

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WHALEY THORNS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whaley Thorns, Mansfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112793

Headteacher: Mrs A Chambers

Lead inspector: P E Lyseight-jones

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 258392

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 208

School address: Portland Road  
Langwith  
Mansfield  
Nottinghamshire

Postcode: NG20 9HB

Telephone number: (01623) 742 604  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: G A Warrener

Date of previous inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whaley Thorns Primary School is a friendly and welcoming school of an average size, with broadly similar numbers of boys and girls, which has served the local ex-mining community as the village school for many years. The school is well regarded in the community. It became a Health Promoting School in 2001, which was the same year in which it was recognised as an Investor in People. The school is a member of the North Derbyshire Coalfields Education Action Zone (EAZ) and is a part of the SureStart initiative. There is also a family learning project on the school site.

The area which the school serves is one of the most economically disadvantaged in the country. The school population is almost entirely made up of pupils from white British backgrounds and there are no pupils at the school for whom English is an additional language. Two pupils are in the care of the local authority.

Twenty-eight pupils have special educational needs, which is in line with the national average. Within this number are three pupils who have statements of special educational needs, which is also in line with the national average. The range of special educational needs is evenly distributed across severe and moderate learning difficulties, speech and hearing impairment and physical impairment. About half a dozen pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties make up the largest group of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils begin in the nursery with poor levels of attainment and by the time that they are of compulsory school age their attainment is well below the national levels.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12641	Pauline Lyseight-jones	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Religious education English as an additional language Special educational needs
9327	Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
21103	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Personal, social, health education and citizenship
13805	Val Ives	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL SUMMARY

**Whaley Thorns is an effective and rapidly improving school.** It has a friendly, inclusive and positive atmosphere and increasingly provides all pupils with the incentive and the opportunity to work hard and to succeed. National test results in 2003 for Year 6 were amongst the lowest five per cent nationally and standards in the present Year 6 are below the levels expected nationally. However, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school is well-led and managed. There are very good links with other schools and links with the community are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school has a very caring and educational ethos with strong educational and social values. It is committed to including all pupils and to having a central role in the local community.
- The drive, educational vision and leadership of the headteacher are of a very high standard.
- There is good quality, well-targeted school development and school improvement work by the governors, staff, LEA, EAZ and other supporters.
- There is good quality provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in class work have improved considerably in the last year; however, national test results are still too low.
- Improvements to the school site have created a stimulating and welcoming learning environment.
- There is a very good range of enrichment activities to support pupils' learning.

**The school's improvement since the previous inspection in 1998 is satisfactory overall.** The school has undergone considerable and prolonged upheaval, which resulted in a new senior team being established in the last 18 months. The new headteacher's leadership is of a very high standard. The school is now well managed. The quality of teaching has improved in Years 1-2 and has been maintained elsewhere. Pupils' attainment is now satisfactory or better. Whilst national test results have declined and attendance rates are below average, both issues are being thoroughly dealt with. The school is showing good signs of improvement and is well able to secure greater successes.

The school has made satisfactory progress on the specific key issues from the previous inspection. Standards in English class work have improved. The outside area has been transformed through sensitive landscaping into a fully functioning teaching and leisure area. The internal accommodation has been improved considerably and the school is now a pleasant and stimulating setting for learning. The computer suite is in place. It is well used by pupils and staff and contributes to clear improvements in information and communication technology teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - in the lowest 5% of schools. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are in line with typical expectations for the age of the pupils. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, they are below expectations. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Otherwise, their progress is satisfactory.** In 2003, standards in the national tests were in the lowest five per cent nationally and when compared to those in similar schools. In English and mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level was well below average. In science, higher level test results were within the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. There were only 28 pupils in the year group for the tests; therefore, direct performance comparisons have to be treated with caution. Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is very poor and on starting the reception class, pupils' attainment is well below the nationally expected levels. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well.

**Pupils' personal development is good.** Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to school and they behave well. The attendance rate is well below the national average, with a significant proportion of absence either being due to holidays being taken in term-time or to the children of a few families.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good.** Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good or better teaching in several classes. Teaching is very good in Year 2. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 6 are good. In other year groups, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. They are taught well and they learn well. Gifted and talented pupils are not yet formally identified and therefore no judgement is made. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and are good in the Foundation Stage and in English. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and in personal, social and health education. The curriculum, including in the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory, with necessary priority being given to English, mathematics and science. There is a very good programme of enrichment activities which broadens the range of what pupils can learn. The standard of care and the consideration given to pupils' welfare are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The school is governed satisfactorily. The headteacher leads the school very well, with a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations. Key staff fulfil their leadership roles satisfactorily, although subject leadership is underdeveloped as several staff have recently taken on responsibility for a subject. The school's strategic planning reflects the school's ambitions and goals very well. Financial management is satisfactory. The school is effectively managed with many good systems and procedures in place.

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

**Parents and pupils are happy with the school and the education that it provides.** Parents receive a suitable range of information about the school and about their children's progress. Any complaints are dealt with well. Parents take an active interest in the work which their children do. There is a thriving parent-teacher association which regularly raises significant funds for the school. Pupils have very good, trusting relationships with adults in school. They enjoy being at school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should improve are:**

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring achievement across the school in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and in personal, social and health education.

- Leadership skills of subject leaders, so that they play a greater role in securing higher standards and better assessment in their specialist areas.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is **good** in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is **satisfactory**. Overall, standards are **below expectations**. Standards are good in religious education in Years 1 and 2 and they are below expectations in English in Years 1 to 6 and in science in Years 3 to 6. In art and design, geography, history and information and communication technology, they are in line with expectations.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results have remained too low for several years.
- Standards of the English, mathematics and science work which pupils do in class is better than expected and exceeds their test performance.
- Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	19.7 (21.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	21.4 (23.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	22.9 (24.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.5 (13.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.8 (11.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.9 (14.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. In 2003 Year 6 national tests, English, mathematics and science results were amongst the bottom five per cent of schools nationally, whether compared to all schools or to similar schools. Higher levels results for English and mathematics were well below average; in science, they were amongst the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Higher level results in English, mathematics and science are well below average when compared to those schools which are similar to Whaley Thorns.
2. In 2003, when compared to all schools, Year 2 national test results were below average in writing and mathematics and they were well below average in reading and in the teacher-assessed science test. When compared to similar schools, results are above average in writing, average in mathematics and they are below average in reading and science. When compared to all schools, Whaley Thorns Year 2 higher level results were average in writing, below average in science and well below average in reading and mathematics. When these results are compared to those in similar schools, they are above average in writing, average in

science and below average in reading and mathematics. The improvement in the school's Year 2 results over the past five years is better than the national rate of improvement.

