

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Harpenden

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117434

Headteacher: Mrs Frances Maddex

Lead inspector: Ms Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 257882

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	155
School address:	Church Green Harpenden Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL5 2TP
Telephone number:	(01582) 623620
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs June Warner
Date of previous inspection:	28 <sup>th</sup> September 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Nicholas C of E VA Primary School is situated in the centre of Harpenden. It is a small school with 155 pupils on roll, 86 boys and 69 girls. Virtually all of the pupils are from Caucasian backgrounds, there are no pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and the very small number of ethnic minority pupils (Chinese) does not have any language other than English as their first language. Approximately 15 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs (SEN) and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is above the national average and pupils have well-developed speaking and listening and mathematical skills. Most pupils come from homes which are socially and economically advantaged. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19938	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley	Lead inspector	Science Citizenship History English as an additional language
9884	Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector	
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education
11642	Carol Parkinson	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Geography Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides its pupils with a good quality of education.** This is an ambitious, lively, happy and effective school which achieves very high academic standards in English, mathematics, science, history and geography. All pupils achieve well due to the good quality of teaching, and are very well prepared for their next steps in education. The very good assessment systems in English and mathematics contribute to the school's success. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, key staff and governing body. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very high standards overall in English, mathematics, science, history and geography at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and the overall good achievement of all groups of pupils throughout the school is a strength;
- Pupils attain slightly lower standards (average) in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, art and design, and experimental and investigative science, due to the lack of identification of subject-specific skills in planning and underdeveloped assessment procedures;
- There is insufficient identification in teachers' planning of what pupils should be achieving in different age groups;
- There is a weakness in the role of subject leaders, other than English and mathematics, in monitoring teaching and learning;
- There is very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning and provision for those pupils who have special educational needs throughout the school;
- The school has recognised that further work needs to be done in developing systems relating to the care of pupils;
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects, and there is a good range of visits, visitors, focused activity weeks and very good extra-curricular activities;
- On occasions pupils do not present their work as neatly as they should, especially those who are above average attainers;
- Teaching, by both teachers and support staff, is good throughout the school with very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs, resulting in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in lessons;
- The good leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governing body, is good. It gives the school a clear sense of educational direction and the school is well placed to maintain its high standards.

Since the previous inspection of September 1998, a new headteacher has been appointed, high standards have been maintained and **improvement overall has been satisfactory.** The best improvement has been in developing the quality of teaching, refurbishing the building and maintaining high standards. There is no unsatisfactory teaching throughout the school. All of the previous report's key issues have been addressed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A	B
mathematics	A	A*	A*	A
science	C	A	A	A

*Key: A\* - very high; 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 6.*

**Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good**, standards are very high in English, mathematics, science, history and geography. In information and communication technology and other foundation subjects standards are average and **their achievements in these subjects are satisfactory overall**. By the end of the Foundation Stage children exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and capability. Based upon the national test results of 2002, in comparison with all schools and similar schools by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils generally attained very high standards. Overall all groups of pupils are achieving well enough in relation to their prior attainment across the school.

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the Foundation Stage of learning are very good and, in the infants and juniors, they are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes to good relationships throughout the school. Attendance is very good.**

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good. The quality of teaching is good**, with examples of very good teaching. All groups of pupils learn well but even greater gains could be made if teachers focused more on developing subject specific skills. **The curriculum is broad and balanced**. Pupils are generally well cared for and **they receive good support and guidance, but procedures for child protection and health and safety are unsatisfactory**. The school has **satisfactory links with parents** and **good links with the community and secondary schools**.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors are good**. A clear educational direction is provided but the role of co-ordinators in science and foundation subjects needs to be developed further. Financial management is very good and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

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

**Parents generally view the school positively** and give generous financial support. A minority are not pleased with some of the children's behaviour at lunch times and certain health and safety issues. Inspectors agree with the positive and negative views of parents.

**Pupils love their school and the teachers**, although pupils' questionnaires reveal that a substantial number of pupils are concerned about behaviour at playtimes and many juniors do not find lessons interesting. Inspectors found several minor problems with the overall good behaviour. Learning opportunities offered by the school are good overall.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in information and communication technology, experimental and investigative science and foundation subjects and the presentation of the written work of all groups of pupils, especially the above average attainers;
- Improve curriculum planning;
- Develop the role of subject leaders in science and foundation subjects; and
- Implement rigorous child protection and health and safety procedures.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Standards** throughout the school **are very high** in English, mathematics, science, history and geography in both the infants and juniors. All groups of pupils, including those who are of below average, average or above average, or who have special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and capability due to good teaching, very good use of assessment and the overall good monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils attain average standards and their **achievements are satisfactory**.

In all other subjects pupils' achievements are satisfactory but above average attaining pupils could be achieving more. No judgement on standards and learning can be made in physical education, music, citizenship and personal, social and health education because insufficient lessons were seen.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has maintained very high standards over the past three years in English, mathematics and science, higher attaining pupils do consistently well in attaining the higher levels in these subjects, and the school is inclusive in all of its practices;
- Pupils achieve above average standards in history and geography but above average attaining pupils could be challenged even further in geography;
- Children in the Foundation Stage exceed the early learning goals (ELG) and achieve well in all the areas of learning, particularly in personal, social and emotional development;
- Pupils' achievements are good overall in relation to their prior attainment and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well;
- Pupils apply their skills of literacy and numeracy well across the curriculum; and
- Pupils' achievements in ICT, science, experimental and investigative science and foundation subjects (apart from history and geography) could be better.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	20.2 (18.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.1 (14.6)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	18.5 (17.7)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 26 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 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (30.9)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	30.4 (30.0)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.7 (30.5)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The school has a history of its pupils achieving very high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children in the Foundation Stage exceed all the early learning goals and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of good provision and an exciting and vibrant curriculum.
2. The 2002 national test results show that, by the end of Year 2, in reading and writing pupils' standards were very high and were in the top five per cent nationally in comparison with all schools. In mathematics standards were well above average. In comparison with similar schools, in reading pupils attained very high standards (top five per cent nationally) and in writing and mathematics standards were well above average. Pupils who were above average attainers achieved well and many of them attained the higher levels of the National Curriculum in English, mathematics and science.
3. By the end of Year 6 very high standards were maintained. In comparison with all schools, standards in English and science were well above average and in mathematics they were very high, and in the top five per cent nationally. Above average attaining pupils did very well and the percentage attaining the higher levels was well above average, with several pupils attaining Level 6<sup>1</sup> in mathematics. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. The school exceeded its targets for literacy and numeracy in 2002 and, over three years in both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils exceeded the national average for their age group in all core subjects.
4. The school undertakes a thorough analysis of how different groups of pupils achieve in English and mathematics and inspection findings confirm that overall all groups of pupils attain well in relation to their prior attainment and capability. Those pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good support and provision made for them. Due to the very knowledgeable special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the school identifies any underachievement by pupils quickly and effectively and targets support immediately, so pupils who struggle with learning receive early intervention and learning difficulties are very quickly rectified. Pupils' individual education plans are used consistently well in lessons.
5. Since the previous inspection high standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science, and standards have improved in the Foundation Stage of learning in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world, largely as a result of improved provision. Rates of progress for pupils with special educational needs have improved due to the very good training and mentoring of the support staff by the SENCO. Standards in mathematics are now well above average as opposed to being above average. Pupils' progress in ICT has improved from being unsatisfactory to satisfactory, although there is still room for improvement. Standards in geography have improved throughout the school and high standards in history have been maintained. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good. However, in geography, above average attaining pupils could be achieving more in some lessons.
6. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average and this good starting point is effectively built upon as they move up through the school. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good; they are better in English, mathematics, science, history and geography than in other subjects, although there is room for improvement in the experimental and investigative aspects of science. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average, and all groups of pupils make good progress and their achievements overall are good. Pupils' achievements are better in these subjects than in the majority of foundation subjects. Standards in history and geography are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because pupils have good general knowledge, are keen to learn and bring a lot of knowledge from home which the school

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<sup>1</sup> Well above average levels for a Year 6 pupil.

effectively builds upon. The high emphasis placed on local history and geography and the good coverage of these subjects contribute to the high standards that pupils attain. The quality of pupils' written work, whilst good in content, is not sufficiently well developed in relation to the way it is presented. Some of the pupils present their work carelessly in both the infants and the juniors, especially some above average attaining pupils, and this does not fully do these pupils justice and needs attention. Parents are generally pleased with the standards their children attain and inspectors support their positive views.

