

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **THONGSLEY FIELDS PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 133699

Headteacher: Ms R C Myer

Lead inspector: Mr Graham Soar

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 258185

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	259
School address:	Buttsgrove Way Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE29 1PE
Telephone number:	(01480) 375 321
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Janine Drew
Date of previous inspection:	July 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thongsley Fields Primary and Nursery School is a new school as a result of amalgamation of Thongsley infant and junior schools in September 2002. The school serves an area of predominantly local authority housing on the Oxmoor development in North Huntingdon. This is a region which has considerable deprivation with higher than average unemployment and rates of crime, and where there are a significant number of families in crisis. The school is similar in size to other primary schools. Most pupils start their education part-time in the Nursery at aged 3 years. Almost half the pupils in the school (49.1 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, well above the national average, the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (6.9 per cent) is higher than in most schools with 28 pupils supported through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and 9 Traveller pupils also receiving support. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs (43 per cent) is well above the national average and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need (5.8 per cent) is also well above the national average. There has been a higher than average change in staffing in recent years, and almost a third of pupils start or leave the school at different times to the normal starting and leaving dates. Most pupils start the school with very low communication, language and literacy levels and a significant number have identified difficulties in social, emotional or behavioural areas but their abilities in other areas of learning are at or below the standards expected of those pupils of the same age in similar schools. Many of the pupils are physically smaller than those of the same age in similar schools.

Under the newly formed leadership there have been significant improvements. The supportive atmosphere and good ethos within the school provides an oasis of calm within a turbulent community that has been recognised by parents and community leaders.

The school is actively involved in seeking additional funding to support developments. A charitable organisation, the 'Triangle Trust' funds the Family Officers who work from the school as part of the family support services. The school set itself appropriate targets for 2004 building on the good achievements of 2003 and making effective use of improved assessment information now available.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10153	Mr Graham Soar	Lead inspector	Science, Design & technology
9942	Mrs Susanne Stevens	Lay inspector	
8602	Pat Baldry	Team inspector	English, Special educational needs, English as an additional language and Information and communication technology
32543	Anne Fisher	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Art and design, Music and Physical education
33157	Julie Bravery	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, History and Religious education

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>7 - 10</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11 - 16</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16 - 20</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	
Special educational needs	<b>20 - 21</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>22 - 38</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>39</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**Thongsley Fields Primary and Nursery is an effective school providing well for its pupils and is giving good support for the community.** Tremendous improvements have been made since the amalgamation in September 2002. **Pupils behave well, and most achieve in line with their capabilities.** For the older pupils, achievements are **good**. Standards are rising from a very low starting point; at the end of Year 6 in 2003 standards were well below national averages in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils are performing in line national averages when compared with similar schools and they are improving at a rate faster than the national average. Value added scores for Year 6 pupils, taking into account their starting points at the end of Year 2, are **in line with the scores nationally** and are **good when compared with similar schools**. Improvements all round are down to the high quality of leadership and management shown by the headteacher, who works closely with her deputies, and together they have created an effective team, committed to high standards of behaviour and achievement. **The school provides good value for money.**

#### **The school's main strengths**

- Leadership of the headteacher in providing a clear vision and commitment to improvement
- Policies provide good guidance and set high expectations to meet the school's stated aims.
- Improvements made and the pace of change since amalgamation, particularly in curriculum provision, pupils' behaviour and their achievements.
- The quality of teaching, learning and progress made in Years 5 and 6.
- Behaviour management and relationships throughout the school are good and are having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning.
- The care, support and guidance provided by staff are good, particularly by those staff working in the classrooms with pupils reflecting the shared commitment by all.
- Links with the community and outside support agencies are very good, particularly in the support provided for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good.

#### **The school's main weaknesses**

- Provision in the Reception is unsatisfactory and does not build on the good Nursery provision.
- Opportunities for pupils to extend their physical development through the use of outdoor play facilities in the Foundation Stage are limited.
- Planned activities to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development are underrepresented in the curriculum.
- Progression in independent research and referencing skills, particularly linked to scientific enquiry, design and technology and investigative mathematics are unsatisfactory.
- Provision and challenge for more able pupils are currently underdeveloped as is extending creativity across the curriculum, although these areas are being addressed in the current action plan.
- Middle management subject co-ordination is at an early stage of development with many individuals new to the school and their roles.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievements throughout the schools are mostly satisfactory.**

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

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

Middle and lower ability pupils make satisfactory progress but the achievement of the most able is not as good as it should be. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well as do those who have English as an additional language. Girls in 2003 performed significantly better than the boys. Improvements in standards in all aspects are clearly evident.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good** throughout the school. Attendance figures, although improving, remain **unsatisfactory** despite good efforts to improve attendance. Provision and support for pupils with challenging behaviour is **very good** and the support and guidance given to pupils and their families are **strengths** of the school. Pupils' social and moral developments are **good**. Cultural development is **unsatisfactory** and spiritual development lacks detailed planning.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **sound** overall. Teaching is **satisfactory** throughout the school but is **good in the Nursery and in Years 5 and 6**; teaching in the **Reception is unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**, and broad, but not as balanced as it should be. The links between the school, parents and the community are **very good** and are a significant strength of the school. Links with other schools are developing and are **good** overall. The **good links** with outside agencies enhance the support provided for pupils with special educational needs, Gypsy Traveller pupils and those from minority ethnic groups, all of whom respond well to what the school provides and they make good progress.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **satisfactory** overall but with many examples of good practice. Leadership of the headteacher and the deputies is **good**. The school development plan provides a **clear focus for the education direction** of the school and addresses the current weaknesses in non-compliance with statutory requirements in the Foundation Stage, design and technology and Religious Education. There is **good guidance to support the newly appointed subject leaders**. Analysis and use of performance data is a **developing strength** in the school. Financial management is **secure** and the governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have taken all reasonable steps to ensure compliance and address the weaknesses.

## PARENTS AND PUPILS VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

**Parents** have an overall positive view of the school; they recognise the significant improvements made. Inspectors agree with the positive statements parents make about the school but felt that some parents had not done justice to the school's good efforts to improve relationships and address poor behaviour and bullying. Some parents wanted more information about the curriculum and ways in which they could support their children's learning.

**Pupils** provide generally positive comments about the school; most notably they enjoy work and like the school as it is. Many think their teachers are 'great'. Pupils are aware of the recent improvements particularly in improved behaviour. Pupils claim if there is any bullying it is dealt with quickly.

## **IMPROVEMENT NEEDED**

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

- Continue to raise standards in language and communication, as well as raising standards in all subjects, but most notably in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the more able pupils are appropriately challenged through independent work.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage most notably in the Reception classes and in the provision for use of outdoor facilities.
- Improve planning and structures to support the cultural and spiritual development of pupils.
- Continue to develop the roles of subject leaders in terms of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, the standards achieved in each subject across the school and in providing appropriate guidance and support for staff.
- Ensure the school meets the statutory requirements in terms of religious education, design and technology and Foundation Stage provision.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are **well below** the national average in English, mathematics and science tests for 2003, but overall performances in lessons and in pupils' work show standards to be **below average** in most subjects. Standards in religious education and design and technology are the weakest. In information and communication technology (ICT), top set English and mathematics groups and in some physical education (PE) lessons, pupils are achieving standards **in line with expectations**. Most pupils including those who have English as an additional language and Traveller pupils achieve appropriately, **in line** with their capabilities, although the **achievement of the more able could be higher**. Lower ability pupils, including those with special educational needs or those having specific additional support **achieve well**. Achievement is best in the Nursery and in Years 5 and 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall progress in English has been very good and pupils now achieve in line with similar schools.
- Overall analysis of pupils' performance and the use of data are good.
- Pupils in the Nursery achieve well and make good progress.
- Standards and progress are unsatisfactory in the Reception classes.
- Support for pupils' learning through intervention or additional support in class is having a positive impact on standards and progress.
- Pupils achieve well in history, PE, English, ICT and mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Investigative, research and referencing skills are underdeveloped throughout the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to talk about their work, share ideas or to work independently or collaboratively are limited.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.1 (13.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.3 (12.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.9 (13.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year (old infant school).*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.6 (20.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.1 (20.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.7 (22.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year (old Junior school).*

1. Almost a third of pupils join or leave the school midway through their primary education. For those children who start at the school either in the Nursery or at other times, most have standards in language and communication that are below, and sometimes well below, what is expected. The proportion of pupils identified with special education needs in the school is well

above the national average. This low starting base, coupled with the high number of pupils with learning difficulties, impedes their overall progress in almost all other areas of learning or subjects for a significant number of pupils in the school. This is why the school has rightly focused its main support in developing pupils' language and communication skills by modifying the curriculum to meet pupils' specific needs as its first priority. In other areas of learning, pupils are either broadly in line with or slightly below national expectations for their age when they start school.

2. The progress made in the Nursery is good and many achieve well, although the good progress is not maintained throughout the Reception year. As a result, many pupils start the National Curriculum in Year 1 with standards below and sometimes well below what they should be. This is because of the limited range of activities and approaches to learning that support and develop childrens' skills and knowledge. Pupils' work in lessons and in their books shows that throughout Years 1 and 2 standards in most subjects are below the national average but their achievements are satisfactory. Learning is slightly better in Year 2 than in Year 1.
3. By the end of Year 2 in the 2003 national tests, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with similar schools nationally, but well below the national average for all schools. Science results based on teachers' assessments are below average. However, the overall progress year on year throughout Years 1 and 2 is significantly better than the national trend.
4. The school's results at the end of Year 6 in the national tests in 2003, show significant improvement on previous years despite the fact that standards overall are well below the national average. In English, results at the end of Year 6 are good compared to pupils with similar prior attainment nationally, whereas in science they are in line, but for mathematics, standards remain below those of similar schools. The improvements in girls' performances in all three subjects are better than the boys.
5. In lessons, standards are below average but pupils generally achieve in line with their capabilities. Achievement of the middle ability pupils is mostly satisfactory whereas achievement of low ability pupils is good. This is as a result of the good, focused support they get from both teachers and learning support staff. More able pupils do not achieve as well as they should largely because of the limited opportunities for them to work independently; all too often learning activities are tightly directed by teachers.
6. A common factor evident in a number of subjects is that pupils, particularly boys, are confident at recalling subject knowledge or isolated facts but find it difficult to explain their ideas or apply their knowledge to different situations in order to solve problems or suggest questions that need to be investigated. Opportunities throughout the curriculum for pupils to work independently, to research or pose their own lines of enquiry are limited. Many pupils lack the confidence to seek out information or lack the skills to skim and scan reference material. Most pupils, regardless of age or ability, enjoy practical work and are developing effectively their skills in manipulating materials and equipment, but opportunities to do so are often limited. Most pupils are gaining in confidence in using information and communication technology equipment and programs but opportunities to use computers to support other subjects of the curriculum are not always taken.
7. Pupils' presentation of their work is variable, sometimes there is a lack of precision in their drawing, recording and measuring. As a result, pupils experience difficulty in analysing and evaluating the information they collect or in interpreting what they have written.
8. The school undertakes a thorough analysis of pupils' performances in tests. It makes good use of local data to compare the school's progress with similar local education authority (LEA) schools. However, the systems in place at present do not provide easy access to information about the relative performance of different groups of pupils in the school other than the difference in boys' and girls' performances. Detailed information about the impact of pupils

joining the school at different times and fluctuations in baseline data year on year, have still to be evaluated.