3. In Year 6, the improvement trend over the last three years is not as good as the national rate. The poor Year 6 results are explained by a number of features. These include giving insufficient attention to pupils' learning needs, staff changes, longstanding low expectations by staff and pupils of what they can do and very poor behaviour by a small but significant group of pupils, which disturbed other pupils' learning. Each of these issues has now been effectively addressed by the new management team. Pupils who are at risk of affecting the quality of other pupils' education are being well supported, both in school and off-site. Staffing changes have strengthened the teaching team in Years 3 to 6. Detailed support from specialist teachers from the North Derbyshire Coalfields Education Action Zone has led to effective teaching strategies now being in place, especially in English and mathematics. The class work which pupils are now doing in Year 6 is in line with expectations for their age in mathematics and it is below expectations in English and science. The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory.
4. The 2003 Year 2 writing results are a significant improvement on the 2002 results. Pupils' results also improved in reading and mathematics but by a smaller margin. These results are due to the thorough implementation of National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and the very good teaching which pupils now receive.
5. When pupils join the nursery class, their attainment is very poor. However, they work hard and make good progress. Children in the reception class are in line to meet their learning goals in mathematical, physical, personal, social and emotional development. In other areas of learning, they will fall below this expectation. The achievement of nursery and reception class children is good.
6. Pupils start Year 1 with standards which are below expected levels and with much ground to catch up. While not all pupils progress at the same rate, this improved position represents accelerated achievement, where pupils are doing better than they, or their parents, would expect. Given their attainment when they start school, they are doing well. This healthy picture is due to thorough teaching from the nursery class to Year 2, including the meticulous assessment of children's work and of what they have learned by nursery and reception class staff. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good.
7. Years 1 and 2 pupils' class work is in line with expectations in mathematics and science and it is below expectations in English. This indicates that the gains made in the 2003 national writing and mathematics tests will be improved upon and that pupils' performance in the reading tests will at least be maintained. This is because there is better targeted teaching which has taken on key aspects of the former National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There is now a more structured and well-resourced reading programme, improvements in pupils' spelling, punctuation and sentence construction and careful mathematics teaching which thoroughly lays down the foundations for confident learning in mathematics.
8. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are good in religious education; they are in line with expectations in art and design, geography, history and information and communication technology. Pupils' achievement is good in information and communication technology, religious education and history. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are in line with expectations in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education. In other subjects, there was insufficient information from which to form a judgement.
9. The concerted drive in school to improve standards, through better staff development, better resources to support the curriculum and higher expectations of what pupils can do, is resulting in pupils' overall achievement being satisfactory. The school is now ready to put into place a structure which will both identify and support pupils who may be either gifted or talented. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with well-matched work which leads to their

making good progress. The two pupils who are in local authority care have recently joined the school, they are given work which meets their needs and are making satisfactory progress.

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

Pupils show **good** attitudes to learning and their school work. They generally behave well. The behaviour of some pupils is challenging, but the school is an orderly and friendly community. Most pupils' personal development is progressing well and the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is much lower than is acceptable.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall.
- Attendance is below acceptable levels.

### **Commentary**

- Most pupils are positive about their work and behave well. They are at their best when the lessons interest and engage them, or they are required to work in small groups, or are involved in practical tasks, such as in science, design and technology or in art and design. They are often keen to contribute, are interested and happy to answer questions. Pupils concentrate well and respond to the needs of the lesson. However, a few pupils, in all year groups, have difficulty in concentrating, listening carefully and maintaining this behaviour throughout a lesson. This is most noticeable if the lesson is not exciting or if they are expected to sit and listen for too long. A few pupils can be challenging to the teacher's authority, but these pupils are well-known and invariably have good additional support to help them conform and to learn. During last year, there were a number of fixed term exclusions, relating to six pupils, but this sanction is used as a last resort. There had been only one permanent exclusion reported at the time of the inspection. The school uses special support services and behaviour improvement programmes to ensure that pupils are included within the school, and that they continue to receive help, in all but the most extreme situations. Behaviour in and around the school is good and pupils move around in an orderly fashion.
- The school makes good arrangements to secure the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Assemblies are used well; both to motivate and to cause pupils to think about big ideas, but this also occurs in lessons. For example, 'what did the Egyptians believe about the after-life?', 'what do you say when you talk to God?', 'how did children feel during the war?' are all questions that pupils tried to answer in their own way. Social and moral development is well provided through the codes of discipline, behaviour and rewards, often partially devised by the pupils themselves. Cultural differences between religions are explored and there is music, artwork and dance in the curriculum. However, the preparation for living in a multi-ethnic society could be more strongly taught, particularly as the school serves an area which is almost universally of a white-British background.

### **Attendance**

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.8	School data	0.9
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

12. The level of pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory and results in some pupils not having the opportunity to benefit fully from their lessons. A small number of families have difficulty in ensuring that their children attend regularly and others take their children out of school during term time. This causes the school's overall attendance figures to be well below the national average. The school is working hard with the education welfare service to improve this situation.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	161	14	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with very good teaching in Year 2 and good teaching in the nursery and reception classes and in Year 1 and 6. The curriculum is satisfactory with very good enrichment opportunities. The school's care for its pupils and for their health and safety is good. The school's links with other schools and colleges are very good, the links with the community are good and links with parents are sound.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, with significant strengths in several classes. Assessment is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 2, teaching and learning are very good. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery class, the reception class, in Year 1 and 6.
- Overall, assessment is good in the nursery and reception classes; across the school, assessment procedures vary too much from subject to subject.
- Teachers' planning throughout the school is good and suitable challenge is provided for pupils across the ability range because teachers know their children well.
- Education care officers and other adults supporting pupils in class are skilled and use their support well.
- The resources available to teachers are used well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they are well motivated to learn.
- The support which pupils receive when doing work in small groups needs to be consistently well managed.

### Commentary

13. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good and all children, including those with special educational needs, learn well and make good progress. Nursery and reception staff plan effectively and their assessment of pupils' progress is meticulous, leading to work being well matched to pupils' needs.
14. The activities and support which are available to pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are very suitable. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work in

small groups or individually, with resources which match the level at which they are working. Education care officers give sensitive support to pupils and involve them in the work of the whole class, especially where work is shared in the final part of lessons. Good planning for teaching means that the needs of more able pupils are being met and they are sufficiently challenged. However, there is no specific programme in place for support for the highest attaining pupils, although plans are in place for this to take place from the beginning of the next school year.

