufficient to check on a regular basis where teaching, learning and standards could be improved, particularly for new members of staff.
34. A major strength of management is the high quality tracking of pupils' progress right through the school and setting targets for improvement in English and mathematics. This has been a significant factor in enabling the school to pinpoint why standards in some areas are not as good as they might have been and doing something about it. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress have improved significantly in English, mathematics and ICT since the time of the last inspection. Efficient systems are now being used to assess and monitor all groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and those from different ethnic groups, and to provide extra help and support where it is needed. Assessment is helping the school to drive up standards, particularly in ensuring that boys are achieving as well as girls. There is a need, however, to develop assessment systems even further as procedures are not as well developed in subjects other than English, maths and ICT and currently there is no secure way of checking where standards are in these subjects.
35. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The role is shared between the headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Provision to identify and support pupils is very well organised and their progress is carefully monitored.
36. Performance management is very well focused on teachers' individual needs as well as the needs of the school. Staff see this process as an important part of their development. School

development planning is very thorough and subject co-ordinators make a good contribution by creating good quality action plans that support the school's targets.

37. Financial systems are secure, enabling the school to save more money than predicted last year in order to support this year's budget. Best value principles are now rigorously applied. This means that the school regularly reviews the rationale and effectiveness of what it does, uses performance data to measure its success, consults parents, pupils and others about its performance, and ensures that the purchases it makes are at competitive prices. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Overall the school provides good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	815,196
Total expenditure	817,196
Expenditure per pupil	2,095

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,000
Balance carried forward to the next	23,000

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

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

38. Provision in the foundation stage is **satisfactory**. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in the reception class and by the end of the reception year most children will achieve The early learning goals in all areas of learning, and will exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. Effective planning provides a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children. The leadership is effective and involves the whole team. Learning support assistants take a responsible role in leading groups and making observations of children's progress in consultation with the teacher. A wide range of interesting activities is provided and children are very well cared for in a well-resourced environment. However, the arrangement of the classroom lacks vibrancy and stimulation. The arrangement of furniture, equipment and apparatus in this new, large classroom lacks the interest and challenge of defined areas for children to explore. Although children create a wide variety of interesting and attractive work, much of it is not displayed.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well thorough good teaching and most will reach higher standards than expected by the end of the year.
- Well-established routines help children to learn about acceptable behaviour.
- Children are developing their ability to work independently.
- The caring atmosphere enables children to establish very good relationships.

#### **Commentary**

39. Teaching in this important element of the curriculum is good. Children have very good attitudes towards the work they do in school and behave well. They are likely to exceed the early learning goals for this area by the time they are in Year 1. At this early stage in the reception class, role models and the clear boundaries set by adults ensure that the children know what is expected of them and they quickly learn the correct way to behave. Children already know the routines well, settle down to the activities and behave sensibly. The majority of children are eager to attempt all the activities provided and show great interest in what they are doing. They are learning to concentrate and persevere with an activity to finish it. Children are expected to clear up after themselves and many do this without much prompting. The teacher and teaching assistants, who are kind and caring, infinitely patient and work well together, promote children's personal and social development very well.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

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

- Children are developing their understanding of letter sounds and their names well.
- There are too few opportunities provided for pupils to develop their writing skills.
- There are good opportunities for children to talk to adults and to each other.

## Commentary

40. Children are given every opportunity to develop their knowledge of letter sounds and their names. They regularly practise the names and sounds of all the letters of the alphabet and know the sound made when two letters come together in a word. This contributes well to their reading skills, which are well supported by a successful home-reading arrangement for sharing books.
41. Most children can write their own names and many are beginning to write simple words by identifying the sounds. Their progress in writing is impeded because they have too few opportunities to learn from clear, well-formed adults' writing. There are insufficient examples of writing in the classroom and children have difficulty in expressing their ideas because they have to rely too heavily on spelling words. Too few opportunities are provided for children to practise writing patterns, to make lists and use notebooks for their own writing. There is no defined area where books are displayed attractively to encourage children to share books and develop their interest and ability in reading.
42. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to communicate orally. Learning support assistants are particularly adept at encouraging children with special educational needs to explain what they are doing. Children readily chat to each other in the role-play area as they dress up as the postman to despatch and deliver parcels. Most children have the confidence to talk to visitors and involve them in their activities. When children enter school their language skills are just below what is expected for children of this age. By the end of reception most children will meet national expectations.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weakness

- Mathematics activities are interesting and motivate the children.
- Adults use every opportunity to encourage children to count.