9. Parents are generally pleased with the progress their children are making and in particular with the support pupils with special education needs, those with English as an additional language and the Traveller pupils are getting.

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

Pupils' attitudes are **good**. Pupils enjoy school and the majority arrive on time. Attendance for the last year remains **below the national average**, although figures show significant improvements. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are **good** because of the positive relationships in the school and the effective focus on their moral and social development. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils accept responsibility and begin to show sensible, mature behaviour at all ages.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good, based on trust, respect and the high expectations of good behaviour.
- Pupils of all ages show positive attitudes and loyalty towards their school and they are proud of the school's achievements.
- All staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and the vast majority of the pupils respond well to instructions and co-operate in making 'correct choices'. Their social and moral development is good.
- Pupils from the travelling community are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.
- There has only been one fixed-term exclusion during the previous academic year.
- Attendance remains below national averages but has shown a three per cent improvement during the current academic year.
- Short attention spans in younger pupils, and attention seeking and demanding behaviour by some pupils, are managed well by knowledgeable teachers and staff.
- Limited planned opportunities to extend the curriculum to explore and extend pupils' spiritual and cultural development results in unsatisfactory provision.

### Commentary

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.1
National data	0.4

*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
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – African

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
220	1	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
6	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0

Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	8	0	0

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

10. Attendance at the school is lower than that of comparable schools and unauthorised absence is higher. Historically, there has been a culture of low attendance and high mobility of pupils in the area. However, over the past months, attendance has improved steadily up by three per cent a year. This has been due to the work of the school staff and support of outside agencies. Pupils are keen to attend school and often their absence is as a result of difficult social circumstances that some families experience. Unauthorised absence has reduced over the last year in response to the school's prompt follow-up procedures. The majority of pupils are punctual and this enables lessons to begin on time in a calm and friendly manner.
11. Pupils are friendly and eager to talk about school life, commenting that many of their lessons are fun. They like and respect their teachers and, because of the good relationships they have with all staff in the school, they show a positive attitude to learning. Behaviour throughout the school day is consistently good and often very good when lessons are particularly interesting. All staff expect pupils to behave well and to take responsibility for making 'choices' about the direction of their own personal behaviour and the impact this has on others. Some pupils find it difficult to focus on their work for long periods, but these pupils respond well to the approaches used by staff and, as a result, support for learning is effective. Where teaching lacks pace and structure as in Reception classes, some pupils lose interest and show immature and silly behaviour. Parents and pupils have few concerns about bullying because they are confident that the school deals with any such instances very effectively. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about being 'playground friends' in the Key Stage 1 playground: 'We help them play and make sure anyone on their own is OK'.
12. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the past academic year and none so far this year. This low rate is testament to the effective support and strategies employed for pupils who have social and behavioural difficulties. Pupils work and play effectively together particularly in co-operative group work where they are growing in confidence and self-esteem as they accept responsibility and progress through the school. Pupils say their 'teachers are great' and are happy to contribute in lessons as they know their teachers and support staff will help them.
13. Good behaviour is as a result of the consistent attention given by all adults working in the school to support pupils. This has been a notable change according to pupils and community workers since the schools amalgamated. Pupils' good personal and social skills in all aspects of school life are effectively supported and developed throughout the curriculum. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and enjoy sharing in the success of each others' achievements, as in the celebration of the successes in rugby and netball competitions.
14. Good progress in pupils' personal development is a direct result of the good provision for pupils' social and moral development throughout the school. Pupils have an ability to distinguish right from wrong, show respect for people, living things, other people's property and the environment. They act in a responsible manner and take pride in the school grounds, in particular the new garden, which symbolises the school's mission statement - 'growing for the future'. However, although there are a number of incidents where pupils experience awe and wonder during their time in school, planned activities in the curriculum to enrich spirituality, reflect on big issues, or for pupils to experience greater awareness of different cultures or cultural events, are limited.
15. The quality of assemblies is variable. Whole-school, and key stage assemblies support social and moral development but more could be done to plan for pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Whilst assemblies enhance social development and support the school in developing moral, cultural and historical issues of citizenship, opportunities are lost to extend spirituality. Assemblies do however provide a focus for reinforcing the corporate identity of the school and for celebrating successes. Organisation and management of collective worship

lacks a clear structure of themes. This is largely due to the co-ordination and link to religious education (RE) rather than having a broader focus that supports the school's mission statement and enhances all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. **Good** achievement in the Nursery and Year 5 and Year 6 is down to **good teaching**. The curriculum provided for pupils is **satisfactory** and is appropriately tailored to the specific needs of the school. Assessment information is a developing strength and the information gained is being used effectively to support curriculum planning.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching is **good** in the Nursery and in Year 5 and 6; teaching is **unsatisfactory** in the Reception classes. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is **good**. English and mathematics teaching is mostly **good** in Key Stage 2.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching of English, mathematics and history in Years 5 and 6.
- Good planning framework and use of learning objectives with clear outcomes ensure pupils of all ages know what they are doing and what is expected of them.
- Use of on-going assessments matched to the learning outcomes is a growing strength.
- Relationships between pupils, teachers and other adult helpers are good.
- Good use of support staff to meet pupils' needs enabling pupils with special educational needs those with English as an additional language and the Traveller pupils to make good progress.
- Opportunities for pupils to work independently or collaboratively are limited.
- Insufficient challenge for the most able in the groups is often as a result of a lack of systematic development of skills linked to research and investigative approaches.
- Teaching in Reception lacks coherence and direct links to the Foundation Stage curriculum that enable pupils to build on their Nursery experiences.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0%	11%	38%	44%	7%	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.*

16. Teaching and learning are good overall in English and for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is generally satisfactory in mathematics, science, ICT and the Foundation subjects. However, teaching is unsatisfactory for design and technology, religious education and in most areas of learning in the Reception classes. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery but the best lessons are in Years 5 and 6.
17. Teachers plan effectively to meet the identified objectives, and in practically all classes the outcomes of the lessons are made clear to pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly against the set objectives and on-going records of their progress are now kept. Teachers provide supportive feedback on pupils' work, but not all staff provide pupils with guidance on what to do next in order to improve. In most cases, teachers have good knowledge of literacy and numeracy and the national strategies and use the published framework to teach the three part lessons satisfactorily, but there is limited flexibility in the methods adopted in order to provide

different opportunities to meet the wide ability ranges in each class. All too often the work is set in a common context for all pupils regardless of ability, with tasks tightly directed by the teacher, leaving limited opportunities for pupils to work independently or collaboratively in small groups or to follow their own lines of enquiry. The approaches currently adopted limit the rate of progress particularly of the more able pupils. Nevertheless, the support and encouragement from teachers and support staff ensures good progress for most of the middle and lower ability pupils.

18. Teachers manage pupils very well, and together with the support staff, use appropriate strategies to deal with pupils who have challenging behaviour or who find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time. Rarely are lessons disrupted because of poor pupil behaviour; this is because of the good relationships that now exist in the school and the consistent implementation of the school's behavioural management policy.
19. Overall, the teachers have sufficient knowledge and subject experience to provide the support for each other to meet the requirements of all subjects of the National Curriculum. However, there are weaknesses in provision and in the teaching of design and technology, and religious education and in the understanding of how to plan for the development of pupils' spiritual awareness within the subjects of the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on curriculum experiences such as the magic of number patterns, the appreciation of good writing, music or art works or to wonder at the scientific and technological advances, and generally experience awe and wonder, are not always taken or planned for, although there are instances where this does happen.
20. An area for development in teaching in the school is to address the lack of systematic development of skills to support independent research and investigative work particularly in mathematics, design and technology and science. Pupils do not have enough practice at using a range of different reference sources or texts. Opportunities are also limited for pupils to feedback to others and talk about their work during the concluding parts of lessons.
21. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, as in Reception classes and in design and technology, it is often linked to inappropriate approaches and pace to meet the learning needs of pupils in the class. In these lessons, and sometimes in lessons that are just satisfactory, teaching lacks the imagination to capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. As a result, pupils lose concentration, they fidget and both the teacher and learning support staff spend too much time managing behaviour rather than supporting pupils' learning.
22. Teachers nevertheless know the pupils well and the school's assessment leader makes a great deal of information about pupils' attainment available to staff to support them in their planning. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are referred to and teachers plan activities to enable these pupils to meet their targets, and as a result, they make good progress.

## The curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision is **sound**. There is an effective planning framework in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly for literacy and numeracy, which provides good guidance to staff. The provision for activities outside the school day is **good** and helps to foster pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Staff are sufficient in number and effectively deployed to provide good support. The school has made good use of external support and guidance to enhance curriculum provision for groups of pupils in the school. The resources for most subjects are **sound** and there is a strong commitment to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning. Statutory requirements are not met for aspects of curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage, and Design and technology and religious education in Key Stages 1 and 2.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because curriculum provision and support for them is good with some innovative practice.
- Teachers and learning support assistants are effective in supporting groups of pupils to access all aspects of the curriculum. These groups include pupils who have English as an additional language, traveller pupils and those pupils in public care.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good and promotes pupils' personal development so that they have positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school.
- There is insufficient provision for pupils to develop as independent learners. In particular, pupils' investigative, enquiry and research skills in mathematics and science are underdeveloped. Pupils, particularly the more able, do not achieve as well as they could in these areas.
- Statutory requirements are not met in the Foundation Stage because there are insufficient planned opportunities for children to learn by working outdoors on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.
- The statutory requirements for religious education in Key Stages 1 and 2, where pupils have opportunities to learn about other principal world religions, are not met. Not all aspects of the design and technology programmes of study are addressed in the current scheme.