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

Attendance levels are very good and all pupils have good attitudes to their work; most enjoy their time in this school. Behaviour is good, although not always during playtimes when, on rare occasions, pupils become involved in rough play. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their personal qualities through good provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all pupils are keen to learn new things and work positively in lessons;
- Levels of self-esteem are high. Pupils speak confidently to adults;
- Good relationships are enjoyed by boys and girls at work and play;
- Pupils' personal development is good because spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is promoted well, although opportunities for independent learning are limited;
- Behaviour at lunchtime needs improvement;
- Pupils in the reception class achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development;
- A significant number of pupils in the juniors identified in their questionnaires that some lessons are uninspiring;
- Some parents and pupils feel bullying is not dealt with effectively.

### Commentary

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	3.7
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.0
National data:	0.5

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

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Chinese

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
154	2	0
1	0	0

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

7. Pupils know they have to work hard and when lessons are interesting and fun they do so. They work together constructively, form good friendships and usually settle differences amicably, sometimes with the help of a playground 'monitor' or older 'buddy'. Many pupils in conversations and questionnaire returns expressed many positive features of the school. They think teachers are fair, listen to their ideas and are very approachable. Pupils would like to

see more improvements in their peers' behaviour and increased opportunities for trust and responsibility across year groups. Inspection findings show that there are times when pupils do not show sufficient respect for one another in the playground by not being fully aware of what constitutes rough play but, in lessons, behaviour is always good. Consistency of approach to implementation of the behaviour policy would reduce the isolated incidents of minor unsatisfactory behaviour in the playground. Isolated examples of minor bullying are dealt with well by the headteacher. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development. They have very good attitudes to learning because the curriculum offered is exciting and vibrant, very secure learning routines are established and children become very confident learners.

8. Parents and carers ensure levels of attendance and punctuality remain high. Most pupils show a good level of commitment to the school ethos of respecting others. There are times when lapses in behaviour are not picked up by staff and consequently reported to parents. Even though these instances are rare and are not major issues, they have nevertheless reduced parents' confidence in the consistent application of the behaviour policy. Exclusions are rare and, when this course of action is taken, all statutory requirements are followed.
9. The school council offers a chance for some pupils to show enterprise and responsibility. Though recently formed, it has made a contribution to the revision of the Golden Rules. Pupils successfully negotiated for play equipment that now provides a focus for playtimes. Older pupils take on the role of monitors with obvious pride. However, there is less scope for pupils to develop this independence further in their own learning.
10. Pupils are used to sharing feelings and experiences with adults and their levels of self-esteem are high. This is often achieved during daily assemblies and worship where pupils participate eagerly. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to reflect on the beauty of nature, inspirational works of musicians and artists, as seen in the magnificent stained glass window adorning the corridor. Moral development is fostered well by pupils being given good opportunities to think about the impact of their action on others. Good quality literature and debates, on the consequences of right and wrong actions, are common and pupils are given good opportunities to air their views in lessons. A minority of pupils still do not understand the impact of their actions on others, especially in outside play, and the school is working hard at ensuring that the behaviour policy is consistently implemented. Provision for social development is good, pupils have good opportunities to work in a variety of groups and social situations and the good range of extra-curricular activities helps them to develop positive relationships with one another. Themes followed encourage pupils to understand their responsibility towards welcoming newcomers and in working successfully as part of a team. Some parents are concerned about behaviour and bullying, whilst there are elements of rough play and not all teachers implement the behaviour policy consistently; the school is fully aware that this is an issue which needs to be addressed further. Pupils interviewed genuinely love their school and say that any problems are effectively dealt with.
11. Lessons in history and geography show pupils the contrast between Harpenden and other places in the world, extending their knowledge of life in different cultures and increasing their awareness of different customs, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. A very good multicultural week and arts week, celebrated by the school, did much to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures and that of their own. Although pupils identified in their questionnaires that some lessons were boring, inspection findings did not fully confirm this. Teachers try hard to make lessons interesting but there is a lack of creativity and excitement when subject-specific skills are not effectively drawn out in foundation subjects, and in science there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to set up their experiments using a variety of approaches and different types of recording. This limits pupils' opportunities to become independent learners.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Generally all groups of pupils achieve well because of the good leadership and management of the school, good curriculum provision, very good assessment in English and mathematics and good teaching, with examples of very good teaching seen in English and mathematics. The school has recognised that the quality of education provided for above average attaining pupils could be improved in science and foundation subjects with more rigorous use of assessment. The good quality of education provided is a contributory factor to the very high standards that pupils attain by the time that they leave school, ensuring that they are very well prepared for their next steps of education.

### Teaching and learning

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is good** with examples of very effective practice in the Foundation Stage and for those pupils who have special educational needs. All groups of pupils are effectively challenged and their academic needs are well met. However, the teaching of English, mathematics, history and geography is generally better than that of other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and there is no unsatisfactory teaching because of effective monitoring and feedback by the headteacher.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching of children in the Foundation Stage of learning and special educational needs;
- Teaching in English, mathematics, history and geography is good;
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge and planning of lessons are good;
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good;
- Very good use is made of support staff in lessons;
- Assessments in English and mathematics are used very well to plan the next steps of pupils' learning;
- Assessments and their use in science, ICT and foundation subjects are insufficiently developed;
- The use of ICT to support learning in lessons is not sufficiently well developed;
- Occasional lack of extension activities to support higher attaining pupils slows down the rates of their learning;
- The quality of teachers' marking needs attention in order that all pupils know how to improve their work.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	13	9	0	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.*

12. During the week of inspection, two very good lessons were seen, one in the Foundation Stage of learning and one when special educational needs pupils were taught by the co-ordinator. In these lessons the teachers concerned set very high expectations for their pupils and encouraged them to try out things on their own. At all times very good support was given by

both the teacher and the classroom assistant, providing a high level of emotional security, and pupils made very good gains in learning. In a one-to-one lesson taught by the SENCO a pupil made very good gains whilst learning how to self-correct spellings and develop skills of finding out relevant information from text. The very good quality of the teacher's explanations and confidence building resulted in very good gains made in learning. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good with very good features, especially in the teaching of pupils' personal, social and emotional development. A good balance of activities is provided for pupils to learn through sensory experiences coupled with the rigorous teaching of basic skills of reading, writing and number. Children want to learn because the environment is stimulating and attractive with good quality resources provided. The teacher and support assistant work well as a team and their particular strengths complement one another well.

13. Throughout the school the teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in English, mathematics, science, history and geography. In English and mathematics lessons are planned well and all groups of pupils are effectively challenged; for example, in a good numeracy lesson in Year1/2 the teacher continuously checked pupils' understanding of place value by very effective questioning, resulting in pupils understanding the concept well. Teachers have particularly good knowledge of the local area of Harpenden and this helps all groups of pupils gain a very good insight into how things have changed in their locality. A particularly effective example of analysing census data was seen in history in Year 6. A suitable range of strategies is used to keep pupils on task, pupils work individually, in pairs and in groups, contributing well to the positive attitudes all groups of pupils have to learning.
14. In all classes pupils have good relationships with teachers, humour is used effectively and pupils respect their teachers. In a good Year 6 lesson, when pupils were reading Laurie Lee's "Cider with Rosie", the class teacher continuously upgraded pupils' explanations of the word "articulate" until pupils fully understood the meaning within the text.
15. Very good use of support staff is made in all lessons and this contributes positively to pupils' learning. Support staff keep a vigilant eye on any pupils who may be struggling with their understanding of what they are being taught and they help them break up the learning into manageable steps so that the pupils can acquire knowledge at their own pace. In the Foundation Stage, for example, during a lesson on creative development, several children struggled with holding their paintbrushes whilst painting and the support teachers helped them to get a thin line of paint on to their paper by modelling how to dip the paintbrush into the paint and run it across the paper with an upward stroke. Once they copied what they had been shown, they made good gains in learning.
16. A contributory factor to the good gains that all groups of pupils make in learning, especially in English and mathematics, is the very good quality and use of assessments developed by the headteacher which clearly show what pupils know and understand. Teachers use this information well when planning the next steps of pupils' learning, and the school has recognised that assessment in science and the foundation subjects needs to be developed further. In some subjects there is insufficient identification in teachers' medium-term planning of what different groups of pupils should be learning in relation to skills and knowledge, based upon their prior attainment, resulting in similar tasks being given to pupils of all capabilities in mixed age classes at times. This does not always provide sufficient challenge. This is echoed by pupils' responses to questionnaires and interviews. The school has recognised that this is an area for development and plans are in place to develop the quality of medium-term planning, identifying subject-specific skills progression and expectations for mixed age groups. ICT is not yet always used appropriately across the curriculum to develop learning and, furthermore, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise the skills they have acquired from home. The recent development of the ICT suite will rectify this issue and plans are in place to develop both planning and assessment in ICT. Equality of opportunity in all learning activities is very well fostered throughout the school, resulting in all groups of pupils having full access to all aspects of learning.