## Commentary

43. Teaching in this area is satisfactory. Children benefit from the good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants who patiently help them to understand new mathematical ideas as well as practise the things they know. Children enjoy a wide range of activities as they explore numbers. They build towers of bricks, throw a dice and carry out many tasks in the class post office which develops their understanding of numbers. They are familiar with number songs and rhymes and add numbers together by using objects and body parts.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress with ICT skills as they have regular access to the computer suite.
- Children have good opportunities to explore the properties of different materials

## Commentary

44. Very little direct teaching was seen in this area but evidence from planned activities and recorded work indicates that most children are on course to meet the expected standards (the early learning goals), by the end of the reception year. Children have regularly planned opportunities to visit the computer suite and, as a result, they are making good progress in

their ability to use the mouse to draw pictures and patterns on screen. They choose with confidence the tools they need from a simple menu to create patterns, faces and pictures with different colours, thin and thick lines and a range of large and small shapes. Children learn some of the properties of materials as they play with sand, water and fabrics and paper with different textures.

## **PHYSICAL AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical and creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of activities gives children opportunities to experiment with painting, drawing and modelling.
- Children show great interest in running and playing games.
- Children use their imagination to explore materials and tools.
- Outside play sessions are less well planned, and there are insufficient resources.

### **Commentary**

45. Standards for both areas are in line with expectations for children of this age, and most will reach the early learning goals by end of the reception year. Most children use pencils, paint-brushes and crayons well. There are good examples of children experimenting with paint and using clay and card to create models. Children use scissors and glue spreaders confidently to make collage pictures and to create Christmas mobiles. Opportunities to take the part of different characters in the role-play area, enables them to use their imagination and to use other tools such as the telephone, calculator, pens and rubber stamps.
46. Most children love to play energetic games outside in the afternoons. The play area for younger children has appropriate markings but there are no large wheeled toys and the variety of small apparatus is too limited. Children have access to the outside area used by Year 1 and Year 2 children, but here is no fixed apparatus specifically designed for children of this age. Outdoor play takes place only in the afternoons and activities planned do not make the contribution to children's physical development that they could. This part of the curriculum lacks the effective planning that is evident in the classroom and does not stimulate children's learning as well as it could.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good, maintaining the good standards seen at the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Speaking and listening skills are developed particularly well.
- Handwriting and presentation of written work across the school is good.
- Pupils' learning benefits from opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers and use books competently for pleasure and to find out information.
- Marking is used well to show pupils where they need to improve their work.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