## Commentary

23. The curriculum for Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory overall because children do not have access to a full range of organised learning opportunities that enable them to develop in all areas of learning. Inadequate curriculum coverage and weaknesses in continuity from the Nursery to the Reception classes adversely affects pupils' achievements. Outdoor provision is underdeveloped and the outdoor area is frequently empty during the school day. A number of non-teaching staff provide very effective support for pupils in the Foundation Stage and they respond well to pupils' individual needs.
24. Since the amalgamation, an effective planning framework has been put in place for Key Stages 1 and 2, and this is used consistently across the school. The two year curriculum plan incorporates the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and adaptations of national guidance for schemes of work in other subjects. The use of national guidance coupled with the school planning framework has had a positive impact in providing clear guidance to staff. As a result, the school has made good progress in achieving consistency and compliance in the implementation of the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2. Additional time is given to the teaching of basic skills and this has had a positive impact in raising standards in literacy. At present, the statutory requirements for pupils to learn about other principal world religions are not fully met neither are aspects of control in design and technology.
25. The school's allocation of timings to each subject is just sufficient for a broad curriculum to be taught, with the main emphasis given to the development of literacy skills. However, within this, insufficient attention has been given to teaching the skills of enquiry and research and systematically building on pupils' previous experiences across subjects and areas of the curriculum. The lack of provision for open-ended tasks restricts achievement for higher ability pupils and is not conducive for pupils of all abilities to develop as independent learners. This also has a negative impact on preparing pupils for the demands of the curriculum in their secondary education. One way the school is beginning to address this is through its commitment to the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The planned multi-media centre is an exciting development. Staff and pupils are gaining in confidence in using the interactive whiteboards recently put in each class.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Their support is carefully planned and work is well matched to suit their needs. There are a number of curriculum initiatives in place to support pupils with learning or other difficulties, including an innovative speech and language project for children in the Foundation Stage. The speech therapist works on vocabulary enrichment activities and introduces children to the vocabulary they will meet in their classroom topics. There is also a social skills intervention programme for specific pupils in the other Key Stages. The Primary Support Teachers are now deployed

to work within the classrooms following the teachers' planned objectives. This allows class teachers to access the expertise within the LEA's Primary Support Team in order to provide effective support. Pupils with special educational needs can access all aspects of the curriculum through the good but unobtrusive support they receive from learning support assistants during lessons. As a result, these pupils achieve well.

27. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is good. All pupils, including pupils with EAL, pupils in public care and Traveller pupils, have targets set for them and their progress is tracked and monitored. Where pupils are not making expected progress, strategies are put in place and the impact of these is monitored. A visiting support teacher is also available to work along side Traveller pupils when appropriate. These pupils make sound progress.
28. Provision for aspects of pupils' personal, social and emotional development is good. PSHE is taught as a discrete subject in Key Stages 1 and 2 but is integral to all aspects of the curriculum and was described by the school as "running through us like a name in a stick of rock". A priority has been the implementation of the health and sex education programme and this programme has been monitored by senior managers. Discussions and drama are often used in PSHE lessons and this is effective in building pupils' self confidence and self-esteem.
29. Additional activities before, during and after the school day contribute to pupils' learning. There is a planned programme of day and residential trips that enrich the curriculum. Visitors include theatre workshops, percussionists and a specialist music teacher. Pupils are proud to represent the school in sporting events and the school team was particularly pleased to receive the Fair Play Award for Tag Rugby.
30. Effective school management has ensured that the school is well staffed by suitably qualified teachers and that class sizes are small. Staff have the necessary skills and experience to undertake the tasks assigned to them. The school's good leadership has promoted a strong commitment to working hard as a team, determined to have a positive influence on pupils' learning. There is a good level of classroom and learning support assistants who are deployed well and make an effective contribution in whole-class and group activities.
31. The accommodation and resources overall are adequate. The school site is being developed with the curriculum in mind and the school will soon benefit from a building project that will link the two former school buildings with a substantial covered walkway. A new media centre, which will incorporate the library resources, is planned and should ensure easier access to reference and research materials.
32. Curriculum resources have been audited and the purchase of new resources is prioritised in the school's development plan. Adequate resources are in place to meet the needs of the curriculum in most subjects. Those for literacy, art and design, physical education, numeracy and science have all been improved significantly since the amalgamation.

### Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare and support for health and safety of pupils are **very good**. Pupils have **good involvement** in the development of the school. Support and guidance to raise achievement is **good**, except for in the Foundation Stage where they are **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care and welfare are very good in all key stages.
- Procedures to welcome new pupils to the school are good.
- Links with parents and other agencies are very good.
- Use of assessment information to support and guide pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are good.

- Use of assessment information to support and guide pupils in Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

33. As a result of the very good care, welfare and health and safety policies, parents are kept fully informed if the school has concerns. Procedures to invite children into the Nursery are good and this helps them to settle quickly. The school employs an impressively flexible approach when welcoming pupils starting throughout the school year, meeting both the pupils' and the parents' needs. Pupils have responsibilities around the school. These include the creation and implementation of a whole-school code of conduct and the use of Year 6 pupils in the development of playground games with younger pupils. The school has established very good links with parents, the community and other agencies. The resident family officers who link with the school are inspiring. They 'bridge the gap' between the community and the school and provide an invaluable service for both the pupils and their families. For example, a Year 6 pupil warmly recounts his positive experience of the family officer's support during his parent's separation. Another parent expressed that, the support she received during a time of family crisis was invaluable.
34. The school's assessment arrangements for pupils throughout Years 1 to 6 are good. Information gathered from tests and other assessments are carefully analysed and the evaluations of these acted upon, ensuring pupils make progress throughout the school. The use of target-setting helps pupils to know what they need to do to improve, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6. However, there are inadequate arrangements for the Foundation Stage. Information regarding pupil progress is not collected systematically, monitored or analysed in order to guide pupils through the Foundation Stage, and ensure systematic development in their learning.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the parents and community are **very good**. The school has a very successful and increasingly effective partnership with parents and carers. This has a major impact on the work of the school and pupils' enjoyment of school life. The very close links with the local community are wide-reaching and supportive for pupils and their families. Liaison arrangements are **good** overall and promote effective transition between primary and secondary education.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The large majority of parents hold the school in high regard and are supportive of all it does to promote their children's learning.
- The school provides good quality information to parents, and staff are always accessible.
- Parents are consulted and their views canvassed and welcomed.
- The school uses its very good partnerships with the community to enhance pupils' learning and to support the pupils' personal development and that of their families.
- Administration staff enrich the partnership between school and pupils' families.
- The majority of parents understand the need to bring their children to school regularly and on time and they strive to fulfil their obligation.
- There are very good mutually beneficial links between the local churches, the education welfare officer, family officers and community partnership in the school.

## Commentary

35. The majority of parents are positive about the school and what it provides for their children. The quality of information is good, useful and easily understood. Annual written reports demonstrate the good knowledge that teachers have of pupils, what is being taught and how their children are doing at school. Targets are set for pupils to improve and each report is

pertinent to the individual child. The school knows that many of the families face complex difficulties and it works hard to support them. The school does all it can to deal with any parental concerns or complaints. Some parents expressed concern about behaviour management. This was found to be based largely on historical behaviour patterns and the overall behaviour has improved across the school. During the inspection, parents expressed their satisfaction with the improvements since January this year. The significant changes in standards of pupils' behaviour have: "Instilled respect and inspired co-operation from pupils and parents alike". These observations have been directly linked to the change of leadership at the school. The administrative staff assist parents from the ethnic minority groups who have difficulty interpreting the information, or those parents who find official form filling daunting. Termly consultation evenings give parents opportunities to see the work of their children and to discuss their progress with teaching staff. These evenings are becoming more popular with improved parent attendances. The school works hard to raise parents' awareness of the need to help children with homework and many respond well to this expectation. There are three regular parent helpers in the school.

36. The school 'is at the hub' of the local community and works hard to support the pupils and their families through very close links with many outside agencies. These include local church groups, the education welfare officer and a local community organisation, Oxmoor Opportunities. A local charity funds two family officers, based in the school, to support any difficulties parents and pupils may have at home or at school. Pupils with special educational needs in speech and language are supported by a community-based service. A range of other outside agencies, and visitors, along with opportunities for pupils to go on educational visits, all help to provide a service or give pupils opportunities to widen their views and enrich their personal development. Carefully structured links with the two high schools, to which pupils transfer, ensure a smooth transition and exchange of information. Parents are welcomed into the Nursery when their child begins school. The school also benefits from close links with other primary schools and Cambridge University Faculty of Education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. Leadership of the headteacher and her deputies is **good** and the leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory**. Overall management is **good**. Financial management is **secure**. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have done all that they reasonably could do in the time available to address the weaknesses and improve provision where statutory requirements are not met. In many respects governance is good with action plans to address weaknesses. However, because of the negative impact of non-compliance on standards; overall, governance is **satisfactory**. The significant improvements made since amalgamation are a direct result of the headteacher's clear vision and focus for the education direction of the newly-formed school with staff, governors, LEA and community leaders working effectively as a team.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspiration, which are clearly transmitted to staff and are reflected in the school's practices.
- The headteacher and her deputies provide a secure nucleus for leading and managing the school.
- There is a detailed school improvement plan that embraces the key priorities for school and subject developments including addressing the issues of non-compliance. However, success indicators are not always linked appropriately to classroom outcomes.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and they know the areas for development particularly in the Foundation Stage, design and technology and in religious education, where statutory requirements are not met.