15. The school has in place a highly organised system for assessing the work of a range of pupils every 11 days. This gives staff valuable information about pupils' progress and standards. There are well-written targets for pupils, in words which they can understand, in both literacy and numeracy and pupils are increasingly aware of what their next challenge might be. However, this is a new development, not in place in all subjects, and pupils are insufficiently aware of what they should do next to improve in many subjects.
16. Teachers plan their lessons well, identifying the main ability groups along with the materials and adult support which will be needed. They work closely to the plans, which have very suitable learning objectives. Teachers know their subjects well, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 6. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, and history is good throughout the school. All staff now expect pupils to do well but the level of challenge and expectation is particularly high in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 6.
17. Pupils are responding well to the effective teaching methods which are in place and developing. They work hard and learn well, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 6. In the best lessons, some pupils are showing that they can work independently and are able to draw together what they have learned and explain this to others. This is a good development and reflects well that some pupils are also seeing themselves as effective learners. The volume of regular, correct work which pupils do, especially in English, mathematics and science, is considerable and demonstrates well the accelerated rate of learning which is now both produced by, and is expected of, pupils. The marking of their work does not yet give pupils enough information about what they have done particularly well and what their next steps should be. However, the regular marking of their neatly and clearly presented work means that pupils realise that teachers have a constant overview of what they are learning.
18. The school has maintained its overall satisfactory standard of teaching since the previous inspection. However, the balance of good teaching, and all of the very good teaching, is now in Years 1 and 2, whereas previously the better teaching was in Years 3 to 6. The partnered teaching and demonstration lessons given by Education Action Zone staff, along with the school's planned programme for subject leaders to have first-hand observation of lessons, is leading to improved teaching standards.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	17 (45%)	14 (39%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

#### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is enriched very well by extra activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides a very wide range of visits and clubs which support pupils' development.
- The accommodation has been developed well over the last year and now provides a bright, very clean and stimulating learning environment.

## Commentary

19. The school has improved the quality of its curriculum since the previous inspection. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements in all age groups and makes effective use of the national and local guidance to support teachers' planning for all subjects and areas of learning. It gives good support to pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are in place and set out suitable targets for pupils in English, mathematics and aspects of social, behavioural and emotional development, where necessary. No pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum, nor are there curriculum modifications in place. The code of practice for pupils with special educational needs is fully in place and is providing pupils with well-matched support, either from outside specialists, through individual or small-group work or through relevant resources, so that they receive full access to the curriculum. In particular, two pupils whose behaviour causes too much disruption in class are supported through individual teaching in the school and part-time attendance at a pupil referral unit. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is rapidly developing. The teacher responsible for gifted and talented pupils has already attended relevant training and has an action plan in place. Lesson planning in English, mathematics and science identifies work for pupils with the potential to attain highly. Extensive, good quality, direct, first-hand teaching support has been given, by Education Action Zone staff, to ensure that the literacy and numeracy strategies are sufficiently challenging for all pupils.
20. Education inclusion is good; pupils with special educational needs are well supported, those pupils who are in local authority care are known by the headteacher and their social and educational progress is closely monitored, and the more able pupils are given work which increasingly provides challenge for them. Booster groups and springboard classes are in place to improve the work and learning of pupils who are not doing well enough in mathematics and English. In addition, regular, individual reading practice is given to targeted pupils, both in lesson time and out of class time. The school successfully manages the educational programme of pupils whose behaviour causes concern, keeping pupils within the mainstream school system, with good support from the pupil referral unit.
21. The Foundation Stage curriculum ensures that all the areas of learning are taught. A strong emphasis is placed on children learning through play and practical activities. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 benefit from a broad and balanced programme of work. The school's long-term planning ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education are covered systematically. There is a good programme of activities in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Good opportunities are now provided for pupils to use information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.
22. The school offers pupils a wide range of extra activities. Several residential visits take place and pupils speak very highly of these. As well as supporting work in a range of subjects, these visits make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. There is a wide selection of clubs for pupils outside lesson times and pupils participate eagerly and in good numbers. The activities include a typical range of sports and arts groups, but also offer more unusual pursuits such as gardening, knitting and aerobics. Pupils enjoy singing in the choir and learning to play the guitar and recorders.
23. There have been successful efforts to improve the building and outdoor site since the last inspection. A key issue from that time was to improve the safety around the pond and to

resurface part of the playground. This has now been done and the outdoor area is attractive and very well maintained. The lovely wildlife area has a positive impact on the teaching of science and personal and social education. Inside, the school is clean and bright. Interesting and good quality displays of pupils' work around the school create a stimulating learning environment.

24. Practical learning resources, including books, art, design and technology materials and equipment for science, are mainly of good quality. They are well organised and accessible. The relatively new and well resourced information and communication technology suite has made a very significant contribution to improving standards and the quality of learning since the last inspection. The school benefits from a good number of qualified education care officers who provide a good level of support in lessons. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The recently appointed co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils is raising staff awareness and is working hard to ensure they are correctly identified and their needs met. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, teachers have had the chance to attend appropriate courses and this is having a positive effect on teaching standards.

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

Pupils have a **very good** and trusting relationship with adults in school and this is the foundation of the effective care, welfare and support systems in place in school. Pupils' views are taken into account well and they have suitable and relevant opportunities to contribute to the way in which the school works.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and give pupils security and confidence.
- All arrangements for child protection, care, welfare, health and safety are well organised.
- Pupils receive good advice and support to help them to learn and develop.
- The ways in which pupils' views are considered ensures that they have a role in the running of the school.

### **Commentary**

25. The pupils' questionnaires show that pupils are very happy that their teachers treat them fairly, listen to their points of view and trust them to do things by themselves. Most importantly, they show that if pupils have any worries about school life, they are confident to talk to their teachers about them. This matches the very good relationships between pupils and adults seen in lessons and around the school generally.
26. Child protection awareness is led by the headteacher and procedures follow the local guidelines. Health and safety procedures are all in place, properly managed and monitored, and cover site safety, fire precautions, medicines, risk assessments for visits, and so on. 'Sure-Start' will soon take up residence in the school and there is already a Breakfast and After-School Club, all of which contribute to pupils' wellbeing. All staff are concerned for the safety and welfare of pupils and the school is a secure environment in which to work and play.
27. Pupils are given good support for their learning and development. Procedures to show how well pupils are progressing are in place in English and mathematics and ensure that extra support is given to pupils who learn more slowly. This also applies to those pupils with special educational needs. The school is also sensitive to family circumstances, which can affect pupils' progress in learning, and has good contacts amongst welfare agencies, which can be deployed when needed. Pupils in local authority care are given sensitive support and their academic and other needs are regularly considered. As a result, they have settled well into school. The education welfare officer works closely with the school to help with attendance or other problems that arise. Support for pupils with behavioural difficulties is particularly good.