17. The quality of teachers' marking, whilst satisfactory overall, is variable. Too often mediocre work is marked as excellent or very good and insufficient emphasis is placed on reminding pupils to present their work neatly. Pupils are not sufficiently informed about how they can improve the quality of their work and too few opportunities are provided for them to correct their work. Whilst marking is regular, it is not sufficiently informative, preventing pupils from taking more responsibility for their learning. There is an over use of worksheets, preventing pupils from developing their skills of independent learning, although these are appropriately used for the good range of homework activities given to support pupils' learning. Parents are very supportive of teachers but would like more rigorous homework. Inspection findings show that the school has an open door policy and parents can ask for more homework at any time.
18. In spite of the weaknesses identified in teaching, the strengths seen far outweigh them, teachers are very hard working, professional, and clearly love their craft. Classrooms are purposeful learning environments where pupils are well cared for.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. **Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, and the provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good.** Provision is broadly similar to that provided at the time of the previous inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality of the provision for children in the reception class;
- The very good implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies;
- The very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs;
- The very good enrichment produced through extra-curricular activities and educational visits;
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects of the curriculum is underdeveloped;
- There are weaknesses in planned opportunities for pupils to develop their subject skills and knowledge further in some subjects;
- The planning of work, in the mixed age classes, occasionally leads to unnecessary repetition of topics and clear expectations of what pupils should achieve are not sufficiently identified;
- The school needs to continue the improvement in the accommodation, resources and use of the library.

## Commentary

19. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education. The curriculum for reception age children is very good. Detailed plans successfully incorporate all the areas of learning that should be taught to children before they enter Year 1. Lesson planning is most comprehensive, and children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences which provide a good balance between play and rigorous skills development. A most stimulating and varied curriculum is the result. Whilst children have a suitable range of wheeled vehicles to use outside, there is no current provision for permanent outdoor equipment, such as climbing frames, and multicultural resources are limited. The school has plans in place to improve the accommodation for outside play.
20. The school has most successfully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Numeracy has been very effectively implemented, with, for example, a most appropriate use of mental arithmetic activities in lessons and a suitable use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum, such as science and design and technology. In literacy very many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills, both within English itself and across the range of curriculum subjects, such as history and geography. The use of the

strategies has had a very significant effect on the raising of standards, as evidenced by the very high percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 in the national tests for English, mathematics and science. Overall the use of literacy across the curriculum is very good, the use of numeracy is good and the use of ICT, whilst satisfactory, could be improved to cover all curriculum areas.

21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Clear procedures are in place and they closely follow the code of practice on the identification and assessment of pupils. The code has been most carefully and effectively implemented by the very experienced SENCO. Individual education plans are of good quality. Care is taken to ensure that the work provided for pupils is closely suited to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in the full range of school activities and the school is very committed to providing equality of opportunity for all of its pupils.
22. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including football, netball, country-dance, choir, recorders, and orchestra. The school welcomes many visitors, including the clergy, the police, members of the veterinary profession and artists, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as Luton Museum, the Globe Theatre and the local Mosque and there is a residential trip for older pupils to Carlisle. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects. Some pupils say that learning in the juniors is not always sufficiently exciting and challenging but teachers are in the process of developing skills progression in all subjects further, which will continue to develop pupils' interest levels even further.
23. The school is currently developing its provision of computers, with the new ICT suite having been opened only recently. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to enhance work in other subjects, for example pupils in Year 6 recorded information from their science experiment on dissolving but, as yet, rigorous planning for ICT across the curriculum is not established sufficiently well to ensure that it fully supports learning in all subjects.
24. The overall standards in the foundation subjects are average, and in history and geography they are above national expectations because of good curriculum coverage. However, in the work seen during the inspection, all groups of pupils were nearly always presented with the same activities during lessons and, whilst outputs were different in relation to the quantity of work different groups produced, better progress could have been made if different groups of pupils were given tasks more suited to their needs. There were too few opportunities for higher attaining pupils, for example, to further extend their skills and knowledge through tackling more demanding extension activities or undertaking their own research work. The provision of such activities would give pupils the chance to raise standards even higher.
25. The small standard number of pupils in the school means that mixed age classes cannot be avoided. This arrangement means that the curriculum has to be planned over a two-year period. At present, whilst short-term planning is often very good, medium-term planning is not precise enough and occasionally work is unnecessarily repeated, especially in science. For example, in a science lesson on food groups, in the juniors, pupils had covered the work before, and this meant that they consolidated learning and opportunities for acquiring new learning were missed during the lesson. Overall teachers' medium-term planning could be improved as, at present, it does not identify subject specific skills to be taught, and expectations, for mixed age classes, of what pupils should achieve by the end of the year are not clearly identified.
26. Due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and governing body, significant improvements have recently been made in the accommodation and resources for ICT. The school is currently developing its library and the provision of books, as there are insufficient books to support learning in all subjects, especially non-fiction books. The previous and current shortcomings in this area have limited the opportunities for pupils to undertake

their own research, in particular. However, the recently-planned actions in the school improvement plan should ensure that this issue is successfully addressed. Overall the match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory with a good number of support staff. Accommodation is satisfactory. It is clean and well maintained in spite of there not being a caretaker, and the headteacher, parents, staff and governors ensure that appropriate standards of cleanliness are maintained. Resources are adequate overall to support learning in all subjects. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory as schemes of work have been put in place. The school has purchased a music scheme and there is good coverage of all of the programmes of study. The school provides pupils with sound opportunities to develop their emerging skills of citizenship and personal, social and health education but these were not inspected to the same extent as other aspects of the curriculum.

## Care, guidance and support

**Provision of support, advice and guidance is good** and supports pupils' personal development well. The seeking of pupils' views and acting on them has recently begun and is still in the process of development.

The school has recognised that, at present, it is not well placed to meet all its obligations connected with assessment of all risks and the child protection policy. The headteacher and governing body are already planning to rectify these issues and training for staff will be provided.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil questionnaires returns show that pupils feel valued and can easily access adults if they are worried;
- Induction to the school is very good and ensures pupils settle into routines quickly and easily;
- This is an inclusive school where thoughtful provision is made for pupils' welfare based on teachers' very good comprehensive and informative records of attainment in English and mathematics and personal information on pupils;
- Individual targets for improvement are set and communicated to all pupils and their parents;
- Detailed health and safety risk assessments are not always sufficiently well undertaken;
- Staff need more training in health and safety requirements and child protection matters.

## Commentary

27. The pastoral/academic care of pupils is satisfactory but there are some weaker elements relating to child protection procedures and health and safety issues.
28. Teachers know their pupils and relate to them well. This is reflected in the questionnaires filled in by pupils who overwhelmingly said that they feel valued by their teachers. Teachers work hard to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils and value them for their individuality. They are kindly and sensitive to their needs. Inspectors find that care and guidance during lunch times is satisfactory overall but necessary systems for recording first aid and pupil incidents do not reflect acceptable levels of good practice in pastoral care. One problem is the informality of some systems and inconsistency in the response of staff in implementing the behaviour policy in situations when 'play fighting' escalates during playtimes. Detailed health and safety risk assessments are recorded and a very effective one was undertaken in the Foundation Stage of learning when the vet's nurse brought several animals into school. Children in the Foundation Stage settle in very quickly due to the very good provision made for them in setting up secure and safe systems of induction. The school places a high emphasis on ensuring that all teachers keep informative records of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, although this is not yet sufficiently extended to other subjects. Generally pupils are well informed of their targets, which are communicated to parents during parents'

consultations, but they are not always recorded on pupils' annual reports, an issue which parents raised during the parents' meeting.