## Commentary

47. Standards in English are likely to be above average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Standards in English are rising overall due to the school's good focus on improvement, particularly in writing, and use of an efficient tracking system to pinpoint where extra support is needed. However, improvement has not been in a continuous upward line in recent years, due to variations in the abilities of pupils in different year groups and the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Results of tests at the age of seven in 2003 were well below average because of the large number of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort. The current pupils in Year 2 are likely to be above average by the end of the school year. The average standards of pupils currently in Year 6, however, represents good progress because these pupils' standards were well below average when they took the national writing tests at age seven.
48. Teachers work hard throughout the school to provide many opportunities for pupils to engage in good quality speaking and listening in subjects across the curriculum and this is a strength of provision in English. Pupils collaborate well in their groups and in pairs to discuss the topic in hand and to confidently share their views and ideas with the rest of the class. By Years 5 and 6 this skill is well refined. Pupils read with enjoyment and use books enthusiastically to find out information needed for their work in a variety of subjects. They also use the Internet to locate and read information and older pupils are beginning to use their ICT skills to word process their work, although occasionally opportunities are missed for this. Pupils write confidently and fluently across the school. Writing is meaningful because it is used in the context of learning in subjects across the curriculum, for example, in history, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 write in their poetry of the awe and excitement felt by the explorers when they open Tutankhamun's tomb for the first time.
49. The quality of teaching varies across the school but overall it is good. New teachers are supported efficiently so that they can come to grips early with the school's strategies for teaching literacy. Where teaching is only satisfactory, this is usually because at the beginning and ending of lessons, where teachers have the whole class together, some difficulties can arise as it is sometimes difficult to pitch the lesson at the right level for the wide ability and age range in the class. Group sessions are much more effective because teachers set groups within their classes for ability and produce work for each group that is pitched at the right level. The school is tackling this problem by introducing set groups for some English lessons across the year groups but this is not yet practice for all lessons. Occasionally, teaching becomes rather mundane when teachers concentrate too much on the technicalities of writing, rather than encouraging feelings for the mood, imagery, and excitement of the topic.
50. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, due to regular and thorough monitoring, assessing and tracking of pupils' progress. Where problems have been highlighted, such as boys' underachievement, they have been successfully addressed. Monitoring recently identified learning difficulties with the middle ability band in classes for pupils in Years 3 and 4. An appropriate action plan was agreed, which included changes to the curriculum and planning for these pupils and although the impact of this has yet to be seen, the school is confident that improvements will soon be evident.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Good opportunities are taken to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. Literacy skills are usually developed well in subjects across the curriculum, particularly in history. Occasionally opportunities for writing are missed in both religious education and science.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good, and standards are well above average by the time pupils' leave the school.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is well led and managed, leading to improved provision and standards since the last inspection.
- Good use is made of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects.
- There is a need to modify aspects of the numeracy strategy, to cope better with the wide range of attainment in infant classes.

### **Commentary**

52. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Most pupils currently in Year 2 are already reaching the standards expected by the end of the school year. They have a good understanding of numbers to 100, use everyday measures of length and time capably, and can subtract using numbers to 20 accurately. Higher attaining pupils are attaining above this level, classifying three-dimensional shapes according to their properties, and using the 24-hour clock competently, for example. Even those pupils who struggle with mathematics are mostly on line to attain the expected standards by the end of the year. By Year 6, work in pupils' books is well above average in a good range of mathematics. Most pupils are already secure in many of the elements expected by the end of the year. They handle decimals well, and start to use simple formulae with confidence. More able pupils do better than expected, using the formula for finding the area of a triangle, for example, or working out problems using their knowledge of the angle sum of a triangle. Pupils who struggle with mathematics, including those with statements of special educational needs, are making good progress relative to their starting points.
53. Good teaching based on a careful match of work to pupils' needs is central to good achievement. In the majority of lessons, at all ages, teachers are careful to match work to pupils' current level of understanding. Maths lessons for older pupils are 'set' according to ability, narrowing the ability range in each class, and enabling teachers to move forward faster in class sessions. Nonetheless, within each set, teachers carefully modify work to match pupils' needs, ensuring that higher attainers are challenged by harder work, and that work for less able pupils is within their scope, often by providing extra help from the learning support staff. As a result, learning in lessons is good, and a good pace is maintained. A weakness of a few lessons with younger pupils comes in the class sessions, when it is very difficult to maintain the challenge and pace to suit all pupils. When this happens, sometimes, younger pupils who find mathematics difficult, struggle to understand what is going on and lose concentration and interest.
54. The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator. She has a good grip on the standards of teaching and learning in different classes, through the observation of lessons, systematic scrutiny of samples of pupils' work and the monitoring of planning. In addition, the results of national tests have been analysed to work out what were relative weaknesses in pupils' performance. The conclusions of this work have been fed back to teachers, and have resulted in modifications in practice, which have helped to raise standards of teaching and learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. Good use is made of mathematics in other subjects. In geography, for example, pupils use graphs to analyse differences in how buildings are used in different towns, or to compare the climate in different countries. In science they use the computer to make pictograms of data they have collected about themselves, such as eye colour. All this helps to reinforce pupils'

understanding of mathematics by using it in practical tasks, while contributing to their understanding of a range of other subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards reached by pupils are above average.
- Pupils, particularly those in Year 6, achieve well.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations.
- Links with other subjects are good.
- Assessment of pupils' learning is good.
- There is no procedure in place for the co-ordinator to check on, and analyse standards.