Teachers manage behaviour well and insist on appropriate standards. A range of initiatives has been introduced, including rewards and incentives, the use of the Pupil Referral Unit and its specialist support teachers, and, more recently, 'Positive Play' – a special programme to develop social skills. The education care officers are well deployed around the school to give good support for those children needing help, both academically and socially, helping them to develop the many skills needed for being alongside others in a community.

28. The school council has been established for some time and the elected councillors take their responsibilities seriously. They act as a channel for ideas from other children and discuss these ideas with senior teachers in school. Members of the school council are particularly pleased with recent changes in the lunchtime and playground arrangements, which came at the suggestion of pupils. More widely, pupils are involved in the setting of the rules for their class and for the playground and Year 6 pupils now act as 'Playtime Pals' to help relationships in the playground. Year 5 pupils are also taking on more responsibility as they have been trained as 'reading buddies' to help younger children. All pupils are now expected to contribute to the understanding of their own targets and to take more personal responsibility for their own achievements.

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

The school is working **particularly closely** with other schools in the Shirebrook cluster on many useful initiatives and is using its local community well. Links with parents are **satisfactory** and **parents are pleased** with what the school does and, as a result, they give **good** support to the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very strong links with other schools provide very good opportunities for staff to work together for the benefit of the pupils.
- The good links with the local community enrich the curriculum.
- Most parents have good feelings towards the school and support it in many ways.
- The school does not involve all parents enough in helping their children learn.

### **Commentary**

29. Schools in the Shirebrook area, of which the school is one, have joined together to develop a series of initiatives to help both teachers and pupils. For example, there will shortly be a 'Reading Month' where all schools work together to focus on reading at home and provide events to encourage and support; subject leaders meet to share best practice and to advance their own skills to give the best curriculum for pupils; specific learning modules are being developed so that by the time pupils move to secondary, they have all had similar learning experiences. There is now a shared information and communication technology technician to help the schools get the most from their equipment, who comes regularly to the school; there are shared initiatives to manage behaviour, such as 'Positive Play'. There are many more such initiatives, and there is a clear determination within the school, on the part of all staff, to use all of these to maximum advantage – and so they do.
30. A number of community services are based on the school site, or close by, and these help both pupils and parents. 'Sure-Start' will soon be working from within the school to support families with small children; there is a drop-in clinic, a Mothers and Toddler group, all of which help children to prepare for nursery. The school has good links with the local church, both for services and wider use, such as the study of buildings for history and art projects. The school also uses the facilities of the nearby Heritage Centre as part of a plan to develop pupils' understanding of their local history. Good links have been established with the Education Business Partnership and, as a result, engineers from local businesses worked with pupils on

a construction challenge. More projects are in the pipeline. Community links provide positive benefits for pupils.

31. Parents are pleased with most things that the school does and they are comfortable to approach staff at any time. The parent-teacher association is very active and provides a social forum for staff, parents and children to come together. Fund-raising activities produce a substantial contribution to the school fund and funds are spent directly on resources to benefit the children in school. For example, the recently completed wet-area in the reception classroom was paid for with funds raised by parents. Parents are always happy to come to school productions and support them well, and the recently started class assemblies for parents are proving popular. A number of parents help regularly in school with reading and give practical help with design and technology and with art and design; there is always plenty of help from parents when pupils go on trips to places of interest. Several groups of parents are working with their children in the nursery, reception class and in Year 1, to develop skills to help children's early learning of language and communication.
32. Although most parents have these positive views of the school, are committed to helping the school socially and in practical ways, and value the education provided, there are still some who are not as involved as they might be. Not all give help and support for homework, not all attend consultation meetings, and pupils' attendance is still below national averages. The school is aware that it has to encourage parents to become more fully involved and is working on new initiatives to bring this about. However, the information which is currently given to parents about the progress of their children is satisfactory; pupils' annual reports are clearly written and there are regular meetings where parents can discuss their children's progress with teachers and set targets together. Parents whose children have special educational needs are invited to the termly individual education plan review meetings and are able to comment on the progress which their children have made and the suitability of the support which is being given.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is **well led and managed**. The headteacher leads the school very well. The work of the governors is sound as is the leadership of other key staff in the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The drive, vision and professional skills of the headteacher have resulted in the whole school community tackling school improvement priorities with determination, good spirit and high morale.
- The governors and school staff work very constructively with the local education authority and the Education Action Zone.
- School improvement planning is very good.
- The governors and headteacher have secured high quality and extensive staff development opportunities which have contributed to the recent improvement in pupils' standards and achievement.
- The role of subject leaders is not yet consistently well-developed.

### **Commentary**

33. The school is governed satisfactorily. The governors have had significant training about their role in school management and leadership. As a result, there is a streamlined committee system and governors take a strategic role in school improvement planning and in school development. Individual governors are linked with specific curriculum areas and keep themselves up-to-date with improvements and changes through discussion and school visits. The chair of governors has a regular weekly meeting with the headteacher, ensuring that there is close liaison at this crucial phase in the school's development. The governing body is now in

a position to play the role of a critical friend; they know how to set appropriate priorities for school development, they review the national and school test results, set targets for pupils' achievement and monitor first-hand the major initiatives in school, like the improvements to information and communication technology facilities. All statutory requirements are met.