29. All groups of pupils are cared for well in a well maintained, clean environment. Their day-to-day comfort needs are met well by the school. Furniture is clean and attractive, and care is taken to display pupils' work attractively. All pupils when surveyed reported that they could go to an adult for help in school. Some younger pupils confide in their Year 6 'buddy' and they feel more confident when in the playground. Parents praise the effective induction procedure for children new to the school, which is staged so staff can welcome small groups into the reception class at various points in the year. This works well. Whilst the school has very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, they are fully included in all aspects of school life and have very good access to the curriculum and their progress is monitored regularly.
30. Pupils' care is supported effectively by very good anecdotal diaries used by staff to monitor and record pupils' specific needs. As a result, pupils are well-known to their teachers. Pupils have access to sound levels of advice and guidance. Most say teachers help them to improve their work in class effectively but not all of them find marking informative. Awards for achievement are plentiful, but some pupils feel that the system of rewards and sanctions is not encouraging commitment to class or school rules because not all pupils know and understand them sufficiently. It must be remembered that the inspection took place very early in the Autumn term and not all pupils were familiar with the systems.
31. School council members are effective representatives of their school. They meet regularly with their headteacher and discuss issues identified in personal, social and health education sessions.
32. The school has only recently started seeking the views of pupils and acting on them and realises that this is an issue which can be more rigorously developed, especially in implementing the behaviour policy.

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

The school has satisfactory links with its parents and other schools. **Community links, especially with the church, are good** and impact well on pupils' personal development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with a good range of information about the curriculum. Newsletters are regular and of good quality;
- A majority of parents are satisfied with the progress their children make;
- Parents co-operate with staff well in support of children's learning at home and at school;
- Many parents give freely of their time to raise substantial funds because they hold the school in high regard;
- Links between the church and school are strong, strengthen learning and, through participation in church services, increase parental involvement in the school;
- Reports on pupils' progress are not sufficiently informative as they do not provide a full enough picture of pupils' attainment in foundation subjects;
- The school has not yet fully consulted parents about their needs and expectations, nor fully won their hearts and minds, and consequently a significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the manner in which their concerns are acknowledged and dealt with;
- The school prospectus does not meet requirements because it fails to provide essential information.

### **Commentary**

33. The majority of parents value the information they receive. Many however would like improved lines of communications between themselves and the school. Parents' responses in questionnaires, at the pre-inspection meeting and during face-to-face discussions during the

week of inspection, indicate that they are very happy with the quality of education provided for their children and their good rates of progress and almost all give the school both their personal and financial support.

34. Many parents say their children 'love school', make good progress and work hard in lessons. This is confirmed by the pupils' questionnaires. Parents say they are well informed through newsletters and termly briefings on some aspects of the school's work. A good number of parents expressed concerns about the way the school works with them. These issues were pursued, and inspectors judged that insufficient emphasis is put into gaining parents' views about school practices or responding to well-balanced criticisms about the management of pupils' behaviour and safety. This is largely due to the great effort that the headteacher has put into developing systems within the school to ensure high academic standards. Parents generally co-operate well with staff and are instrumental in ensuring that their children carry out their homework regularly, contributing to the high standards pupils attain. Parents are particularly good at hearing their children read and, with the plans for the new library, children will have access to good quality books to take home.
35. There are weaknesses in providing statutory information for parents. Annual reports on pupils' progress do not clearly show what has been achieved in each subject or where progress has slowed; this is largely in relation to foundation subjects. The school prospectus does not include all that it should about provision for special educational needs and what the general arrangements for school discipline are. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement.
36. The level of support parents provide for their children's learning is very high and helped by a wide range of relevant curriculum information, regularly provided at well-attended termly briefings.
37. Parents help out in school and support extra-curricular activities. A thriving parent teacher association raises good amounts of money which is used to support school initiatives; their well-run social events are important in promoting community links. The use of the adjacent community facility for dining eases the problem posed by the lack of a dining hall in the school.
38. Links with the church and local community are good and are satisfactory with other schools and colleges, contributing well to pupils' emerging skills of citizenship and belonging to a church community. Since the appointment of the new headteacher two years ago, much needed to be done to improve assessments, the fabric of the school, the ICT suite and accommodation. The headteacher has been very busy ensuring that the school provides the very best for every child and this has been at the expense of keeping parents regularly fully informed of all the good work that has been undertaken, resulting in parents sometimes saying that their views are not fully taken into consideration. The school is now well placed to continue to forge even more effective relationships and seek parents' views and opinions whilst, at the same time, ensuring that decisions taken are totally focused on the best provision for all groups of pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of the governance and the leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team is good.** The headteacher and governors work together well to create an effective school which has very high standards in English, mathematics and science. Together they have identified the school's immediate priorities and, through high quality strategic planning, have improved the achievement of higher attaining pupils. They are aware of the school's areas for development and have plans in place to address them. The previous inspection found leadership and management to be very good. In the time since then, a new headteacher has been appointed and major administrative issues, some of which were apparent at the last report, have needed to be put in place. These have had to be addressed urgently because the high standard of the school's provision could not be maintained

otherwise. These issues have taken up much of the headteacher's time and have now been effectively addressed. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory when taking into account the degree of effort demanded and the difficulty of the tasks the headteacher faced in improving accommodation of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall good leadership and management of the headteacher in providing a clear educational direction for the school;
- The very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, special educational needs and teaching assistants by the headteacher and senior management team;
- Very good, detailed assessment procedures and monitoring of performance data in English and mathematics which track the performance, progress and achievement of all pupils very effectively;
- The good commitment to inclusion and the promotion of equality to help all pupils make progress;
- Very good financial management to support educational priorities, and good systems for self-evaluation;
- The good governance of the school by the governing body, their strong knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their high degree of involvement in all aspects of school life, in spite of weaknesses relating to the health and safety of pupils;
- The creation of a successful senior management team by the present headteacher;
- The underdeveloped monitoring role of co-ordinators, particularly in monitoring teaching and learning, and subject specific skills in planning;
- Lack of precision about the degree expected of pupils' progress on staff performance management targets;
- The communication systems between the headteacher and parents have minor weaknesses.

### Commentary

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	375,632	Balance from previous year	19,622
Total expenditure	322,292	Balance carried forward to the next	50,546
Expenditure per pupil	2,066		

39. The headteacher and governors have used their knowledge of the school well to prioritise the needs of the school effectively. Financial management is very good and has been a demanding issue as the headteacher has had to make many bids for funding. The school's carry over figure is targeted at improving the fabric of the building and ICT provision. In this she has been well assisted by the governors. They have implemented their plans for developing essential school building projects very successfully, and the school is now well placed to raise its standards of teaching and learning rapidly in information and communication technology. The school has good systems of self-evaluation in place and both staff and governors are very secure in their knowledge of what needs to be done to ensure that the school improves on its previous best performance. They have raised standards in English and mathematics significantly by the end of Year 6 by introducing a very good tracking system to monitor pupils' progress, which is well used by all staff to help them plan suitable work for pupils of all capabilities and so to raise standards. The recent training of teaching assistants has been very effective and enables them to support SEN pupils in the classroom so they achieve well. The very good management of special educational needs by the co-ordinator, and the headteacher's and governors' commitment to inclusion, ensuring all pupils are equally involved

in school life, also have the effect of raising standards significantly in class because individual needs of these pupils are addressed very well. The creation of the senior management team by the present headteacher has been effective in raising standards throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage where children make rapid progress in response to very good provision. The Foundation Stage is managed very well by the very hard working co-ordinator.

40. While the new senior management team is successful, there is no deputy headteacher in the school, and this has meant that the headteacher has had many pressing issues to deal with. Certain tasks, such as improving the assessment procedures in foundation subjects and science, and defining the development of subject specific skills, have not yet been fully addressed. Linked to this is the need to develop the monitoring role of co-ordinators so that eventually they can act as team leaders in helping the headteacher continue to implement performance management, and to ensure that curriculum planning for their subjects is improved. At present performance management is effective but pupils' progress targets need to be more precise in identifying time scales by which standards should rise. The headteacher has managed to create an appropriate work/life balance within the school through computerising the school's planning systems; this has been of great benefit to the staff as there is now consistency of approach by all staff. The headteacher is a competent manager who is well supported by very efficient administrative staff. Governors ensure that the principles of best value are used and these are central to the school's management and purchasing of resources. Procedures for evaluating cost effectiveness of pending are good overall. The race relations policy is monitored effectively and all staff are aware of its contents. The headteacher has worked very hard to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. The school improvement plan is a very detailed and comprehensive document which identifies all the areas needed for improvement. The headteacher, staff and governors have good skills of self-evaluation and they analyse and use comparative data very well.
41. Opportunities for the continuous professional development of staff are good, arising out of the effective monitoring of teaching and learning, and the previous newly qualified teachers have been well supported and have successfully completed their probationary year. In her annual review with the governors, the headteacher was set highly ambitious targets, which she is well on the way to achieving. However, she has not yet had the time to achieve a strong public presence in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of some parents. The governors have sought advice on ensuring that all aspects of health and safety have been addressed. However, there are still issues outstanding which are in the process of being rectified so that all statutory requirements are fully met. Staff will be trained further on child protection issues. The school building belongs to the Diocesan Board of Education and it takes a considerable length of time to ensure that notices regarding health and safety issues are displayed. All staff and the governing body are very keen to provide the very best for the pupils; and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed. She has worked relentlessly at establishing effective systems, ensuring that high standards are maintained by all groups of pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory and a high quality of leadership has been maintained.