### **Commentary**

56. Pupils start in Key Stage 1 with an average understanding of the world about them and because of good teaching and learning, pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2. Standards in science in Year 2 are currently above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 2 in 2003 showed standards to be below average but this was the result of a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Standards in Year 6 are also above average, as they were at the last inspection. The results of the tests in 2003 for 11 year olds showed that many pupils obtained scores higher than the nationally expected Level 4. Evidence from the scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils in Year 6 show that these above average standards will be maintained at the end of this school year. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well, including those with special education needs.
57. Evidence shows that pupils are taught all elements of science effectively as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 2 make careful observations and use correct scientific vocabulary. They have a good knowledge of living things, and know that a prediction is a sensible guess about what might happen in an investigation. They know why some materials are particularly suited for a specific purpose, such as glass for windows and wood for doors. By Year 6 pupils have made good progress and planned their own investigations. They know how to carry out an investigation in a scientific way and that they must repeat observations and measurements to ensure reliability. They described the functions and positions of the main organs of the body. They understand the differences between a solid, a liquid and a gas and how they change and can explain clearly about the force of gravity and how air resistance affected falling objects.
58. Teaching is good. In the lessons seen during the inspection teaching varied from unsatisfactory to good. Where it was good the teacher's enthusiasm was communicated to pupils and the lesson proceeded at a good pace with pupils showing a real interest and enthusiasm for science. Here the learning was good. Where it was unsatisfactory the teacher failed to gain the interest and attention of a small minority of pupils, the introduction was too long and the teacher failed to provide sufficient challenging activities for pupils. All lessons are well prepared and build well on pupils' previous learning. Teachers assess pupils' attainment well both during lessons and at the end of each unit of work. Links with other subjects are appropriately made. For example pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their knowledge of electricity to design a circuit for a system of lights which they made in design and technology.
59. The co-ordinator was on leave of absence during the inspection and so no secure judgement can be made about the leadership and management of science. Clearly, leadership has been effective in the past, in promoting the good standards across the school. However, there is no systematic procedure currently in force for checking on standards, observing teaching and learning, or analysing information on pupils' performance in detail.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards reached by pupils are above average.
- Pupils are confident and enthusiastic in their use of ICT.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership.
- ICT is used well across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils' basic keyboard skills are under developed.

### **Commentary**

60. Standards in ICT in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils in Year 2 can save, print and retrieve their work. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in their use of the Internet to find information and they have shown good understanding in evaluating the quality of a website's front page. They are very confident about most of the basic keyboard functions when word-processing. For many pupils, however, their skill at operating a keyboard is still limited, and this slows down their pace of work.
61. Pupils cover all aspects of ICT through a programme of work that is based on an adaptation of national guidance to fit with the school's topics. They are learning to use word-processing, graphics, the Internet, data handling, control, remote sensing and modelling, though there was little evidence that pupils use a digital camera. They make good use of what they learn across all subjects.
62. Teaching is good. The major strength in teaching is the way teachers fit ICT into a whole range of other work. In specific ICT lessons seen during the inspection teaching was mainly satisfactory and some was good. Teachers used their subject expertise well in the direct teaching and revision of skills. They gave clear demonstrations of the operation of programmes using the data projector and remote mouse. Teachers combine the teaching of ICT skills and their use in other subjects very well. There were some occasions, however, when high attaining pupils could have used the skills they had learnt in previous lessons rather than waiting for revision of those skills by the teacher. Pupils working independently on computers show very good use of the skills they have learnt. Discussion with pupils shows they have learnt the skills of ICT well and made good use of them in all subjects. Evidence shows that teaching and learning are good and that pupils achieve well.
63. The leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment of the standards pupils attain are thorough but very straightforward and are used well by teachers. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the standards of ICT in the school. She has identified the need for more software for mathematics and further training for teachers in the use of the digital camera and scanner. There is a comprehensive portfolio of pupils' work to provide teachers with clear examples of the levels of attainment in all aspects of ICT. Resources in the subject are satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the ICT suite and all classes have computers. There is a comprehensive bank of software linked to the topics covered in each teaching team. The school has its own web-site, which is managed by a governor who has regular meetings with the co-ordinator.