34. The headteacher's leadership is of a very high quality. She has a clear vision of how she wishes the school to develop, linked to a considerable determination to create a very good school. She has high aspirations for the pupils, for staff and for all members of the school community. The school has recently emerged from a long period in which its senior leadership was uncertain. This circumstance led to staff having to take temporary charge of the responsibilities normally carried by both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the standards in school were such that the local education authority identified the school as needing close monitoring and support. Since that time, 18 months ago, the response of the governors, staff and pupils of the school has been impressive.
35. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory. The senior team has been in place for nearly two terms. The team is tackling the necessary changes in a determined fashion, appreciating that teamwork, linked to clear school priorities, will achieve the desired changes. Their work is sound. All subject leaders are keenly aware of both their leadership and their management roles. However, several have come to their roles recently and have not yet had first-hand opportunities to monitor and evaluate work in the classroom and it is too early to judge their impact on subject development. There is a suitable rolling programme of visits in place to allow the effective checking of work in classrooms and the school has very regular assessment days where subject leaders assess the work of pupils from across the school. The school manages the needs of pupils with special educational needs well and plans are in place to set up a register and support for gifted and talented pupils in the autumn term.
36. Pupils' behaviour is now not a cause for concern and the few pupils who need extra help to moderate their behaviour are being successfully supported and are continuing to learn. Whilst lower than acceptable attendance rates remain, the school's clear analysis of patterns of absence means that the school is better able to target its efforts on specific pupils or families, in partnership with education welfare officers. Test results have improved in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. Standards of work in class have been maintained throughout the school and they have improved markedly in information and communication technology.
37. The school is well managed. School improvement planning is of a high quality. Governors and staff, led by the headteacher, and in conjunction with the local education authority and the Education Action Zone, have a keen appreciation of the main school priority, which is, to raise standards. The school improvement plan is fully focused on this. Eighteen months ago, the main constraints were identified and are now being systematically addressed, with commendable skill, energy and professionalism.
38. Performance management is fully in place. High quality staff training has ensured that all staff are keenly aware of the standards and best teaching and learning practice in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In other subjects, subject leaders continue to take every opportunity to attend training. Where pupils' behaviour had been causing concern, decisive action has been taken, there are very good links with agencies such as the Pupil Referral Unit and the result is that the school is a calm, friendly and well-ordered community. The special educational needs co-ordinator is a good leader and manager and ensures that all pupils are appropriately identified and supported. The action plan sets out the key activities which need to take place to ensure that pupils are given an appropriate education by suitably skilled staff. Education care officers are well trained and deployed. Special educational needs resources, both staff support and materials, are sufficient and well deployed. The school's administrative systems are good and are capably managed by the office manager. The governors, in conjunction with the local education authority, have transformed the learning environment, both inside and out, creating a very impressive setting in which pupils can, and do, learn. Resources have improved both in quality

and quantity, especially to support English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

39. The success of changes which are now in place, including the close tracking of pupils' progress, the range of targeted support, the improvements to the learning environment, the updating of teachers' skills and the creation of a suitable climate for learning, justify the confidence of governors and staff that the school is improving at a good rate.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	638,801
Total expenditure	605,344
Expenditure per pupil	2,869

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,405
Balance carried forward to the next year	51,862

40. The school's finances are well managed. In common with other schools in the area, the school has to manage the impact of falling rolls. In agreement with the local education authority, it has kept a favourable ratio of staff to pupils, a factor which has secured small, single year group classes and has helped to bring about improvements. Governors are fully involved in setting and managing the school's finances and make every effort to get best value from what they spend.

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

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

The provision for children is **good** both in the nursery and the reception class.

In the nursery, children achieve well and make good progress in developing and consolidating their skills in all the areas of learning. This is because the staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is good. Children are well prepared for the reception class because of the staff's emphasis on improving children's social skills and the promotion of their independence. Children continue to do well in the reception class because the teaching is good and activities are well matched to their different needs. Staff plan together effectively to ensure that learning is steadily built upon as children move from one class to the next. Staff work very well as a team, children are assessed meticulously and their progress is carefully monitored. The quality of teaching and learning has been maintained since the last inspection.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are clearly planned learning opportunities which help to develop children's social skills.
- The stimulating, well-organised and managed environment contributes markedly to children's good achievement.
- Children form good relationships with adults.
- Children achieve well and they make good progress because they enjoy coming to school.

### **Commentary**

41. Children make rapid progress because of the consistent team approach in providing a well-organised setting for learning. Children enter the nursery with very poor social skills. The school has good strategies to deal with this and by the end of the reception year most children attain the expected standards.
42. Good nursery and reception class teaching has a positive effect on children's learning. Children develop a positive attitude to school and make good progress because adults are well organised and plan interesting activities. All staff, including the nursery nurse, oral health promotion assistant and education care officers, create a calm, secure and purposeful learning environment in which the children thrive and become confident learners. For example, discussion lessons encourage the children to talk about what happens in the story of the three little pigs. The children in the nursery learn lessons about the importance of looking after their teeth through the effective work of oral health promotion assistant who is in class each day. New children are settled in thoughtfully and successfully and are happy to come to school. They quickly know the routines and feel secure. For example, children in the nursery are learning to put up their hands and share their ideas, while those in the reception class show independence when they collect their drink and biscuit on entering the classroom after break and then sit sensibly on the carpet. In addition, the children understand that they need to wash their hands, for instance, after making bricks with plaster. Most children cope well with getting ready for physical education in the reception. Behaviour is good. With helpful encouragement and sensitive handling, the children form positive relationships with one another and with adults. The special needs of children, whether they are behavioural, social or academic, are fully addressed. Staff in the Foundation Stage draw on their own skills as well as on the expertise of staff involved in special needs support in school and within other support agencies.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- Resources are well chosen to stimulate interest and motivate learning.

### Commentary

43. Children enter the nursery with very poor skills in this area of learning. Many children have a limited vocabulary and, whilst they make good progress in speaking and listening in both the nursery and the reception class, their standards are below expectations when they enter Year 1. Most children achieve well because they are well taught. Within a few weeks of entering the nursery, the children become confident in speaking aloud in a group. They listen carefully to instructions and carry these out well because many opportunities are planned to promote these skills throughout the day. For example, children are required to listen to instructions so that they know what they are to do.
44. A good emphasis is placed on speaking and listening from an early age, and all staff, including the nursery nurse and education care officers, provide ample opportunities for children to develop these skills. For example, role-play situations are created, such as a building site, for group communication. The children need a lot of prompting from adults to extend their speech and they often reply to questions with one-word answers. Skilful and clear questioning techniques help the children to think about what they are doing and to talk to each other and to adults. This contribution benefits all the other areas of learning. Very thoughtful stories and rhymes are carefully chosen to increase the children's vocabulary. For instance, the children in the nursery and reception classes enjoyed joining in a story about 'The Three Little Pigs': they correctly put the elements of the story into the proper order and enjoyed adding songs to it. The children are developing their writing skills well through focused sessions that are planned to match their needs. Checks to assess how the children are progressing are frequent and manageable and clearly highlight any needs there might be.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned, with clear aims that are shared with the children.
- Practical activities make mathematics fun and interesting.