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

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

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and has been improved since that reported at the time of the previous inspection. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage of learning is very good and very balanced learning opportunities are provided for children, based upon detailed assessments of children's academic and social competencies. The children had been in school for just three days at the time of the latest inspection.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children are on course to be well above the expected level by the end of reception.

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

- Children's very good attitudes and behaviour;
- Their good relationships both with adults and other children;
- The very good quality of teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

42. The children have settled very well into school life. They have learnt how to behave in school and be part of a social group. They readily help their teacher in giving out materials and equipment, and then in tidying up at the end. They are eager to explore new learning, and they are able to concentrate on work being undertaken. They have a well-developed sense of what is right and wrong, and their behaviour is consistently very good.
43. The children are prepared to work with other children, take turns and share fairly. They are able to move confidently around the classroom, and the school, and they ask for assistance where required. Their attitudes to school, to other children, to their teacher and the teaching assistant, and to their whole environment, are most positive.
44. Teaching is very good. The teacher knows the children well and responds very appropriately to their individual needs. The children are continually encouraged to be involved in a range of activities, and, where necessary, they are reminded about such things as sharing and politeness. Particularly effective use is made of the teaching assistant, who works very well with the teacher in establishing the high standards of behaviour and social skills. Children are helped to make very good progress.

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

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good. Children are on course to be above the expected level by the time they leave reception.

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

- Children's above average skills in speaking and listening;
- Their appreciation of books;
- The good quality of teaching and learning; and
- Children's weak skills in controlling pencils when forming their letters.

## Commentary

45. All children pay close attention to their teacher, listening with interest and concentration to stories, poems and instructions. Speaking skills are well developed, and the majority are keen to answer questions and offer opinions, sometimes at length.
46. Children show a keen interest in books, and they handle them with care. The majority of the class understand some letter sounds and they are beginning to recognise simple words.
47. Teaching is good overall. The teacher provides an interesting range of books to read to the children, enhancing the children's listening skills. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking skills, both in front of the class and in the home corner. Children are provided with suitable books to study, and they are also encouraged to develop their writing skills through the provision of suitable activities but they are not always corrected when writing their letters.
48. Most children successfully practise their emergent writing skills, such as when they write out notes in their role-play activities in the 'Vet's Surgery'. Nearly all of the children can write their names independently. Not all children hold their pencils correctly or comfortably, and this results in some ill-formed letters.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

**Provision in mathematical development is good.** Children are on course to be above the expected level when they leave reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's good basic knowledge of number;
- Their good use of mathematical language;
- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- The correct formation and orientation of numbers are not always sufficiently well modelled.

## Commentary

49. Most children can successfully count to ten, with some counting further. The majority clearly understand the concept, and most can count out an appropriate number of objects with confidence. Higher attaining children can readily add 'one more'.
50. In using water and sand, most pupils understand such words as 'empty' and 'full', and in comparing size they are aware of 'big' and 'small'. Most children successfully extend their mathematical vocabulary to name a variety of two-dimensional shapes.
51. Teaching is good overall. The work is well planned and carefully matched to the needs of the children. Many opportunities are provided for the children to count, often within practical activities, such as counting shapes or small figures. A good provision of resources, such as water, sand and number games and number lines, helps children develop their mathematical language and understanding. Their progress is good.
52. Whilst most children are developing suitable control in forming their numbers, a small number are tending to reverse some of their digits and insufficient opportunities are provided to model the correct formation of numbers, especially in structured play.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

**Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.** Children are on course to be well above the expected level by the end of reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's very good knowledge of the human body;
- Their good skills in undertaking simple cookery activities;
- The children's good ability to produce work on the computer;
- The very good quality of teaching and learning; and
- The limited range of multicultural resources.

### Commentary

53. Children can name the main external features of the human body, such as hand, foot and elbow. Most are aware of the various human senses and can explain the difference, for example, between tasting and smelling. They understand the importance of the senses.
54. Children have been provided with opportunities to work with food and they have successfully made items such as cakes and biscuits. Some of the biscuits were in the shape of figures. The children further developed their mathematical skills in adding and counting buttons and eyes using currants.
55. All children have used computers and, with some help, they have used the mouse to dress, and then print a picture of a teddy bear.
56. Teaching is consistently very good in this area of learning. As a result, the children's achievement is very good. Children are provided with a very wide range of experiences, such as looking at pictures and photographs, tackling simple experiments, being taken on trips around the school, using the computer and undertaking practical activities, such as working with food. The teaching assistant provides most effective help to the children in many of these activities. Good opportunities are provided to teach children about multicultural festivals, but there is a lack of multicultural resources such as ethnic dressing up clothes, dolls and different varieties of play food.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

**Provision in physical development is good.** Children are on course to be above the expected level by the end of reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's good skills in using and handling large and small items of classroom equipment;
- Their good abilities with a range of larger play equipment in the hall and on the yard;
- The good quality of teaching and learning;
- Children's underdeveloped skills in handling and using such items as pencils and paint brushes; and
- The lack of provision of fixed items of climbing equipment in the outside play area.

### Commentary

57. Children's dexterity in handling large and small items in the classroom is developing well, such as when they use construction kits and jigsaws, and thread small objects onto a string. Children's manipulative skills are good. Malleable materials, such as playdough, are used

successfully, for instance, when they make items such as small animals, and letters and numbers. They use construction toys with confidence, producing a range of houses and vehicles.

58. They have suitable opportunities to use balls, ropes, hoops and climbing apparatus, when receiving lessons in the hall, and most children show confidence in using such items. Most are also happy when further developing their skills through using the array of wheeled vehicles in the outside area.
59. Teaching is consistently good. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant join in with the children and demonstrate how to carry out different activities and develop various skills. This helps all children to achieve well. A wide and varied array of activities is provided and children are encouraged to 'keep busy' with them throughout the day. In particular, all adults are keen to emphasise the need for the children to carry out all activities safely.
60. Some children lack some control when undertaking activities which require more control and accuracy, such as painting and colouring, and writing letters and numbers.
61. Whilst overall there is an adequate range of resources and equipment available for the children, the addition of permanent outdoor facilities, such as climbing frames, would further enhance this provision.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision for creative development is good.** Children are on course to exceed the expected levels by the end of reception.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children's good ability to produce a variety of pictures and collages;
- Their good ability to use their imagination, both in producing pictures, and in taking part in activities in the home corner;
- The children's high levels of confidence in taking part in musical activities; and
- The good quality of teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

62. Children confidently use a variety of paints and crayons, and they produce pictures both from direct observation as well as from their imagination. They have successfully produced, for example, pictures of themselves and observations of different animals. They have also shown some confidence in making three-dimensional items, and they have, for example, successfully produced collages using wool, felt, feathers and glitter.
63. Children readily take part in role-play activities. Currently the home corner is in the form of a 'Vet's Surgery', and the children happily play the parts of vet, nurse and receptionist with equal enthusiasm.
64. Children can confidently sing songs and rhymes, clap a steady beat and perform an appropriate range of actions to their songs. They can successfully use un-tuned percussion instruments to accompany the rest of the class singing, and they listen carefully to a range of pre-recorded music.
65. Teaching is good. Through careful planning, the teacher ensures that all the children have opportunities to take part in all activities. Adults also encourage the children to develop their independence by arranging sessions when they are allowed to move from one activity to another when they are ready. They also make sure, however, that the children experience all

the activities and that help is always available when it is needed. In enjoying the variety of work available, and being well supported by adults, the children are helped to make good progress.

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

### **ENGLISH**

**Provision for English is good with very good features** and standards are even higher than those seen at the time of the previous inspection. Satisfactory improvement has been made in raising standards.