- Leadership, management and guidance provided to support assessment procedures and systems are good, resulting in rapid improvements.
- Monitoring systems by the senior leadership group are secure but as yet there is limited involvement by subject leaders in the process.
- Subject leadership and management are at an early stage of development.
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

37. Subject leadership is underdeveloped at present, this is because,
- very little was in place at the time of the amalgamation in terms of curriculum guidance and support particularly in assessment and monitoring systems in Key Stage 2; and
  - the majority of staff are new to the school.
38. The school has prioritised developments focusing on the main weaknesses including:
- behaviour management systems;
  - assessment processes; and
  - core subject development, particularly reading and writing.
39. During the early stages of development of the new school the senior management has tried hard to establish a corporate identity for the school within a physical structure that was originally designed as two separate institutions. The previous junior school did not have a good reputation locally. All this has changed in just over a year and is a testimony to the staff's commitment and the school's leadership.
40. The headteacher is primarily responsible for ensuring the rapid progress the school has made since the amalgamation. She has a very clear vision and appropriately high expectations of her staff and the pupils. "Growing for the future", the school's mission statement, is at the heart of all policies and practices. There is a strong commitment from all adults working in and with the school to ensure all pupils achieve to the best of their abilities. The headteacher inspires, motivates and influences all those she works with. The progress and achievements since amalgamation are clearly recognised within the community. The headteacher and her deputies provide good role models to support the newly-formed senior leadership team, who are developing in their roles and providing a secure basis for school improvement, leadership and management.
41. The school has benefited from effective support from the LEA during the early stages of the new primary school, particularly in focusing on the national strategies. Although the leadership in a few subjects is unsatisfactory at present, the framework for middle managers is now in place and there is good support from the senior leadership group. Schemes of work are being developed and many of them are being implemented. There is clearly potential and capacity for the school to continue to improve, and this is recognised by the LEA, governors and community workers who are associated with the school.
42. There is a good framework for planning and effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This latter area is one of the most notable improvements in the last year; the assessment system now promotes assessment for learning (linked to teachers' planning), as well as assessment of learning, (tracking pupils' achievements). Analysis of the school and individual pupils' achievements are good even though with the school's system, it is difficult to compare the relative performance of different groups of pupils. However, in the Foundation Stage, the assessment process is not as effective as it should be.
43. The main areas linked to evaluation of assessment data, that remain to be developed throughout the school, are identifying and comparing data on the:

- baseline information and profiles for each year group and class;
  - impact of pupils arriving and leaving at different times in the school year on the school's results and value added; and
  - relative rates of progress of different groups of pupils in the school other than boys and girls.
44. The tracking processes in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory and not clearly linked appropriately to the "stepping stones". The main weakness is the lack of coherent leadership and management of the Foundation Stage in order to support the transition between the Reception and the National Curriculum in Year 1.
  45. The school improvement plan embraces the key priorities for school development, including an 'Early Years Action Plan' to address the identified weaknesses in the Foundation Stage. Areas for development are clearly prioritised and are on track for completion. Success indicators in school and subject development plans tend to focus on completion of tasks and are not always focused on the impact that the actions will have on classroom outcomes and pupils' achievements.
  46. The school is organised well and efficiently run. Day-to-day organisation and management are smooth. There are clear procedures, and documentation provided for staff is very good in focusing on what the school is about and how it operates. Outcomes of performance management focus on individual need, school and pupil-centred issues and these effectively inform the professional development programme.
  47. Monitoring systems by the senior leadership group are secure and the information obtained has been used effectively to inform planning. This is clearly evident in the focused developments for improving reading and writing. As a result, the school's English results have improved dramatically. The school's focus for self-evaluation this term and early in 2004 is on mathematics development where improvements, although good, have not been as large as in English.
  48. A great deal has been accomplished in a very short time because of focused planning and good leadership and management by the senior management team. This was recognised in the HMI monitoring visit earlier in 2003. Evaluative reports of the school's progress and achievements are presented regularly to staff and governors. However, subject leaders are not yet fully involved in the process, particularly in identifying the relative rates of progress of individuals or different groups of pupils in various subjects. Not all staff are secure in their understanding of the quality and quantity of work required of each National Curriculum level as seen in teacher assessments, some of which are generous. This has a negative impact in meeting the needs and challenging the most able pupils in the school. Although an improvement on previous years, few pupils attain Level 3 at the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics or science and the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 at the end of Year 6 is below what one might expect.
  49. Management of resources including staffing and learning resources is good. There are clear policies to guide the work of the school, and as a result of the implementation, the practices in the school ensure the central focus on learning and achievement and on good pupil behaviour. The deployment of classroom support staff and the use of outside agencies to meet the learning needs of the very wide ability range of pupils in the school are very effective.
  50. The newly-formed governing body has learnt a great deal from the experiences of the past infant and junior schools, and as a result, they have a clear view of the direction in which the new school is to develop in supporting the community and in providing quality education. Significant improvements have been made in the development of school governance, making good use of experienced and new members to the governing body. The community's interests are represented well. As a result, the school is developing as a central focus to support the families of the Oxmoor community.

51. The governing body is effectively organised through its committee structure and it ensures that performance management works effectively. Governors have a clear corporate view of the direction in which the school is developing. They are willing and supportive of the school and relationships between them and the school are very good. An induction programme for new governors with support from the LEA enables them to be clear of their roles in relation to the specific issues raised by a school working in challenging circumstances. Governors are informed and involved in school improvements, both in the structure of the school's development plan, and in monitoring its progress. They have done all that is reasonably possible to do in order to ensure the school meets statutory requirements given the time scale since the schools amalgamated, the mitigating circumstances including staffing changes and bearing in mind the improvements already made. Governors are gaining in confidence when questioning and challenging the school using information they get from regular visits and through regular monitoring reports. On a number of issues they still rely on the headteacher for guidance and information.
52. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils' needs are fully met but this is not always the case particularly for the more able pupils. In a number of classes where there is a very wide ability range, common tasks led by the teacher do not always ensure appropriate extension activities that promote pupils' independence and extend their learning to enable them to meet the high levels.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	901, 525
Total expenditure	880, 536
Expenditure per pupil	3,426

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	109, 933
Balance carried forward to the next	51, 494

53. Financial management is prudent and well informed. The large carry forward in 2003 from the previous year was planned in order for the school to meet the capital building programme due to start in early spring 2004 as well as to carry out planned developments with ICT and the multi media learning centre.

**The effect of any particular aids or barriers to raising achievement either in the school or externally**

54. Key factors that have aided school improvements are linked to stability in staffing, support from the LEA and the dedication of key leaders and managers in steering the school through the period of change to a unified school that is beginning to challenge assumptions about pupils' capabilities, their learning and behaviour. There is a clear commitment from all who work in the school to high achievement.
- Central to the improvement in pupils' behaviour and their learning is the consistent implementation of the schools' behavioural policy, which gives a clear steer for pupils to make the right choice in terms of their language and actions and the impact that each pupil has on others. This has resulted in good attitudes and good behaviour and as a result, pupils are achieving well.
  - The vast majority of pupils enjoy school; they like the company of their friends and are motivated to learn.
  - There is a growing confidence in the use made of assessment information to guide curriculum planning, to set targets for individuals and groups and to inform evaluation procedures.
  - Additional grants and other funding are helping to develop the school as a community centre for learning.
  - The national strategies have provided a framework for learning that the school has embraced and matched to its own particular needs, this has had a positive impact on teaching and learning

particularly for older pupils. There is a clear focus on 'Learning Objectives' and expected outcomes that pupils are made aware of.

- Very good relationships with the community are a strong feature of the school's work. The work carried out by staff in the school in supporting families with various issues has placed the school at the centre of the community and encourages parents to take a greater interest in their children's learning.
  - Increased availability of ICT facilities has enabled teachers and pupils to access a wider range of ICT applications and to enable staff to use assessment information more effectively for target-setting and tracking progress.
55. The most significant barrier to raising achievement has been linked to pupils' low communication, language and literacy skills when they enter the school. These low skills impact on their learning throughout the school. Also, the high level of staff turnover in the past have impacted negatively on standards.

- The school tries hard to involve parents in their children's learning and for them to recognise the importance of good attendance; the vast majority of parents acknowledge the benefits the school has brought in recent months.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs requiring specialist support.
- A significant number of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the normal entry and leaving dates. This turbulence, and the challenging levels of ability in the school population, impede progress and high attainment.
- The accommodation, whilst satisfactory for individual class learning, presents an obstacle to enhancing a unified school building. Access between the old infant and junior blocks is unsatisfactory at present.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Special educational needs**

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils on the register of special educational needs make good progress.
- Effective support from class teachers and learning support assistants.
- Good links with outside agencies.
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

### **Commentary**

56. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their capabilities. This is because the adults who support them know them very well and work is planned carefully to meet individual needs. Resources are carefully targeted to raise the achievements of these pupils and the impact of intervention programmes are monitored and evaluated. The good behaviour in the school and the effective provision for pupils' personal development fosters positive attitudes and pupils with special educational needs participate in all aspects of the curriculum. Rarely are lessons impeded and other pupils' learning adversely affected as a result of the actions of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties because of the good support these pupils receive during lessons.

57. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers know the targets in their pupils' individual education programmes (IEPs) and are effective at incorporating targets into their lessons. Pupils are given good oral and written feedback on how well they have done. Class teachers review pupils' targets each half term and new ones are set as appropriate. There is good communication between teachers and

support staff. Learning support assistants complete feedback sheets for teachers on the progress individual pupils make during lessons. The Primary Support staff are now deployed to work within the classrooms following the teachers' planned objectives. This allows class teachers to access the expertise within the LEA's primary support team as well as ensuring that the support provided is coherent. As a result, pupils achieve well. All classes have files that contain the individual educational programmes for pupils with specific needs and adults working with these pupils have easy access to their records. The impact of this is that these pupils make good progress in their lessons. Generally, their work is well presented which shows that they take care and pride when completing tasks. Pupils are supported well in developing basic skills to access all aspects of the curriculum and they receive good but unobtrusive support from learning support assistants. For example, in a Year 5 ICT lesson, the learning support assistant gave good support in developing a pupil's spelling skills as he labelled his bar graph.

58. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. The support provided for each pupil is carefully planned and work is designed to meet each pupil's needs. There are a number of curriculum initiatives in place to support pupils with learning or other difficulties including an innovative speech and language project for children in the Foundation Stage. The speech therapist and learning assistants help pupils to gain in confidence using language and to increase their vocabulary by introducing them to the words they will meet in their classroom topics. A number of parents would like more professional support from outside agencies but they recognise the limitations of the support provision and what the school is trying to do.
59. There is also a social skills intervention programme for specific pupils across the school who find it difficult to form meaningful relationships. The national 'catch up' programmes for literacy and numeracy are in place and evidence from internal monitoring show that pupils in these programmes make good progress.
60. The leadership of special educational needs is good. Senior managers have established an ethos that supports inclusion with a strong drive to improve behaviour so that all pupils, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, can access the curriculum and not adversely impact on the learning of others.
61. The impact of the good leadership of special educational needs can be seen in all classes where there is a shared view of effective practice for pupils requiring specific support. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is a member of the senior management team, demonstrating the high priority the schools' leadership gives to improving special educational needs provision. Some aspects of the SENCO's role are shared with the headteacher who manages the financial provision. The SENCO is effective in her role and has established good communication systems with learning support assistants who are clear on what is expected of them. Liaison with outside agencies is good, including the transference of pupils with statements to other schools and the assessment and induction of pupils who join the school throughout the year. The implementation of targets on individual pupil's educational plans is monitored regularly through classroom observations. Good use is made of data to pick up on any issues related to specific pupils. Although the attendance of all pupils is tracked, at present, the information is not accessed by the SENCO so that she can monitor the impact of low attendance on pupils with special educational needs.
62. Clear lines of accountability are established with good involvement of the governing body. The SENCO is a member of the governors' inclusion committee, which meets each term to review the progress made on the action plan.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **unsatisfactory** overall, despite the many examples of **good provision** in the Nursery. Teaching in the Nursery is **good** overall in all areas of learning but in the Reception, the quality of teaching is more variable and there is a lack of focused planning that builds on children's experiences particularly in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and in language and communication. There are insufficient opportunities to extend children's learning through play using the outdoor classroom or for direct intervention by adults to support learning during the various activities made available to them. The school does not meet statutory requirements for this key stage. The good provision and standards identified prior to amalgamation have declined and there are now significant weaknesses in the provision for children in the Reception year.
64. Attainment of many children when they first start at the school in the Nursery is **slightly below** what is expected nationally except in the areas of communication, language and literacy which are **below and in some cases well below** what is expected. Induction arrangements for children entering the Nursery are **good** and this helps them to settle in to school quickly. The children enter Reception in the September before they are five, and attend part-time initially, with all children full-time by week four of the Autumn term.
65. Provision for children in the Nursery is **good** and the wide range of activities motivates and stimulates children in their learning. The quality of teaching is **good overall**. The main strengths are the organisation and management of the classroom and the quality of the planning. Adults work well together and have a good knowledge of individual children. Good relationships are formed and the children know what is expected of them. By the end of Nursery, children are in line with what is expected but below national expectations in communication, language and literacy skills.
66. Provision for children in the Reception classes is **unsatisfactory** overall. The planning does not meet the statutory requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children do not experience a range of activities that enable them to achieve in all of the areas of learning. When they are asked to choose activities there are too many occasions when they are not given any specific goals to extend their learning and activities are not well planned. Teaching in knowledge and understanding of the world and in aspects of language and communication are unsatisfactory particularly when activities lack a clear learning focus.
67. Children in Reception, based on where they are at present, have the potential to reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. However, with the present quality of teaching, curriculum provision and rate of learning in lessons in these classes being unsatisfactory, it is unlikely that these expectations will be met. This explains why the majority of children starting Year 1 are below expectations in most areas and well below in communication, language and literacy. However this is being addressed in the 'Early Years Action Plan'.
68. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are **unsatisfactory** and there is ineffective team planning and assessment of pupils' attainment and needs. There is limited on-going, detailed and thorough monitoring and evaluation of individual children's progress within the areas of learning. As a result, expectations in Reception are low and pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall. However, the school has recognised the differences between Nursery and Reception provision and the fact that the Foundation Stage needs to be improved overall. An Early Years Action plan is in place and this covers the main areas that need to be developed addressing all the weaknesses identified during the inspection.

69. The support from Nursery nurses and other adults and the management of pupils are generally very effective, and pupils respond well to adults and each other in a secure environment.

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

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development in Nursery is **good** but it is **unsatisfactory** in Reception.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adults provide a secure and welcoming environment in the Nursery where pupils have a sense of belonging. Familiar classroom routines are established well throughout the Foundation Stage.
- Good teaching and high expectations in the Nursery lead to positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to play independently, together or take turns in the outdoor classroom.
- Nursery nurses and learning support assistants are highly effective more so in Nursery than in Reception.
- Low teacher expectations and the lack of planned support for independent learning, reduces children's progress in the Reception.

### **Commentary**

70. The school's very caring ethos and the effective learning environment in the Nursery provides a good foundation for learning from the time the children enter the school. Children know the routines well and what is expected of them. Adults have high expectations of children and provide a secure and welcoming environment where they feel that they belong. Children are well behaved and show an increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities. The good support children receive from the Nursery nurse and learning support staff effectively ensures learning and skill development takes place. Adults play and talk with children during the activities encouraging them to share and take turns, and put up their hands when answering questions. The majority of children show an interest in what they are doing and have positive attitudes to learning because tasks meet their needs and adult intervention is highly effective. Children settle quickly to activities and enjoy a wide range of teacher led and child initiated tasks that are stimulating. Overall, they make satisfactory progress because of the good teaching and the wide range of opportunities to support learning. However, outside play is not well planned or structured and children do not have enough frequent opportunities to play independently, together or take turns during the school day.
71. In the Reception classes, pupils are familiar with classroom routines and respond well to adults. But the nature of intervention and support is not as focused as in the Nursery. Reception children are unlikely to meet or exceed the goals expected by the end of Reception year because of unsatisfactory teaching and ineffective curriculum planning. Teachers have low expectations for children when they use available resources to play or carry out independent activities. This, along with the lack of planned support for independent learning, reduces children's progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the Reception.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision and achievement in communication, language and literacy is **good in the Nursery but unsatisfactory** in Reception.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are eager to communicate using speech and gesture and enjoy stories and books.
- There is a lack of focus on teaching specific speaking and listening skills.
- Use of interactive whiteboards to encourage communication skills is good particularly in the Nursery.
- Tasks are not well matched to the differing needs of pupils in the Reception; with missed opportunities for children to extend their ideas and develop communication skills.

### Commentary

72. Teaching of communication and language skills in the Nursery is mostly satisfactory and often good. Children are keen to share books with adults and show an interest in both the illustrations and the text. Many children are beginning to show an awareness of the way stories are structured and enjoy listening to stories and joining in with chorus and rhymes. Although the speech of many children is underdeveloped on entry to school, they are encouraged by the adults to answer open-ended questions, to share their ideas, to listen to others and to contribute to discussions. Pupils who have English as an additional language are supported well and they join in activities and make appropriate progress because of the quality of support provided.
73. Children are given a range of mediums to practise writing and are encouraged to write, draw and paint frequently during the day. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for children to underpin the development of language and communication skills during other activities so that they reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they leave the Nursery.
74. In the Reception classes, pupils are beginning to use a wider range of words to express their ideas and some adults intervene with children to encourage them to talk and share their ideas. Children are keen to share books and some of the more able children are able to read simple sentences. Too few children are as yet able to write independently. However, some of the most able are beginning to use writing as a means of communicating and can write two or three simple words.
75. The quality of teaching is generally unsatisfactory in Reception classes, some planned literacy tasks lack challenge, are repetitive and children's interest is not maintained. It is unlikely that children will reach or exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy skills as there is insufficient focus on developing the skills through all of the areas of learning in both the indoor and outdoor classroom. During role-play activities there are few opportunities for staff to intervene and talk about children's play and challenge their ideas. Information identifying the progress children make is not co-ordinated effectively so that assessment data rarely inform curriculum planning.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Mathematical development is **good** in the Nursery and **unsatisfactory** in the Reception.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective planning is in place in the Nursery and pupils enjoy a wide range of mathematical activities which are reinforced in all areas of learning.
- There is little evidence of progression between Nursery and Reception particularly in using numbers and counting.
- Tasks are not as well matched to pupils' needs in the Reception as they are in the Nursery and as a result, more able children are not effectively challenged.

### Commentary

76. In the Nursery, mathematical development is well planned, taught effectively and children have positive attitudes to their learning. The teacher makes good use of her knowledge of mathematics and the children in her care. Across all areas of learning there is evidence of increased understanding of number, shape and space. Mathematical vocabulary is incorporated into many activities during the day, including the effective use of the interactive whiteboard. Children are encouraged to recognise numbers and shapes, count, add and explore space in a range of teacher led and child initiated activities that are interesting and challenging. In one lesson, children were asked to sort and identify simple shapes and explore irregular shapes using the interactive whiteboard. Adults' assessment of children's understanding in mathematics is effectively carried out through observations and questioning. Children make satisfactory progress overall and reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they leave the Nursery.
77. In the Reception classes, children are unlikely to reach or exceed the early goal for mathematical development because planned tasks lack challenge and do not take into account the progress children have made in the Nursery. Curriculum provision for mathematical development is unsatisfactory because work in mathematics is not reinforced across other areas of learning and tasks are not matched well to children's needs. The quality of teaching is generally unsatisfactory. Children's mathematical development is not effectively planned; teaching is often dull and repetitive and worksheets do not always provide an appropriate focus for mathematical development. There are a number of lost opportunities for using information and communication technology to support mathematical development. Use of assessment data to plan meaningful tasks is poor as most children experience the same activities, for example all children in one class regardless of previous experience or success were expected to focus on the same type of activities when counting 5, then 6 and then 7.

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

Knowledge and understanding of the world is **good** in the Nursery and **satisfactory** in Reception.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The range of experiences and stimulating opportunities to develop children's understanding of their world is better in the Nursery than in Reception classes.
- Use of the outdoor classroom is under utilised throughout the Foundation Stage as are opportunities for children to engage in structured play both indoors and outdoors.
- Use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support children's learning is limited.