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

64. The use of ICT across other subjects is good. It has been carefully integrated into the planning for all subjects and many examples were seen during the inspection. Pupils have used word-processing to tell stories, recount visits in geography, describe differences between living and non-living things in science, and much more. Older pupils used the Internet to find information

to use in history lessons, and to plan a multi-media presentation to go on the school's website. All this work is of good quality.

## HUMANITIES

65. History and geography were only sampled during the inspection. Two **history** lessons were observed in Year 5 and 6 classes, and samples of pupils' recording were examined in books and on display. In the two lessons seen teaching was satisfactory. Teaching had many strengths, including high expectations and the good use of collaborative tasks as pupils researched information about different Egyptian gods from a range of sources. However, the lack of appropriate CDs available to a small group of pupils limited their progress in the tasks they undertook. Pupils showed good standards in their understanding of historical information, and in their research skills. Pupils' work showed a broad and interesting curriculum, with standards at least in line with national expectations, and often above for the oldest pupils. A significant strength of the work is the careful linking with other subjects, including art, ICT, geography and English. For example the geography work on rivers is linked to work about the Nile and its role in ancient Egyptian life. No **geography** lessons were seen, but samples of work were examined in Years 3 to 6. This was of a sound standard, with cross-curricular links again being a significant strength.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good, and have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good links are made between religion and pupils' own lives.
- Some opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills in the subject.

### Commentary

66. Much of the work in the subject was oral. However, in lessons observed with all age groups, there was evidence of good standards, which went beyond those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has just taken over the responsibility for the post, and is starting to audit provision in the subject. The good standards suggest that the subject has been led effectively in the past. However, differences in interpretation of planning show that there is a need to monitor teaching and learning more effectively, so that support can be given where it is most needed.

### Example of outstanding practice

**During an excellent lesson with a Year 1 and 2 class pupils showed a very good understanding of why people give presents at Christmas.**

After discussing the gifts of the wise men and shepherds, they talked about gifts they had received and their favourites. Through very careful questioning and explanation, the teacher gave pupils a very good understanding of the idea of some gifts being intangible. In discussion in pairs, they thought of examples, such as when older pupils helped them settle into school, or when someone shared a secret with them. By the end of the lesson, they related this to the Christmas story, and most knew that Jesus was a gift from God, and one of the higher attaining pupils explained clearly that this was a gift to the whole world, and not just to Mary. The high expectations of the teacher, coupled with careful support for pupils who found the concept difficult from the learning support assistant, gave pupils a very good understanding for their age of a difficult concept.

67. By contrast, in a perfectly sound lesson in a parallel class, timetabling of the lesson into too short a session made it difficult for the teacher to make the same progress in developing

pupils' understanding. She was able to convey to pupils the links between Christmas presents and gifts of the three Kings, and Christmas being Jesus' birthday, but did not have the time to develop the more abstract ideas in depth, and pupils did not really make as much progress in this element.

68. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed a good understanding of religious symbols from the Jewish and other faiths. Clear explanations and searching questioning from the teacher ensured that they understood clearly the connection between the celebration of Hanukkah, and the story that lay behind it. Similarly, in a very good lesson with Year 5 and 6 pupils, carefully structured discussions in small groups, backed up by shrewd interventions from the teacher and support staff, meant that pupils learned a lot about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. They learned a lot over the course of the lesson about the significance of the festival to peoples' lives, and gained a very good understanding of the symbolism that underlies many of its elements.
69. Although the largely oral nature of the work results in good levels of understanding, older pupils in particular lose out by not sometimes having the chance to explain their understanding in writing. The concepts covered and absorbed by the pupils in their lessons, in relation to feelings and beliefs, provide opportunities of a kind that are not available in other subjects. They therefore lack the chance to practise writing in a different genre, which would provide a different kind of challenge to their skills.