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

- Teaching is good with many strengths;
- Pupils' standards are very high, especially in reading and speaking and listening;
- Assessment of end of year tests is very good;
- Very good use of teaching assistants;
- Pupils' good attitudes to their work;
- Pupils' skills of literacy are used very well in other subjects;
- Provision for the library is barely satisfactory; the unsatisfactory number of books available and opportunities for independent learning are not encouraging for pupils;
- The way pupils present their work is sometimes untidy;
- Marking of pupils' work lacks dialogue and is not always as helpful as it could be; and
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

#### **Commentary**

66. Standards in national tests are very high and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Those with special educational needs achieve very well. Pupils enter school with good speaking and listening skills. This capability, combined with good teaching and a high level of parental support at home, makes a very good starting point for developing high standards in reading and writing. Pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result of this combination. Teachers provide challenging work in both grammar and texts and they plan very well as a result of their very good use of assessment techniques. This enables them to extend and improve the knowledge of all pupils. Pupils with SEN have inspired individual teaching and this gets to the heart of their difficulties and gives them confidence to manage their own problems better and work more independently. Teachers and teaching assistants use individual education plans very well and parents are kept fully informed and involved in their children's progress. Teaching is good, with brisk pace, thorough planning and interesting texts. The teaching of reading, especially reading aloud, is very good. In the infants teachers set a very good example to pupils as they are learning to read expressively and, by the time pupils are in Year 6, they read aloud with confidence, able to use their voices well to add meaning and interest to the text. As a result, other pupils listen with interest and respect, and it is a positive experience. Teachers work very well with teaching assistants, giving clear written instructions and making good use of their time. Teaching assistants keep careful notes of pupils' attempts at their work, and by their focused support enable pupils to improve their rate of progress. By the end of Year 2 pupils know the sounds of letters very well. They read fluently and their writing is clear, imaginative, well punctuated, and their spelling is phonetically justifiable and good overall. Pupils know the writing conventions of fairy stories, such as "once upon a time", "long ago", and they really enjoy poetry, especially when they match up rhyming words. By the end of Year 6 they are avid readers with a love of learning. They write in many genres and some very good writing was seen in their history books when they wrote accounts of life in the Second World War and poverty of Victorian times. Pupils in both the infants and juniors speak clearly and articulately. They have a good, varied vocabulary and they have clear thinking skills.

67. While pupils work at a good speed, their presentation is often untidy, and teachers' marking is not always as helpful to pupils as it could be, missing opportunities to raise standards and to develop pupils' skills of independent learning. The school has plans to develop its library facilities as at present the library is in a passage-way, has too few books and is a weaker element of the school's provision. The headteacher is well aware of this, but has had more pressing priorities to address.
68. Pupils are keen to learn, work hard and their behaviour is good. The use of computers, although satisfactory, is still at a comparatively early stage because the computer suite was completed the week before the inspection took place. This absence of provision, combined with weak library facilities, has reduced pupils' opportunities to work independently and to do their own research at school. ICT use is confined mainly to word processing and presentation of work in different fonts, because of inadequate facilities.
69. The co-ordinator's leadership is good. The senior management team has worked together very well to raise standards in English. The very good assessment techniques, introduced by the new headteacher, combined with the very good management of special educational needs and recent training of classroom assistants, have made a very good contribution to classroom standards and are very likely to maintain the high level of pupils' achievement.

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

70. Pupils' good general knowledge, combined with their grammatically correct spoken patterns, means that they communicate very fluently and confidently in English and other subjects. Use of literacy across the curriculum, especially history and geography, is very good. Pupils build on their strengths as they go up the school, understand their teachers well and remember new vocabulary quickly.

### **MATHEMATICS**

**Provision in mathematics is good.** Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average. Pupils' achievement is good. Provision is similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The high standards achieved by pupils throughout the school;
- The good quality of the teaching and learning;
- The good attitudes shown by the pupils;
- The very good assessment of pupils' work;
- The good role played by the subject co-ordinator;
- The unsatisfactory standard of presentation of work by some pupils; and
- Marking of pupils' work is variable; whilst it is satisfactory overall, it could be better.

### **Commentary**

71. By Year 2, pupils successfully carry out a range of practical and problem solving activities, and higher attainers confidently try to discover their own ways to find solutions. Pupils are confident in handling numbers and they have a clear understanding of addition and subtraction. They know the multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10, and most can undertake a range of multiplication and division exercises accordingly. They successfully identify halves and quarters, and many can find a fraction of a whole number. Most pupils can correctly identify two and three-dimensional shapes and reflective symmetry, and they have a good understanding of time on the hour and half hour. In measuring activities, most pupils are able to use both standard and non-standard units of measure confidently. Pupils successfully collect data, such as on pupils' favourite food, and they carefully represent their findings in bar graphs.

72. By Year 6, most pupils successfully develop their own strategies for solving problems. They readily identify the information they need and they draw their own conclusions from their work. Pupils confidently undertake work in addition and subtraction, as well as in a range of multiplication and division forms. They have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures and most pupils are confident in saying the times-tables and in quickly recalling individual multiplication and division facts to 10x10. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions and they readily identify equivalent fractions and reduce a fraction to its lowest terms. Pupils use and interpret co-ordinates in the first quadrant. Pupils name a range of angles, draw angles to the nearest degree and most are able to identify and calculate perimeters and areas of regular and compound shapes, using an appropriate formula when required. Pupils collect data on a variety of issues and they successfully produce a range of graphs to display their findings. They then confidently interpret information that is contained in the graphs. No difference in achievement by gender was identified during the inspection.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are carefully planned, based on the pattern of the National Numeracy framework. In particular, teachers make most careful allowance for the provision of practical and problem-solving activities. They are also careful to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs. All teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons. They are also aware of the need to continue to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary and they are careful to address this issue during lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instruction and give much well-directed support throughout. Lessons are brisk in pace, pupils are kept busy and much help and support is provided, with the result that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their overall mathematical ability. Teachers hold most appropriate plenary sessions, in which pupils are given an opportunity to review their learning and teachers to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done.
74. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly but, although some teachers provide regular comments of advice or praise, others do not carry out the practice consistently. This is particularly the case in relation to pupils' presentation of their work, where appropriate comments are not always made about untidiness.
75. Whilst the academic standard of pupils' work is high, this is not always matched by the presentation of their work. Many pupils take care with the appearance of their books and, indeed, some take a pride in it. However, others are less careful.
76. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy the work, the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm, they work well with other pupils, when required, and they make considerable efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are always well behaved and this enables them to concentrate well and make suitable progress. The use of ICT in mathematics is satisfactory.
77. The assessment of pupils' work is very good, contributing to the very high standards that all groups of pupils attain. Regular tests are undertaken and an extensive amount of information is provided to show both pupils' current attainment and the progress they have made. Pupils are provided with targets for improving their work and these targets are regularly reviewed. The assessment of work is also used very well to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their particular needs. Higher attaining pupils in particular are provided with challenging activities and this has contributed well to the school's current high standards.
78. The co-ordinator has played a significant role in raising and maintaining standards and her leadership is very good. The subject has been given a high profile and the numeracy strategy has been well implemented. The co-ordinator regularly monitors the work being tackled and, through the successful use of assessment, a close eye has been kept on the standards being achieved. Expectations are high and pupils are provided with every opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

79. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. It is used well in history, geography, science and art and design. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise their skills of understanding co-ordinates and making symmetrical patterns, producing graphs (although many line graphs were not seen during the inspection). Pupils can calculate the temperature and forces used in science and, in history, they have a good sense of ordering chronological events by date, but too few opportunities are provided for data logging and using a range of strategies to record mathematical findings.

## SCIENCE

**Provision in science is good.** The co-ordinator has returned to school after a long illness and plans are in place to tackle the areas for development identified by the school and by the inspection team. **Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards at the end of both key stages;
- There is good coverage of the programmes of study for the science curriculum;
- Enhanced learning opportunities through visits and visitors enable pupils to experience first hand learning in meaningful contexts;
- More opportunities are needed for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning;
- The development of assessments and their use to plan the next steps of learning are not well established;
- Curriculum planning needs to be improved;
- More opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of experimental and investigative science and present their results in a variety of ways; and
- The use of ICT to support learning and the written presentation of pupils' work are underdeveloped.