### **Commentary**

78. In the Nursery, children explore toys and torches that use electricity and experiment with simple circuits. Teaching is good and children are challenged to explain their observations and understanding. The quality of questioning by staff is good. Use of the outdoors classroom is as yet underdeveloped. By the time the children leave Nursery they are in line with national expectations having made satisfactory progress.
79. In the Reception classes, children are unlikely to reach or exceed the early learning goals for knowledge and understanding of the world because there are insufficient planned opportunities for them to develop their skills and increase their knowledge. Teaching is variable, ranging from unsatisfactory to satisfactory; where teaching is more effective, there is an accurate understanding of what children need to learn and tasks are matched to their needs. For example, during a lesson that focused on sorting using children's physical features, children were able to name parts of the body, compare features and describe them. Children enjoy using the interactive whiteboard, but there are missed opportunities for them to explore the world around them using this exciting resource. The quality of planning does not ensure that all children experience a range of worthwhile activities across all of the areas of learning, in both the indoor and outdoor classroom. This is particularly the case in role-play activities in the

Reception where there are few opportunities for staff to intervene and talk about children's play and challenge their ideas or provide interesting creative opportunities for children.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical development is **satisfactory** in the Nursery but **unsatisfactory** in Reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop their manipulative skills effectively handling equipment, making marks using crayons, pens and paints; they also use tools appropriately under supervision.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to construct objects with large apparatus, or to negotiate space; this impedes their physical development.
- Structured play sessions are not effectively planned into the curriculum for Reception children.
- Limited intervention by adults during play activities in Reception classes reduces opportunities for children to extend and challenge their physical and creative development.

### Commentary

80. When the children access the outdoor area it is often for limited amounts of time, the planned activities are satisfactory and enhance their skills. However, all too often, Nursery children have limited opportunities for outdoor play and this restricts opportunities for their physical development. They use the equipment safely, respect each other and show good physical control in their movements. Children enjoy exploring the outdoor area and there are adequate resources in place to meet their needs, including climbing apparatus, tricycles and other ride-on toys. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory with many good features. Adult intervention is well timed and effective in supporting children's learning and skill development. Children's manipulative skills are developing well and many are able to use simple tools with confidence. However, children do not have sufficient access to large apparatus, construction equipment and role-play activities during the day.
81. The quality of teaching is mostly unsatisfactory in reception classes largely because of the limited intervention by adults during play activities and the lack of effective tracking in children's progress in their physical development and this has an adverse effect on children's learning and progress. In the Reception classes, children are unlikely to reach the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year because of the limited opportunities for them to develop their physical skills both in planned activities led by the teacher or through work when children play together or work independently following their own creative ideas. Also, because of limited intervention by staff, pupils are not always challenged to try something new or to find alternative ways of doing things.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Creative development is **satisfactory** in the Nursery but **unsatisfactory** in Reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery there is a satisfactory range of experiences to support childrens' creative development but this is not so in the Reception classes.
- Children throughout the Foundation Stage enjoy action songs and respond well to rhythm and music.
- Children enjoy taking part in role-play but there is a lack of adult involvement and intervention when children play and work on their own interests in the Reception classes.

### Commentary

82. In the Nursery, children experience a satisfactory range of activities that stimulate their creative development including action songs, playing with musical instruments and playing games. Resources are well prepared and adults intervene effectively during activities that children engage in. Children are able to sing a range of familiar songs and rhymes and explore what happens when they make marks with paint. All children show a keen interest in what they can hear, smell, see, touch and feel in and around the classroom. The teaching for creative development does not focus enough on the continual use of the outdoor area and role-play areas in order to enhance learning. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory as is the progress children are making in their creative development and, as a result, children are expected to be broadly in line with expectations by the end of the Nursery year.
83. In the Reception classes, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching for creative development is not well planned for and children do not experience a range of opportunities that are delivered across all the areas of learning. There is little adult intervention with children and there are therefore a number of missed learning opportunities. Children enjoy taking part in role-play, for example running the dentist's surgery, but adults do not get sufficiently involved with children's play in order to challenge them to achieve appropriately or try new things or even to talk about what they are doing. The range of activities is limited and, as such, they are unlikely to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. There is an under-use of information and communication technology to support children's learning despite the range of resources and programs available.

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

### **English**

Provision in English is **good**. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning is **good** and the work planned for pupils helps them to achieve well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in reading and writing are improving significantly from a very low base.
- Pupils' presentation of their work is good.
- The use of writing targets and feedback comments help pupils to know what they must do to improve.
- The quality of teaching and learning for English is consistently good or very good in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their lessons.
- Pupils' independent learning skills, including research and referencing skills are weak.
- Pupils do not know the names of well known authors.
- Opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills are limited.
- The challenge for more able pupils, at present consistently seen in Year 5 and 6 classes, is not evident in all other year groups.

### **Commentary**

84. Literacy skills across the school are improving because of the consistent teaching approaches used across the school. The impact can be seen in the significant rise in literacy standards. National test results in English in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that they are performing in line with similar schools and Year 6 pupils are above average compared to similar schools, although standards remain very low in comparison with all schools. Pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6, based on their starting points at the end of Year 2.
85. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in English in relation to their capabilities. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, traveller pupils and pupils in public care make good progress in their lessons. This is because the adults who support them know them very well and tasks are planned carefully to meet individual needs. In Years 5 and 6, more able pupils

achieve well in their lessons because their provision is better than in other parts of the school. At the end of Year 6, boys' and girls' standards in reading and writing have steadily improved. Girls out-perform boys in reading and writing.

86. Standards in speaking and listening are below that expected of pupils of a similar age. At the end of Year 2, pupils listen to others and usually respond appropriately. When they speak to the whole-class group, most pupils are not yet aware that you need to use your voice in a very different way than when you are talking to the person next to you. Year 4 pupils generally find it difficult to give sustained contributions in discussions. This has improved by Year 6 when pupils are beginning to develop their ideas and to be aware of how to use language to persuade. For example, Year 6 pupils discussed how to present a balanced argument through using more formal phrases such as 'on the one hand/ on the other hand'. The staff are aware of the need to help and extend pupils' vocabulary and do this by providing good role models of how to speak and listen through the clear explanations that they give and their attention to pupils' responses. They develop pupils' vocabulary through repeating and explaining unfamiliar words as well as using technical language, when appropriate, as part of teaching subject-specific vocabulary. At present, there is no speaking and listening scheme of work in place so opportunities are missed to include these objectives in lessons. There are insufficient opportunities in the infant classes and lower junior classes for pupils to give sustained contributions in discussions which are linked to the lack of open-ended questions. Strategies such as 'talk partners' are not used enough for pupils to develop their ideas through talk.
87. Standards in reading are improving. Pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 reach standards that are good in comparison with similar schools. Fewer pupils reach higher standards in reading in comparison with similar schools. The school has made it a priority to improve reading provision. Younger pupils are teamed up with an older 'book buddy' each week. Time is allocated each day for guided reading sessions so that pupils acquire and develop their reading skills. 'Catch up' literacy sessions are taught well and pupils make good progress. There is good encouragement for pupils to read at home with the recently purchased smart book bags which include a home/school book in which parents make comments. Pupils who are learning to read know how to use letter sounds, picture and context clues to work out how to read words and sentences. Some fluent readers who can decode the text well, have weak comprehension skills. This is because of their lack of attention to punctuation so they fail to get the sense of the text and miss the nuances of meaning. Few pupils know the names of popular children's authors or can clearly explain their tastes and preferences in reading material. Pupils know that you read an information book in a different way to fiction. Skimming and scanning skills, when locating specific information, are weak. Pupils are not familiar enough with the Dewey system to locate a book in the library. At present, there is no whole-school approach to record the development of pupils' reading skills that gives sufficiently useful diagnostic comments.
88. Pupils' achievements in writing are steadily improving and progress is good. Pupils take pride in presenting their work well and care is taken with handwriting. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils have developed a fluent, but not always joined, handwriting style. Their writing range increases with the main features of the chosen text beginning to be adapted for the intended reader. Good attention is given to improving pupils' spelling. Younger pupils learn key words. Older pupils are aware of spelling rules and how prefixes and suffixes can help improve accuracy in spelling.
89. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in all years, Year 1 throughout to Year 6, are good. Teachers demonstrate to their pupils a range of writing skills including how to edit and amend text, use a range of connectives and punctuate accurately so that pupils are clear on what they need to do. Teachers are becoming confident in using the interactive whiteboard for whole-class teaching sessions. They plan tasks that match the different ability levels of pupils so that pupils achieve well. Thoughtful use of resources, such as writing frames and rhyming pots, are encouraging for younger and less able pupils. Teachers mark work well with good feedback comments against writing targets and lesson objectives so that pupils know how well

they are doing. The introduction of 'morning work', gives pupils the opportunity to consolidate skills that can be applied in their subsequent writing tasks. Very good teaching approaches in Year 6 for lower achieving pupils include the use of drama and discussion that motivates reluctant writers, particularly boys. There is a high level of challenge for higher achieving pupils in Year 6 where discussion and open-ended questions are used well so that pupils are working at the edge of their capability and producing good outcomes.

90. Senior managers have been rigorous in analysing literacy standards and taking effective action to address areas of weakness. The impact can be seen in the significant rise in literacy standards and the consistent teaching approaches used across the school. Senior managers have supported the English subject leader well in her role and she has a good understanding of standards and what needs to be done to improve them.

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

91. A decision has been made to give additional time to the teaching of basic skills throughout the school and this has had a positive impact in raising standards in literacy. However, not all the literacy skills are planned into the context of other subjects, particularly in speaking and listening. The use of formal and informal subject discussions or just asking each other: "what do you think?" are under-used. Skimming and scanning techniques to find out information in texts as well as evaluating the effectiveness of different reference sources are not clearly evident in teachers' plans.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** but standards remain low.

Standards in mathematics are **below the national average** but they have improved. By the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress but in the 2003 national tests standards were **well below the national average** and below those of schools with similar prior attainment. Standards in the using and applying of mathematics are below what might be expected in all year groups.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs in a high proportion of lessons.
- The good use of assessment to plan for individual needs.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in most lessons which are an improvement on the last inspections.
- Standards compared to similar schools are below average at Year 6 and few pupils reach the higher levels at either key stage.
- Lack of planned opportunities for using and applying of mathematics, supporting higher attaining pupils.
- Monitoring and evaluating mathematics provision throughout the school, particularly teaching and learning are at an early stage of development.