### Commentary

45. Children enter the nursery with below average early skills in mathematics. They achieve well, and standards are broadly in line with expectations in numeracy by the end of reception. Teaching in this area of learning is good, enabling the children to see mathematics as part of their daily activity. Adults effectively build on what the children know and provide many well-planned opportunities to improve their learning. For example, children in the nursery learn to put the days of the week into the correct order as they complete the calendar each day. Teaching is clear and precise so that the children know what is expected of them, and work is effectively planned to meet the needs of all children.
46. Learning is effective because children have many practical opportunities to improve their understanding. There are worthwhile challenges for them to build on what they have learned

and consolidate their learning. For example, children in the reception are helpfully introduced to two and three-dimensional shapes with practical resources to stimulate their interest and successfully support their learning. Good questioning probes children's understanding about position and directions and the children understand such words as top, bottom, between, beside and next to. Education care assistants and the nursery nurse contribute well to the children's learning. In the nursery, they probe what children understand about, for example, two-dimensional shapes: they ask effective questions and discuss the correct name of shapes. The good collaboration between the teachers, the nursery nurse and the teaching assistants effectively reinforce the children's learning. Regular checks of their progress are recorded and new targets are drawn up if required.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There are good opportunities to use the computer.

### **Commentary**

47. Children enter the nursery with very limited knowledge of the world around them. Teaching and learning are good and consequently all children make good gains. A few more able children are likely to achieve the expected level and the majority will make good progress achieving the later stages of the goals but are unlikely to achieve them fully.
48. The classroom environment is stimulating and there are good opportunities for children to use, for example, magnets to investigate which objects are magnetic or not. Computer programs are well chosen and ably support the children's learning; children have regular opportunities to practise their skills in using a computer. Children make good progress using the mouse and keyboard. For example, good opportunities are provided for the children to draw a picture of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, using the mouse to make marks, draw shapes and write their name. More able children write a sentence and change the font and the colour. Good teaching and well-planned and interesting activities help children to develop awareness of the wider world. A good science investigation in the reception class highlighted the use of stimulating resources that produce, for example, wonder when bricks are correctly linked to form a wall and the need for more ingredients than just sand to make mortar. This prompted such observations as "*It doesn't stay on the bricks*" and "*it's pouring off*". The good planning ensures that all the staff are well deployed and clearly know what to do. There is good communication and intervention between the staff and the children.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and make good progress.
- Lessons in the hall are well planned and language is used well.

### **Commentary**

49. The majority of children are on course to achieve the expected goals by the end of the reception year because teaching is good and children experience a broad range of physical activities.
50. In the physical education lesson observed in the reception, the children experienced a good level of physical activity and the teacher used language well to extend their awareness of different movements. These were effectively linked to the topic of building a house. Children enjoy moving freely and develop their confidence and ability to move in a range of different ways, for example, in climbing a ladder, hammering, sawing and bending and stretching. Good teaching ensures children are made aware of how they are moving. Children with special educational needs achieve well and join in with other children. All children make good progress learning to dress and undress for their hall sessions. Adults are aware of ensuring the children's safety. The well-chosen resources provide many opportunities for the children to cut, stick and join objects together, such as when using paper and drawing around two-dimensional shapes to produce the shape of a house that is stuck on card. They build on their skills to control and manipulate objects through the use of, for example, large outdoor play equipment and apparatus, construction kits, scissors, spoons and paintbrushes.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

51. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area, but the work on display shows that that the children are given appropriate practical experiences and a suitable selection of materials to explore a number of techniques and adequately develop their skills in art. Role-play effectively helps children to develop their imaginations, enabling them to act out their understanding of, for example, how to build a house and what happens on a building site. This effectively supports and extends their speaking and listening skills.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils attain standards that are below average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good in Year 2 and Year 6 with some very good aspects and pupils achieve well: teaching is never less than satisfactory.
- Lessons are well planned with clear aims that are shared with the pupils.
- Effective action has been taken that is having a positive impact on the pupils' attainment.

#### **Commentary**

52. The standard of Year 6 pupils' class work is below expectations in reading and writing because pupils start school with standards which are well below expectations, and whilst they make good progress, have not yet caught up with pupils of the same age across the country. Test results have been well below the national average over the last three years. Only a very small number of pupils have attained the higher levels in English since 2001. Pupils in Year 6 undertake a wide range of reading and writing activities, including poetry analysis and rewriting Shakespeare. Most pupils can write persuasively on topics such as, 'Should homework be banned?' The work of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, shows evidence of internet and other research to help them to structure their factual writing. Writing of the most able pupils regularly includes more than one main idea as well as a suitable range of punctuation. Year 6 pupils use punctuation such as speech marks and exclamation marks. They are beginning to use paragraphs in their original writing. Most pupils' handwriting is neat and clear; most pupils regularly use a joined style. Their spelling is generally accurate, although some pupils' spelling is inconsistent. However, pupils do little editing of their own

work; therefore, pupils' work frequently lacks depth and there is little attempt to develop or improve the work through adding more to the initial ideas or further complexity. Pupils read from a well-matched range of texts and are able to talk about what they have read, with both accuracy and interest. However, lower attaining pupils still struggle with instructions in textbooks or worksheets, as they are not yet skilled enough in inferring meaning from these types of writing.

53. Overall, Year 2 pupils' reading and writing are below expectations. Year 2 national reading test results have been well below average over the last three years. In writing, they have varied markedly and are now below average. This reflects a significant improvement on the previous year, where results were in the bottom five per cent of schools. Pupils write for a range of different purposes, including factual, recounting events and book reviewing. They are beginning to use dictionaries and other reference texts to help them to find words and their meanings. They also check and edit their work, to improve its quality. Their handwriting is developing well and their work is presented neatly and is mostly clear and easy to read. Their writing increasingly uses the correct tense, simple descriptions of people, events or things and suitable punctuation, including speech marks.
54. Overall, pupils' speaking and listening is in line with expectations. During Years 1 and 2, pupils are given frequent opportunities to speak to the whole class, to explain their answers or to read their work to others. They are keen to do this. They are calm, quiet but intent listeners who demonstrate that they are actively listening by the questions or comments which they make about what they have heard. As pupils get older, the opportunities for them to contribute by sharing reading, asking questions or being part of discussions continue. Where pupils are shy of doing this, teachers and other adults in the class are encouraging and draw out responses through using effective questioning. In Year 6, pupils usually answer questions or contribute to discussions by using full, if brief, sentences.
55. Pupils' achievement is good. Taking account of the well below average attainment when the current Year 6 were in Year 2, Year 6 pupils are achieving well and have made good progress. Years 1 and 2 pupils are challenged to succeed by their teachers, and meet the challenge well. Teachers' planning of lessons is having a very beneficial effect on pupils' attainment and their achievement; teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are high, they check pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly and they alter what they are to teach as a result of their assessments.
56. Overall, the quality of the teaching is satisfactory and it is good in Years 1 and 2. It is good, with some very good features, in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. An effective feature of each of the lessons seen is the positive way in which teachers share learning objectives at the start of the lesson. Consequently, pupils know what they are expected to learn. In Year 6, the good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and how well they achieve. Lessons are well planned and prepared and meet the learning needs of all the pupils; there is effective consolidation of skills already practised. Teachers' good questioning skills probe the pupils' understanding about, for example, the features of writing styles in Year 6 that enable the pupils to correctly identify and structure the sequence of events of a school trip. Resources are well prepared to stimulate the pupils' interest and keep them focused on the task they have been given; pupils in Year 2 respond very positively to the teacher's high expectations of their behaviour and the good level of challenge which is set for them. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher's good questioning skills helped pupils to think carefully and to develop their understanding of specific words about books and publishing. The teacher used her own broad vocabulary to introduce pupils to new words and to reinforce familiar ones, like 'inter-active whiteboard', 'skim', 'non-fiction' and 'key words'. The teacher's very clear explanations meant that pupils knew exactly what they were to do.
57. As a consequence of the effective teaching and the pupils' positive responses, all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress.