### Commentary

80. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards which are well above average and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in spite of underdeveloped assessment procedures and several minor weaknesses in curriculum planning such as the identification of scientific skills. This is because the quality of teaching is good overall, support staff are used effectively and pupils have good general knowledge. They are knowledgeable about scientific issues and receive good input from their parents. The school provides an interesting range of enhanced learning opportunities for pupils to find out more about scientific processes. For example, pupils have undertaken mini-safaris to understand the habitats of mini beasts and are regular visitors to places of scientific interest.
81. Pupils in Year 2 know how the human body works, they know the functions of the heart and muscles, and they can name many bones of the human skeleton. Throughout the school, pupils are particularly interested in mini-beasts and very good links have been set up with Rothamsted Institute. The most able pupils have attended master classes to challenge them further and this has had a positive effect on the development of their thinking skills. Pupils in the infants write very well and they can explain the conditions needed for plants to grow, giving detailed information as to how lack of sunlight affects the greenness of leaves. Several very good examples of research were seen with pupils developing a fact file on bees. Pupils know how forces make things move, stop and change direction.
82. By the end of Year 6, pupils know which materials reflect light, how liquids keep the shape of containers that they are poured into and how much air there is in different types of soils. They

- can readily identify how much air there is in gravel and they know that they need to take repeated readings of experiments to ensure accurate results.
83. Very good examples of the use of literacy were seen in the juniors. In the oldest class, pupils wrote letters to their friends explaining that air does exist and how this can be proved. Pupils' writing is full of convincing explanations and lively discussions. In a mock interview with Professor S Illy, pupils in the 'Brain Studio' asked questions relating to how various organs function. This type of lively writing contributes well to pupils' good attitudes to learning.
84. Although pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and cover a lot of work, in both the infants and the juniors, a weakness in the science curriculum is the lack of clearly defined expectations in teachers' medium-term planning for mixed age classes and identification of progressive scientific skills, such as evaluation, observation, synthesis, comparison and recording of findings in a variety of ways, and especially in using ICT as an aid to learning. This restricts pupils from developing their skills of independent learning and scientific enquiry. At present, the library does not contain sufficient books to support independent learning, an issue which the school is addressing.
85. Teaching is good, teachers have secure subject knowledge, make lessons interesting and use time effectively. However, they give pupils too many worksheets, restricting pupils from recording their findings in a variety of ways. Teachers' marking is satisfactory, but it is over generous, with too many instances of work being praised which is clearly not the pupils' best. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use graphs and set up their own ways of recording experiments. Support staff are very well used to help all groups of pupils access the curriculum. The use of assessment is underdeveloped and this, at times, restricts above-average attainers from achieving more, and consolidating their learning rather than extending it.
86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is very hard working, knows her subject well and ensures that pupils' learning is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors. However, her monitoring role for teaching and learning is less well developed and the school is providing further training in this aspect of leadership. The school has maintained the high standards identified in the previous inspection and the quality of teaching has improved. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory, but there are still a number of issues that need to be addressed, such as developing pupils' skills of recording and their knowledge of experimental and investigative science.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.** Standards are in line with those expected at both Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection as the quality of resources has improved.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' good skills in word processing;
- Pupils' confidence in using control technology;
- The good attitudes shown by pupils;
- The limited use made of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum;
- The insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to monitor external events and record the results of their learning in a variety of ways;
- Teachers' skills in teaching in the new ICT suite are just satisfactory; and
- The monitoring role of the co-ordinator needs further development.

### **Commentary**

87. Pupils show good skills in word processing. Younger pupils produce text, where they show the ability to introduce capital letters and full-stops, and to correct mistakes they have made. Older pupils confidently change the font, colour and size of their work, and they successfully move portions of text from one place to another. Pupils in Years 2 and 3, for example, have written about different animals, and those in Years 5 and 6 have written about Black Beauty and the legend of Bedgelert.
88. Discussions with pupils show that they have a secure understanding of control technology. Pupils in Year 2 readily explain how to instruct a floor turtle to move over varying distances. Pupils in Year 6 have developed their skills to enable them to give instructions to work their own models of play ground equipment.
89. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. When using computers, they listen very carefully to the instructions being given and they show good concentration when working with equipment. They work well alone and with partners when required to do so, readily taking turns and helping each other. They behave well and are very keen to accomplish whatever task is set them. They handle all forms of equipment with great care. Pupils' attitudes contribute well towards the sound progress they are all now making.
90. The school is currently developing its work in ICT, with the new suite having only been open for a matter of days. Whilst satisfactory coverage is made of most aspects of the subject, limited use is currently made of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. Some use is made in science and art and design, for example, but the school recognises the need to extend this now into the planning for all subjects.
91. Older pupils successfully develop their control skills and they confidently retrieve information they require. They recognise patterns and relationships in, for example, adventure games, and they confidently predict the outcome of different decisions. Pupils have limited opportunities, however, to develop their skills in monitoring external events, such as light and temperature, and pupils currently lack confidence in this area. Furthermore, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to record their learning in a variety of ways as, for example, in science the scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that insufficient use was made of ICT to construct a variety of graphs and charts.
92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and they are now able to provide a good array of resources in the new ICT suite. Good use is made of learning support assistants to support and help pupils. This advice enables the pupils, including those with special needs, to achieve satisfactorily. However, teachers are still developing their skills in using the suite. In one lesson seen, the teacher grouped the pupils around a computer and provided clear and careful demonstration and explanation of the work to be tackled. In other lessons, the teachers relied on verbal instruction, without demonstration, and a number of pupils did not always find it easy to understand and carry out the routines required. Some time was lost whilst these pupils received personal attention.
93. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic, and she has done much to support her colleagues in increasing provision in the subject. This enthusiasm has clearly helped to raise the confidence of both staff and pupils. As yet, however, she has little opportunity to monitor the work in class, to see for herself the standards being achieved. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory as resources have been audited and plans are in place to implement ICT across the curriculum rigorously.

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

94. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory but, as yet, it is not as well developed as it can be, largely due to the lack of both hardware and software. This is now improving due to the opening of a new ICT suite.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

**Provision for geography is good.** Standards are high at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Only one lesson was available for observation during the inspection, so no judgement on teaching could be made. The school has maintained the good quality of provision and standards reported at the previous inspection.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good curriculum coverage;
- The good amount and quality of pupils' work ;
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school;
- Pupils' good use of subject-specific vocabulary, geographical skills and knowledge of the local area;
- Underdeveloped assessment procedures;
- Overuse of worksheets, resulting in the above average attaining pupils being under challenged.

#### Commentary

95. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' work reveals that they make good progress and standards are well above average. They use their high quality English and mathematical skills well to write and explain fluently and clearly, for example, when writing about the water cycle, pumping stations and the need for clean water. They use their computer skills effectively to present information clearly and succinctly in a variety of formats, largely related to word processing. Pupils improve their ability to use maps steadily throughout the school. They learn to compare different areas of the country well with increasing detail and understanding. They show they can combine these skills to good effect on a trip to Carlisle when they make field notes, note distances between different areas of the town and types of transport and buildings. By Year 6, pupils become aware of the link between the environment, the history of Harpenden and how this affects the purpose of the town and the work opportunities.
96. Teachers know their pupils well and they have a satisfactory overall view of their attainment. However, assessment is not as rigorous as it can be and, too often, pupils in mixed age classes cover the same learning intentions. Some above average pupils are not being challenged sufficiently to extend their learning due to the overuse of worksheets which do not make sufficient demands upon their learning.
97. Pupils are enthusiastic, especially about the field trips. Their attitudes to the subject and their achievements are good. The leadership and management of the subject are good, because the co-ordinator ensures that planning is monitored for effective coverage, and standards are above average, due to a good scheme of work, adequate resources and good emphasis placed on local geography. The curriculum is much enhanced by the school's residential visits.

### History

**The provision for history is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and pupils at the end of both key stages achieve standards which are well above average** and achievements of all of pupils are good, because of the good coverage of all programmes of study, the very good use of literacy in the subject and good examples of teaching seen during the week of inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good knowledge of life in the past and how fashion and schooling have changed;
- A wide variety of writing genres are used, helping pupils develop their skills of empathy;
- Pupils have very good knowledge of how Harpenden has changed over the years;
- Pupils are interested in the subject, behave well and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment;
- Weak assessment procedures and inadequately defined expectations of what pupils should achieve in mixed age classes;
- The use of ICT is satisfactory overall but it could be better.