### **Commentary**

92. Improvement in mathematics standards over the last year has not been as good as in reading and writing. Standards in the end of Year 2 tests in 2003 show pupils to attain well below the national average but broadly in line with standards of similar schools. Standards for boys have risen steadily over the last three years but those of girls have fluctuated and there was a dip in girls' performance in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2003. Progress throughout Years 3 to 6 is sound and the school's results in the end of Year 6 tests in 2003 show marked improvements. However they remain below those of similar schools. Girls show almost a two term lead on the boys in their mathematical development by the time they reach the end of

Year 6. Standards in lessons are generally below expectations with the exception of the top mathematics set in the upper school where pupils are broadly in line with expectations.

93. Mathematics teaching throughout both key stages is at least satisfactory, and pupils make sound progress achieving satisfactorily throughout Years 1 to 6. The most successful lessons feature good planning, careful preparation and the use of imaginative teaching methods, resulting in lessons that are conducted at a lively pace. Staff and pupils are gaining in confidence in the use of the interactive whiteboards. In one lesson, its use provided an interesting way for pupils to measure a variety of objects using standard measures. Pupils then applied these skills using rulers to measuring a variety of objects in centimetres. In another example, pupils used the interactive boards as a calculator to explore place values. Most teachers have a good understanding of pupils' previous learning and in the best lessons they skilfully target questions and provide praise for individuals.
94. Teachers have secure understanding of the mathematics curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning is generally satisfactory, making effective use of the assessment information made available to them. Mathematics planning ensures adequate coverage in all areas of mathematics curriculum except 'Using and Applying'. The lack of planned opportunities for problem-solving and mathematical investigations means that more able pupils are not always extended. Sometimes teachers dominate activities which restricts opportunities for pupils to independently explore number patterns or relationships. The lack of consistency in the use of mental oral strategies, limits opportunities to meet the wide range of needs of many pupils in classes as well as restricting opportunities to develop speech and language through mathematics. Support staff are deployed effectively, as a result, pupils with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress.
95. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in a high proportion of lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now co-operate well in class and sometimes are given opportunities to discuss their work in small and large groups in an orderly way.
96. Co-ordination of mathematics is developing. The current subject leader took over the role in September 2003, with the support of a mentor from the senior management team. Together they have established a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in mathematics at Key Stage 2. However, they are less confident in identifying issues and supporting the development of mathematics in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Monitoring to date has been mostly through review of pupils' work; however, monitoring teaching and learning in lessons is limited, although this has been identified as a priority for a future management focus.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

97. Satisfactory use is made of numeracy in other subjects, including number skills and data handling in science; design and technology and ICT. Applications of the use of number are often well displayed throughout the school and these examples enhance the learning environment.

### **SCIENCE**

**The quality of science provision is satisfactory.** The subject leader is new to the school but has already established a secure framework for teaching and assessing science. She has identified the main weaknesses and is working hard to improve provision, making good use of the evaluating information made available to her.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained in science are well below the national average, but pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
- Developments in science are at an early stage, with good subject leadership.
- Good structured science planning framework and effective on-going assessments in line with the school's assessment policy provides good guidance to teachers.
- The main focus for teaching is on science subject content and terminology. There is limited focus on the systematic development of skills of scientific enquiry.
- Opportunities for pupils to investigate independently are limited and this impedes the progress of the more able scientists in the school.
- Pupils have difficulty manipulating and evaluating data and other information particularly when taken from unfamiliar contexts.
- Opportunities for pupils to lead discussions on scientific topics towards the ends of lessons are limited.

## Commentary

98. Standards at the end of Year 6 national tests in 2003 in science were well below the national average. However, this represents an improvement on the previous year when science results were in the bottom 5 per cent of schools nationally. Girls have made significantly greater progress in science than boys since the schools amalgamated. The vast majority of pupils achieve broadly in line with what might be expected from pupils of similar age and ability based on the work they do in class and in their books. However, more able pupils could do better, as few pupils achieve the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6. Analysis of the progress pupils make from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 in science shows that achievements in science are in line with national distributions for pupils with similar starting points in science. Science performance overall is broadly in line with the national average when compared to similar schools, but performance is low when compared at Level 5.
99. Pupils at the end of Year 2, in teacher assessments, are below the national average with 85 per cent of pupils achieving Level 2, the national expectation. No pupils achieved Level 3 in science. On the basis of the work submitted, overall attainment in science by the end of Year 2 is below what might be expected.
100. The lack of progress towards the higher levels throughout the school is largely due to pupils' low literacy and communication skills, particularly in comprehension research and referencing skills. Whilst many pupils, particularly the boys, are able to recall scientific facts many find it difficult to explain their ideas, apply their knowledge to different situations or to suggest questions for independent investigations. Progress of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, is good because of the effective support provided from them.
101. A range of practical and investigative work was seen during the inspection and there is evidence in pupils' books to show an increased emphasis on methods of scientific enquiry. From an early age pupils are encouraged to experiment, make and record observations, for example looking at similarities and differences in living things and in sorting materials or looking at various properties of materials such as whether they are magnetic or not. However, often the tasks lack imagination and are too simplistic to enable more able pupils to collect, record and evaluate meaningful information. As a result, skills associated with scientific enquiry are not developed systematically.
102. Experimental work is more focused in Years 3 to 6 but pupils in some classes revisit aspects of work on materials and properties that they have covered earlier, without any clear evidence that they have built on their previous experiences. The work on stretching fibres in Year 3 is sound and is effectively linked to design and technology. In Year 4, pupils are gaining in confidence in manipulating equipment making electrical circuits and investigating conductivity.

There has been some good work on investigating factors that affect the rate of evaporation, and during the inspection, Year 6 pupils investigated wind resistance and considered factors that affect the rate of fall of a paper spinner.

103. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. There is a good planning framework that guides lesson plans. Teachers' preparation is good but sometimes the teaching and learning approaches adopted limit pupils' outcomes. Learning objectives and the expected outcomes are shared with pupils. These objectives are used as a basis for monitoring pupils' on-going progress and are supported by additional end-of-topic tests. Overall assessment is satisfactory but improving, with a number of aspects that are very good particularly in the analysis of pupils' performances in tests and the identification of areas of the curriculum that need further focus. It is from this analysis that the co-ordinator has identified issues linked to areas of weakness in staff's subject knowledge some of which is variable, but the support provided by the coordinator is good and identified weaknesses are being addressed particularly in teachers' questioning and the development of enquiry skills, with more effective use of the concluding parts of lessons to discuss and evaluate experimental evidence.
104. Relationships throughout the school are good and as a result pupils show good attitudes with respect of equipment and living things; they enjoy practical science. On-going support in the classroom is good overall but very good in Years 5 and 6. As a result pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Because most science work is based on a common context often closely directed by teachers, there are limited opportunities for pupils to follow their own methods of enquiry; consequently, opportunities for the more able pupils to extend investigations are not always made available. The achievement and progress of the more able pupils are not as good as the middle and low ability pupils in the groups.
105. Subject leadership and management are at an early stage of development; the science co-ordinator has been in the school for less than two terms. However, a great deal has been accomplished in that time since amalgamation. There has been good overall analysis of performance and an audit of science provision. The development plan is comprehensive and deals with the main issues that need addressing. Progress in science development is good from a very low starting point.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strategic planning and vision for ICT is good.
- The focus on developing staff confidence and competence through training.
- Effective briefing and deployment of support staff which contribute to pupils' learning.
- The regular access pupils have to ICT facilities.
- ICT is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards in ICT are not established well.

### **Commentary**

106. In the newly amalgamated school, good progress has been made in improving the provision for ICT. Pupils have regular access to ICT facilities with time allocated to teach specific ICT skills and to use ICT in other subjects. A scheme of work is in place which has been implemented since September. There is limited evidence of ICT in pupils' work to support other subjects submitted to inspectors. Judgements have been made on the six whole and part lessons observed during the inspection and from discussions with pupils about their work.

107. Pupils' standards in the infant classes are mainly below that expected for their age. In Year 1, pupils are beginning to learn how to program a simple control device (Pixie). They can, with support, program one or two instructions and are beginning to use appropriate terminology such as 'clear the memory'. They make good progress and achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Progression can be seen in Year 2 where pupils are building on previous experiences to program the 'Pixie' device to draw a simple object. They are learning the purposeful use of ICT equipment and achieve appropriately. There are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and test the sequences of instructions in order to make things happen; this aspect of the curriculum is required if they are to reach the higher levels.
108. Standards in junior classes are average for their age. Key board skills are sound. Pupils can log on, access a spreadsheet, input data and label columns. They can highlight data and create a bar graph that is appropriately labelled. Learning support assistants working with pupils with special educational needs and with those who have English as an additional language, are effective in their interventions so that all pupils make sound progress. Pupils are developing their ICT skills effectively. There is a focus on production of data from a range of sources and pupils are moving towards interpretation and analysis of the data they collect.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. Lesson plans are based on an effective framework identifying the three part lesson, as seen in the ICT suite. Learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils. Teachers give good explanations and break tasks down into manageable steps in order that pupils make sound progress. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate what they have learnt in the concluding parts of lessons. Teachers are developing their confidence and skill in using the interactive whiteboards to demonstrate and explain and are providing good role models for pupils.
110. The headteacher has a clear vision of the provision and use of ICT. The proposed multimedia suite is an exciting development. Good support has been given from the LEA ICT consultant who has worked with the newly-appointed subject leader on his action plan and together they worked on tasks identified on the actions plan. Procedures for assessing, monitoring and evaluating standards in ICT are not yet firmly established or used consistently.

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

111. Cross-curricular ICT use is at an early stage of development. In history, pupils in Year 2 with support, accessed the Internet and learnt how to enter key words and locate information on the Great Fire of London. Pupils found the reading demanding, but, with good support, extended their knowledge of historical facts, learning new vocabulary and developing their note-making skills. In Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils learn how to input data and select an appropriate graph for displaying it.

### **HUMANITIES**

112. All pupils are taught religious education (RE) and either history or geography on a termly rotation. During the inspection, RE and history were inspected and reported in full. No work relating to geography was available for scrutiny. However, there were opportunities to discuss aspects of planning and subject leadership with the geography subject leader.

### **HISTORY**

Provision for history is **satisfactory**. Pupils are achieving levels in line with those expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents an improvement since the amalgamation.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in history is good for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have very good attitudes to their learning.

- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development.