58. A number of effective and successful initiatives have been introduced to raise the pupils' attainment throughout the school: the accurate identification of priority areas for improvement ensures that the subject moves forward. For example, a rigorous improvement programme from the local education authority and the Education Action Zone cluster of schools is firmly in place in which support, consultancy, monitoring and development are identified and acted upon.
59. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with greater academic potential, achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and every effort is made to provide appropriately planned work in order to raise their attainment. There are intervention programmes for these pupils and those who are identified for support are given individual help to ensure that what they are to learn fits their individual needs. Pupils generally use a limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures in their speech and this is reflected in their written work. In response to test information, which suggests that girls do slightly better than boys, the school has worked hard to identify areas for improvement. All pupils now have reading, writing and spelling targets, designated reading times and some timetabled extended writing times. Close liaison with outside consultants has been arranged to support and improve pupils' literacy skills.
60. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader regularly undertakes first-hand classroom observations and gives teachers direct assessments of their work. There is a subject action plan which sets out the main priorities for improvement; it is reviewed and brought up to date each term. The procedures for checking the pupils' progress are good and, as a result, staff have a good knowledge of individuals' strengths and weaknesses and are able to plan accordingly.

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

61. Language and literacy are beginning to be appropriately developed across the other subjects. Teachers ensure that they introduce pupils to new words linked to the subject which they are teaching. They check pupils' knowledge and understanding of previously learned key terms. Good opportunities to speak and listen to each other are evident in most lessons, particularly in personal, social and health education. Valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to use their writing skills to support work in other subjects, such as writing questions about history artefacts in Year 2. With the effective support of story books, pupils have lively discussions in religious education. Pupils use computers regularly for word processing and to retrieve information from the Internet. In history, pupils in Year 4 research aspects of Ancient Egypt and write interesting accounts of the 'Dam Busters'.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils work hard and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good.
- Decisive action has been taken to improve standards.

#### **Commentary**

62. Standards are in line with the nationally expected levels in Years 2 and 6. Given pupils' attainment when they join the school, pupils achieve well. Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests in 2003 was in the lowest five per cent and this represents a considerable decline since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in national tests in 2003 was well below average. However, the performance of pupils in Year 2 has improved over the past three years, the

overall trend is one of improving standards and pupils' class work is now in line with expectations.

63. The school has now put the National Strategy for Numeracy teaching and learning into place. There is an increased and very suitable range of resources to support the teaching of mathematics. Pupils get regular homework. Staff have attended specialised training to ensure that they are confident in putting the strategy into place. There is a regular programme of first-hand observation of mathematics teaching which involves not only the headteacher and the subject leader but also an adviser from the local education authority. There is now skilled mathematics teaching across the school but particularly in Years 2 and 6. This concerted action has led to the standard of work which pupils do being in line with expectations.
64. Pupils enjoy doing mathematics and they work hard, producing a high volume of accurate written work. They work intently on problem-solving tasks. In a good Year 6 lesson, the more able pupils grappled with a problem about calculating the perimeter of a triangle. While in the same lesson, pupils who were learning at a slower rate discovered that they could predict the measurements of the sides of a rectangle of a given area by using factors or multipliers. This emphasis on discovery backed up by thorough teaching is echoed in Year 2 where pupils are excited about doing board work on money problems. Their whiteboards are eagerly used to write down their own answers and then to display them to others. They use the language of mathematics well. This class is unlikely to believe that mathematics can be boring or difficult.
65. All lessons are suitably planned with appropriate challenge for both the more able pupils and for lower attaining pupils. Links with the targets of pupils with special educational needs are not always made clear but the close adult support which these pupils receive means that they make good progress, even so. Education care officers are well directed to support pupils in lessons and their work with individual pupils and with small groups makes a positive contribution to the rate at which pupils learn and to how well they understand what they are to do. The child-friendly targets, which have just been introduced, have the potential to motivate pupils to higher achievement, as a clear statement of each pupil's next steps is written into the cover of their current mathematics book.
66. Mathematics is satisfactorily led and managed. The current subject leader has only recently come into post but has had long experience in the school. Her own teaching provides a good model for others. The mathematics action plan sets out the correct actions to improve standards further. Challenging targets are in place, underpinned by careful, precise and regular tracking of pupils' performance. At this stage, it is clear that pupils across the school are progressing at a swift rate and should meet the performance targets set.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils use their number and mathematics skills and knowledge daily, in other subjects. For example, they use their knowledge of measurement to help their designing and model making in design and technology. In science, they record their findings in tables and can understand different measures and calibrations and in information and communication technology they can control a screen turtle, calculating how far it needs to travel and in which directions, setting down their findings and making the necessary corrections.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been very low for the last three years, but pupils' work in lessons is significantly higher this year than previously.

- Teaching is now good and pupils are making good progress in their learning.
- Emphasis is given to the development of pupils' investigative skills.
- Pupils enjoy the subject.
- Marking is not consistently used to tell pupils how to improve their work.