## Commentary

98. By the end of Year 2, pupils can identify similarities and differences in toys and kitchens and fashion from the past. They know that Victorian schools were a lot stricter than schools of today. They understand the concept of invasion and that many different tribes invaded the British Isles long ago. They know that over the years, the church of St Nicholas has been very important to the people of Harpenden, as it is today, and that many aspects of its architecture date back many years. All groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their capability and prior attainment and they ask good-quality questions to develop their understanding of how life was for people in the past.
99. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed very good skills of historical enquiry, they interrogate documents such as maps, charts and play scripts and come up with very sensible suggestions for the reasons about why the War of the Roses broke out and why Henry VIII needed to marry so many wives. Pupils write very well, for example, a Year 6 pupil wrote about the drudgery of a maid's life in Victorian times by highlighting her weariness in 'My mill diary'. The pupil wrote: "I was nearly killed in the last hour by carelessly falling into slumber whilst I was at work". In another example of an interview with Lord Shaftesbury and Dr Barnardo, pupils used their literacy skills very well to ask pertinent questions relating to why benefactors wanted to improve conditions for pupils by the passing of the 1800 Factory Act. Pupils' very good use of literacy, especially their use of different writing genres (diaries, interviews and accounts), enables them to develop their skills of empathy because they are encouraged to see life in olden times through the eyes of different people.
100. Only one lesson was seen, therefore judgements on the quality of teaching over time cannot be made, but it would appear from evidence seen in teachers' files that, generally, teachers plan well, but too often the same tasks are set for different capabilities and age groups of pupils in mixed age classes, and this, on occasions, restricts rates of progress. In the very few lessons seen during the week of inspection the teachers had pupils spellbound, due to the good use of resources and clear explanations given. ICT is not used sufficiently well to develop learning, although a very effective example was seen in the oldest class where pupils interpreted census data about families living in Harpenden. The leadership and management are satisfactory and the co-ordinator has good subject knowledge but does not yet monitor teaching and learning, although an effective start has been made at monitoring teaching. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped. Whilst satisfactory overall, in relation to identifying coverage of topics, they are not sufficiently informative to enable pupils to have a clear understanding of what aspects of historical skills they need to improve upon.

## Religious education

101. To be inspected separately by a Section 23 inspection.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Design and technology

**Provision in design and technology is satisfactory.** Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. During the current inspection no lessons were seen. Judgements are made, therefore, based on discussions with pupils and a study of their previous work.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good skills in making a variety of items;
- The good attitudes shown by the pupils;
- There are weaknesses in pupils' evaluations of the work they do;
- Curriculum planning is not rigorous enough to ensure that expectations and skills progression of pupils in mixed age classes are clearly defined;
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped.

### Commentary

102. By Year 2, pupils are confident in choosing from a suitable range of materials and tools to help them make their product. Having prepared their components, pupils join them with items such as glue or split pins. They successfully make puppets, wheeled-vehicles, cards and sandwiches with a variety of fillings. The items made are carefully finished. By Year 6, pupils confidently choose from an increasing range of resources. They successfully and accurately measure, cut and shape materials, and join them with items such as sticky tape and thread. Pupils have succeeded in making items such as coats for Joseph, food boxes, money containers, slippers, and model structures such as bridges and shelters. Suitable finishing techniques are used when necessary.
103. Although no lessons were seen, discussions with pupils show that their attitudes to the subject are good. They talk enthusiastically about the different items they have made, and how they were planned. They clearly like the subject, they enjoy the opportunities to work with other pupils when necessary, and they are quick to point out the care that is needed when using various tools, especially saws. They are also keen to emphasise the need for hygiene when handling all forms of food.
104. Throughout the school, pupils produce suitable plans for the items they wish to make. They sometimes produce detailed drawings of their product, together with thoughtfully produced lists of the materials and tools that they will need to use. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to evaluate their work, either as they proceed, or when they have finished their product. The use of ICT in this subject is unsatisfactory and has not been sufficiently well developed. The school has recognised this as an area to be addressed.
105. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and she is aware of the coverage of work being undertaken throughout the school. She is able to see some samples of the completed items, but she does not have the opportunity to observe classroom practice, to see for herself how the subject is developing through the school, and so the work to improve the development of subject-specific skills has not yet been addressed. Too often all groups of pupils work at the same level, as demonstrated by displays of work. This is because assessment is underdeveloped and is unsatisfactory overall. Her leadership is satisfactory; she has monitored teachers' plans and is aware of what needs to be done to raise standards.

## Art and design

**Provision for art and design is satisfactory.** There is no judgement for teaching as only one lesson was seen. Standards are lower than they were at the last inspection but this is due to the high emphasis that the school has placed upon developing English and mathematics.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator's subject knowledge is good;
- Pupils' observation skills are good;
- The quality of design throughout the school is good;
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning;
- The use of sketchbooks is much weaker than in the previous inspection;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills are insufficient; and
- A clearly-defined strategy to develop subject-specific skills is lacking and assessment is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

106. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve standards which are in line with national expectations and all groups of pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. In the infants pupils have good skills of observation and they pay attention to detail when they carry out their observational drawing. Pupils can record what they have seen and their observational skills are good. They have a satisfactory sense of perspective. They know how to mix colours but displays of work reveal that pupils have insufficient time to experiment and show their individual flair and creativity. Parents had concerns that this was the case and inspection findings support this view. The use of sketchbooks indicates too little practice of different drawing techniques and that there is a lack of orderliness, purpose and consistency throughout the school in the way they are used. Displays of work indicate that pupils have a good sense of design but there is a lack of imagination and variety. In Year 6 they have well-designed pictures in relation to proportion of colour and shape, and their collage work is neat and effectively executed. Despite the lack of opportunities to use computers until the week prior to the inspection, the school has made good efforts to produce good examples of work in the style of Charles Rennie Macintosh. All pupils have studied the work of great artists and, in the juniors, have produced some very good work, for example, in the style of Mondrian. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They were eager to talk about their work, especially when discussing what they have learned about great artists, and several said art is their favourite subject. The school has several good examples of framed reproductions of the work of great artists, one of which, *The Woodcutter's Daughter* by Millais, was used to very good effect in the one art lesson observed. However, pupils do not have enough time and opportunity to work independently and creatively, and displays indicate that work is over-directed, not allowing pupils to develop their creativity. At present, assessment is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory overall, as insufficient tracking of pupils' skills is taking place; the school has recognised this as an area for development.
107. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is new to the school and is knowledgeable and enthusiastic but, as yet, her input is not reflected in raised standards. She has not yet had time to establish the teaching of subject-specific skills throughout the school. The establishment of drawing skills, knowledge of perspective, colour mixing and the use of light is not yet of a high enough standard to enable pupils to make good progress and achieve at a higher level.

## Music

**Provision for music is satisfactory.** There is no judgement on teaching as only one lesson was seen. At the time of the last inspection, teaching in Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory and the school's scheme of work for music provided insufficient guidance for non-specialist teaching staff. Since then, a commercial scheme has been introduced and this ensures that all members of staff have access to an adequate set of prepared lessons; provision has improved.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's orchestra and choir contribute positively to pupils' musical awareness;
- Pupils' enthusiasm and ability to perform is good;
- Further developments are needed in medium-term planning to build upon the musical knowledge that pupils bring from out-of-school activities, so that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability;
- Composition, particularly notation, is not sufficiently well developed.

### **Commentary**

108. The introduction of the commercial scheme helps teachers to ensure that pupils attain average standards in music by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, this alone does not enable them to achieve to the best of their ability, especially when they have good previous knowledge from outside school. Pupils enjoy music very much and show great enthusiasm, willingness to participate and a desire to learn. Those who take part in the orchestra and choirs have good knowledge of musical notation and terminology. Throughout the school most of the pupils have some experience of using symbols to record their informal composition but not all have yet used any formal notation or computer programs. There was no evidence of knowledge of great composers, reflections on listening to different types of music, or recording and composition in the scrutiny of work. Pupils interviewed were able to name several different composers but were not too sure as to what they had composed. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to play in the orchestra and to sing in the choir, and pupils sing well.
109. While the co-ordination of the subject and resources are satisfactory and adequate for pupils to achieve basic music standards, assessment is unsatisfactory and does not give any indication of the pace at which individual pupils learn. This, combined with the basic content of the curriculum, means that while pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, above average attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could. The school has concentrated heavily on improving the standards and provision for mathematics and English in the last two years and has recognised that now the profile of music needs to be raised so that pupils can develop their creativity and work more independently.

### **Physical education**

110. During the inspection no lessons were seen in physical education. A study of teachers' planning shows that appropriate coverage is made for the subject during the year. During the year all classes attend swimming lessons, and by the end of Year 6, almost all pupils can swim 25 metres, with many swimming significantly further.

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

111. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Pupils in both the infants and the juniors are provided with adequate opportunities to express their feelings, distinguish right from wrong and learn how to care and respect others. This results in pupils developing good and trusting relationships, with one another and with adults, throughout the school. The good links with the community, especially with the church, enable pupils to develop their skills of citizenship. Pupils are very well prepared for later stages of education and they are developing into good ambassadors for their school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	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).*