### **Commentary**

113. No history lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2. However, analysis of pupils' work indicates teaching in these year groups to be satisfactory. The history lessons seen in the Year 5 and 6 classes were very well taught ensuring all pupils made good progress particularly those with English as a second language and those with special educational needs. The characteristics of the good history teaching include good planning, careful preparation, good links to literacy and effective use of interesting themes. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils wrote a report about the last flight of Concorde making good use of information gleaned from a range of sources including video footage they had seen in a previous lesson. The choice of topic inspired and motivated pupils. They then relayed the key facts, such as when and where the aircraft was built and presented these as newspaper articles. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and enjoy their history lessons.
114. The co-ordination of history and geography is developing with planned changes in subject management throughout the school. The support provided by the senior management team provides a good role-model for developing middle management subject leaders. The use of effective monitoring and evaluation systems, and a planned programme for monitoring teaching and standards in the humanities subjects, involving subject leaders, has yet to be implemented. As a result, the subject leaders have limited knowledge of pupils' progress within each subject throughout all phases. Strengths and weaknesses in some aspects of provision have been identified and areas for development have been included on action plans.

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education (RE) is **unsatisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below expectations.
- The locally agreed syllabus for RE is not covered fully.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development.

### **Commentary**

115. Although it was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection, evidence from this and from assemblies, displays, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work indicates that standards and achievement are below those expected of the agreed syllabus. Standards and provision for RE have not improved as much as other subjects since the amalgamation.
116. The main focus of RE is on learning about Christian teaching. The teaching of other faiths is limited and does not meet the requirements set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Year 6 pupils are able to discuss where Muslims pray and recall some of the Islamic festivals. However, they are limited to simple descriptions and many pupils cannot discuss why these practices are important to the Muslim faith. For example, many could not recall or talk about issues linked to any of the other major religions identified in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from different faith groups respond well to RE but the opportunities to extend spirituality and cultural awareness through religious education are also not developed, resulting in a lack of progress for pupils' learning. However, pupils do have a good understanding and knowledge of social and moral behaviour and the needs for codes of practice. They are responsible and relate well to each other and adults - particularly those pupils with special educational needs who gain a great deal from the good support provided for them.

117. RE subject leadership is at an early stage of development. As with many other subject leaders in the school, the co-ordinator is new to the post only starting in September 2003 and is still developing an understanding of the subject and the school's provision. However, the lack of pupil knowledge and understanding and the limited range of coverage of RE indicates that guidance and provision for the subject has been unsatisfactory for some time. The new scheme of work linked to the locally agreed syllabus has yet to be implemented fully. The current subject leader does not have a secure understanding of the locally agreed syllabus which limits her ability to support others. There are also limited monitoring and evaluation systems in place in order to establish the quality of teaching, learning and standards achieved in RE.

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

### **ART**

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

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

- Enthusiastic and skilled subject leader.
- Subject leader has not been able to monitor teaching and learning in the subject.
- Teachers are gaining confidence in teaching of art.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy all art activities.

#### **Commentary**

118. Although it was not possible to observe any art lessons during the inspection, pupils' works were studied in sketchbooks and on displays around the school and pupils were interviewed about them. The quality of displays and the way pupils' work is presented are significant strengths of the school. The policy for displaying work, its purpose and the forms of presentation both of art work and other subjects has been a major factor in raising pupils' expectations and their awareness of high quality work and has improved the learning environment for pupils. Parents and other visitors have commented on the high quality of work now visible around the school. Pupils are proud of their work being displayed particularly those with special educational needs who progress well in developing artistic skills.

119. Issues about art provision were discussed with the subject leader and documentation analysed. Standards are above average in Year 5 and pupils are in line to meet expected standards by the end of Year 6 but standards in Year 2 are below expectations. Pupils' achievements are above expectations in Years 5 and 6, in line with expectations in Years 3 and 4, but below in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 5 can explore and use a variety of two and three-dimensional media, for example creating model dwellings by weaving natural materials following a visit to Hinchbrook Park. They also produced some high quality 'Splash' screen prints. Pupils in Year 6 can manipulate images using chalk and paints and produce abstract artwork from still life drawings. However, pupils have had insufficient opportunities to evaluate their work and the work of others. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve in line with others in the groups. The standards of art work seen represent satisfactory improvement over time and the quality of presentation of art around the school has added significantly to the atmosphere of learning. The subject leader is enthusiastic about developing the subject further. Resources for teaching art have improved and teachers are gaining more confidence in art teaching through sharing good practice and through good quality in-service training. The subject leader is highly skilled and enthusiastic and is aware of standards across the school through informal monitoring, and has an appropriate action plan in place.

### **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils sing well and enjoy taking part in musical activities.
- Good or very good teaching of music in Key Stage 2.
- Leadership and management are at an early stage of development with limited opportunities for the subject leader to monitor and evaluate music teaching and standards throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

120. Two music lessons were seen, one in Year 6 and one in Year 4. A discussion was held with the headteacher. Two singing assemblies and a recorder club session were observed, and subject documentation analysed. In one lesson, teaching was very good and in the other teaching was good. In the very good lesson, pupils were engrossed in listening to carefully chosen musical extracts and showed that they could identify and compare musical elements using appropriate vocabulary. Standards are in line with expectations in Year 6 and achievement is good. In Year 4, pupils were able to identify rhythms and listen to and perform Morse code signals. Pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, worked well in pairs and were supported effectively by the adults. Standards in Year 4 are in line with expectations and achievement is satisfactory.
121. Pupils across the school enjoy opportunities to sing and there is good modelling of singing techniques during the assemblies. During the feedback to senior managers two pupils asked to sing their own composition to the inspection team the quality of which was good. There is a choir who performs to members of the community and pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 are able to learn to play the recorder. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but teachers do not track the progress that pupils make effectively to ensure that over time, the progress pupils make in relation to agreed expectations is appropriate. Leadership and management of the subject are at an early stage of development. The subject leader is new to the post this term and has not yet been able to monitor the teaching and standards in the subject or to provide the support needed to help improve pupils' achievements. Improvement since the amalgamation has been satisfactory and the school has an appropriate action plan for the future developments in music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Improved resources and storage.
- Enthusiastic subject leader.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in sporting events in the local community, have positive attitudes and are developing a good team spirit.

### **Commentary**

122. Two lessons of physical education were seen, one in Year 6 and one in Year 2. Discussions were held with both the previous and present subject leaders and documentation was analysed. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 know that they need to warm up their bodies at the start of physical exercise and know that their hearts beat faster when they exercise. They also understand basic health and safety rules when moving equipment and when moving around the hall.

123. Teaching in one lesson was satisfactory and good in the other. In the good lesson, the teacher had high expectations for all pupils and made the learning objectives clear so that pupils understood what they were learning and why. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and planned a challenging range of activities for the pupils. Achievement was satisfactory in both lessons. Standards are in line with expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are on line to meet expected standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 are able to use a variety of controlled movements to create bridge shapes in pairs and improve their performance by evaluating the work of others. In Year 2, pupils are able to produce some effective balances through working collaboratively. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make appropriate progress as do those with English as an additional language. Pupils enjoy joining in physical activities and show good team spirit encouraging each other.
124. The curriculum is enhanced through the provision of extra-curricular netball, football and tag-rugby clubs run by teachers and outside trainers. Pupils are proud to take part in sporting events and the school has recently been awarded a 'fair play trophy' at a local tag-rugby tournament and won a local netball tournament. Resources for teaching physical education have improved considerably and the scheme of work has been developed using a range of curriculum materials. The subject leader is new to the post this term and has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching and standards across the school. A pupil tracking system is now in place but there is not a secure mechanism to ensure that teachers can track the progress pupils make over time in relation to agreed expectations. Improvement since the amalgamation has been satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Sound policy in place but limited guidance to support teachers; the scheme of work has yet to be implemented.
- Limited range of themes and topics and a narrow base for skill development.
- Insufficient focus on the on-going development of skills and subject knowledge as well as the use of a range of different tools and equipment.
- On-going assessment procedures are good and follow the school's policy but there is not a secure understanding of the quality and quantity of work required of each National Curriculum level.
- Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is limited in knowing what to teach and how.
- Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

125. Standards of pupils' work in lessons are below expectations at the end of both Year 2 and the end of Year 6, and this is largely because of the lack of a coherent scheme of work to guide staff. Opportunities for pupils to develop precision in marking out and measuring, cutting and shaping and in joining materials are limited within the current topic framework. No work was seen or submitted from the older pupils.
126. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have drawn plans for a model house made from paper and card construction to simulate the framework of an Anglo Saxon house. Whilst the majority of pupils enjoy the practical work and show positive attitudes and good behaviour because of the good support provided, there are limited opportunities for them to choose different tools or materials to make their models. As a result, the constructions all bear a remarkable similarity. It is only in Year 4 that the issues of triangular frame works and cross-beams are discussed. Far too much of the work is teacher-directed thereby limiting opportunities for pupils to be creative and to develop a range of skills through construction using different tools and materials. There is

insufficient depth to the work to challenge the more able pupils in the groups; this is because there is not a planned programme that builds on pupils' previous experiences. Nevertheless pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve appropriately. They are gaining in confidence using tools and materials and in talking about their constructions because of the appropriate intervention and support they get from adults.

127. Pupils in Year 2 working with fabrics, investigate the fastest means of joining two pieces together, the strongest and most comfortable seams. During these tasks, pupils work safely together, show good hand-eye co-ordination when sewing and are able to discuss the merits of the methods they investigate, however the outcomes are limited in terms of meeting the full range of skills required.
128. Teachers' preparation for lessons is good and they plan to meet their stated objectives which they all share with pupils. The support given by teachers and adults working with groups of pupils containing a wide range of abilities is very good. However, the nature of the activities planned for is limited and does not ensure the full range of skills and knowledge to be developed through the chosen topics. On-going assessments map pupils' progress against the outcomes of each lesson's objectives. An audit of learning resources and comments from staff have identified a number of short falls that impede curriculum coverage particularly in learning about mechanisms, construction and deconstruction and in meeting a design brief for a particular purpose. The main area of weakness is in mechanism and control systems.
129. Leadership and management of design and technology are unsatisfactory. There is limited over-sight of subject provision and progression of skills within and between Key Stages. The current scheme of work, although based on titles and themes suggested in national guidelines does not address the suggested approaches to these topics. As a result, there is insufficient detailed guidance to enable teachers to plan activities that cover the full range of skills needed and to give pupils the experiences they need. There is a new scheme planned for implementation in early 2004.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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