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

70. Apart from art and design, these subjects were not inspected in detail. In **design and technology**, three lessons were seen, all in Year 3 and 4 classes. In these lessons teaching and learning were satisfactory or good. Discussion with pupils about work in their books and on display showed that they are experiencing a good range of materials and techniques and reaching the expected standards in the subject. Pupils develop their skills through a carefully planned programme of lessons that fit in well with other subjects in the curriculum. In **physical education**, only one lesson of dance was seen, in Years 3 and 4, where standards were satisfactory. From discussion with the co-ordinator and looking at planning it is clear that all strands of the subject are taught across the school. Pupils attend swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4 and records show that most can swim 25 metres by the time they leave school. Some sporting enrichment activities are undertaken but these are limited to pupils in Year 5 and 6 whilst country dancing is offered in the summer term for all pupils in Years 3 to 6. No lessons were observed in **music**. Evidence gained from assemblies and other occasions during the week showed that pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically. The headteacher teaches more than 40 pupils, from Year 4 upwards, to play the guitar. Standards in guitar playing are good by the end of Year 6.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

Provision for art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject has a very high profile in the school and both teachers and pupils are justifiably proud of what they achieve together. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is always at least good, usually very good.
- Pupils receive a very wide range of purposeful and exciting experiences in art across the school and thoroughly enjoy their work.
- The links between artwork and other subjects across the curriculum is very good.
- Leadership of the subject is very good, with some excellent features.

## **Commentary**

71. Standards are generally high across the school, due to the very wide range of very good quality experiences and the very good teaching of specific skills. Much of the work seen was both inspirational and exciting, particularly as pupils move up the school and the impact of this exceptional teaching can be seen in their work. Pupils' painting is so colourful, with such interesting hues and tones because they are introduced to skilful colour mixing from an early age. In addition, they visit art galleries where teachers encourage them to see and discuss a variety of work by important painters and this helps them incorporate the detail into their own work. When pupils in Year 4 create soft, delicate, blended hues in their paintings in the style of Monet and other impressionist painters, to show reflection and light, the impact of this very good teaching is evident.
72. It is a treat to study the development of drawing skills in pupil's sketchbooks. Pupils are generally given time to explore the materials presented to them and to make their own decisions on colour and texture, shade and tone. When drawing aspects of the human body, to support work in science, older pupils practise and develop their skills of drawing eyes and other body parts in charcoal and pastel, and their work is mature and of a very high quality. In lessons, when they create paintings on silk in the style of the Ancient Egyptians, they maintain a high level of concentration, often rapt attention, and show great care as they apply the techniques they have been taught. This is because teaching is so good, reflecting teachers' very good subject knowledge and very high expectations for the work.
73. Leadership of the subject is very good. This is because the co-ordinator regularly audits all aspects of teaching, management, resources and pupils' attitudes. Thus, she is able to continually review the curriculum, which is vibrant and exciting. Much of the success of artwork in the school is due to her drive, enthusiasm, skill and very good organisation of the subject. She is keen for the subject to impact on pupil's cultural development, so, for example, when an African drumming band visited recently, pupils were encouraged to create very good quality observational drawings of their instruments.

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

74. These subjects were not inspected in detail. Four lessons were seen in this curriculum area. In these lessons teaching and learning were mostly good with some being satisfactory. Standards were good. The school teaches a personal, health and social education citizenship through an effectively planned programme of lessons. In all classes the provision of a discussion period called Circle Time provides a good opportunity for pupils to talk over issues that face them as part of everyday life. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 also benefit from a topic entitled "The choice is yours" when awareness of drug abuse and sex and relationships education is taught. The school council provides opportunities for all pupils to understand elements of democracy and citizenship. Pupils are successfully made very aware of the need to support and look after others. Their levels of understanding in this curriculum area, as seen in the lessons observed and through other evidence, were good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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