## Commentary

68. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils' standards were in the bottom five per cent. Standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection and for the last three years they have been well below the national average. However, an examination of pupils' current work indicates that they are performing much better this year than previously, although they are still likely to attain standards that are below average. However, given the pupils' ability on entry to the school, this represents satisfactory progress. Year 6 pupils have done a lot of work in the time available and they have taken care with its presentation. Discussions with the pupils revealed that they are keen to do well and that most have attended the booster classes provided for them after school.
69. Standards at the end of Year 2 are now in line with expectations, having been well below expectations for the previous three years. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils enjoy their work and try hard. Their oral work is of a higher standard than their written work and in lessons their answers and suggestions show most pupils have a good grasp of the subject. Pupils' books show that they have covered a lot of work during the year. Their written work contributes satisfactorily to the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.
70. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory overall, and there is a significant amount of good teaching. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. All teachers have a secure understanding of the subject. They plan their lessons carefully, providing different levels of challenge in the work set. Education care assistants work closely with teachers, so that they provide effective support for pupils. However, the focus on supporting the lower attaining pupils in classes sometimes means that the higher attaining pupils do not get the help they need to make maximum progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. This leads to positive attitudes and behaviour in the vast majority of the pupils. Questioning is used well by teachers to find out what pupils already know and to get them to apply what they know to new situations. Teachers plan interesting activities, linking them to continuing work in other subjects whenever possible. Science is used well to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The subject also contributes positively to pupils' social, moral and personal development. Computers are used regularly to support or extend learning, for example, to research planets and space.
71. Assessment is being developed, but, as yet, is insufficiently rigorous and is not generally used by teachers to help them plan their work or to set individual pupil targets, including targets for pupils with special educational needs. The quality of marking is variable. All teachers mark work frequently, but comments are generally positive rather than evaluative. Consequently, pupils are not clear about what they have done well or how they can improve.
72. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. She has correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses in science. Her management is secure and is improving teaching throughout the school. She has significantly improved resources in order to ensure that teachers have everything they need to plan an interesting range of investigations. She monitors teachers' planning to ensure that every class has sufficient opportunities to undertake investigative work, covers the required curriculum and that lessons build on what has gone before.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards which are average for their age.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps pupils achieve well during their lessons.
- Pupils' progress has been good since the opening of the ICT suite.
- Assessment is not yet in place and therefore does not help teachers plan their work.

### Commentary

73. Pupils enjoy their lessons in the ICT suite. Standards in Year 6 are in line with expectations. Pupils work enthusiastically, both independently and in pairs. They share ideas and information and are quick to help one another. Year 6 pupils confidently produce multi-media presentations. They combine text and graphics from a range of sources, use formulae to make calculations on spreadsheets and regularly use the Internet to carry out research. Standards in Year 2 are also in line with expectations; pupils word process their work competently, changing font, colour and layout. They combine text and graphics to make their work look more interesting. Pupils use an art program effectively to draw pictures and patterns, changing the colours and methods of applying them. They give instructions to floor and screen turtles to make them move in different directions. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well, particularly where they are working with programs which challenge them to succeed; education care officers provide encouragement and guidance, ensuring that the pupils make good progress.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to teach their lessons confidently and clearly. Their planning is detailed and takes into account the needs of pupils of different abilities. Behaviour management is generally secure; pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and respond well. Pupils whose behaviour can be challenging like using computers and they generally try hard to complete their tasks. Education care assistants are well briefed by teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers plan interesting activities, which are often linked to continuing work in other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 learn a great deal at the well-attended computer club. They also make use of the BBC Revise Wise series to prepare for their national tests.
75. Provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school now has a computer suite, which gives pupils greater access to computers and a much better range of software. Each class has at least one lesson a week in the suite. This means that new skills can be taught to the whole class and then pupils can use them to support their work in other subjects on their classroom computers during the week. There is a scheme of work which is based on recent national guidance. It ensures that the statutory requirements are now fully met. As a result, standards are no longer unsatisfactory. Computers are also used well to support those pupils who have special educational needs and those who lack motivation. Staff training has led to increased confidence amongst the staff and this has improved the quality of teaching.
76. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The subject leaders have good subject knowledge and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. They have produced a detailed action plan which identifies appropriate areas for development. They have yet to adopt an effective assessment strategy and use the information to further improve standards.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Pupils use their ICT skills well to support a range of subjects. They draw graphs and use spreadsheets to support their mathematics work. They practise their literacy skills as they produce leaflets, word process stories and poems and make PowerPoint presentations. They carry out research to support work in science, history and geography. Pupils produce some interesting art work on the computers.

## HUMANITIES

78. In **geography**, work was sampled as no geography was taught during the inspection. Therefore, there is no overall judgement about provision in this subject. The evidence of pupils' work indicates that standards are in line with expectations, as they were at the last inspection.
79. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place which is based on recent national guidance. This ensures that the National Curriculum requirements are fully covered. Pupils' books indicate that they work hard in geography and cover a suitable range of topics. A good range of visits and visitors is used well to make the subject more interesting. All work is marked with positive comments, but an effective assessment and recording system has yet to be developed. Resources and teachers' subject knowledge have both been improved since the last inspection.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2 are good.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2.
- There is a good stock of suitable resources, including artefacts.
- Religious education is well led and managed.

## Commentary

80. Religious education is given sufficient teaching time and the curriculum is planned in line with the locally agreed syllabus. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on pupils' achievement, teaching, learning and assessment in Years 3-6.
81. Overall, standards across the school are in line with expectations; however, standards are above expectations in Years 1 and 2. In these classes, pupils are learning about Christianity and Judaism in some depth. They are asking good questions about stories, traditions and artefacts and they are linking this work with their own experiences and with their work in other subjects, especially history, art and design and personal, social and health education. As a result of this very thorough immersion in aspects of faiths, pupils achieve well.
82. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good. A Year 2 lesson on finding out what can be learned about peace from religions was very good and pupils made very good progress in their understanding about looking after the world. Teachers know their subject well; they link their teaching well with the learning objective for the lessons and use resources well. Education care assistants work well with pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, helping them to contribute to whole class discussions. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are well promoted. In a good Year 1 lesson, which was focusing on Christian symbols of faith, a child, recalling a class visit to the local church in the previous week, said that they had seen 'big pipes'. The teacher sensitively explained that they were organ pipes and that they were for celebrating the religion and were not religious symbols. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well.

Coupled with well thought out lessons, this good behaviour management results in pupils enjoying their learning and working hard.

83. The subject leader is a specialist whose enthusiasm and capability result in religious education being well led and managed.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is detailed and meets the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Pupils enjoy the subject as activities are interesting.
- Good use of visits and visitors brings the subject to life.

### Commentary

84. Pupils work hard in history and do a lot of work in the time available. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. This represents good achievement, given their low attainment on entry to the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about history in the recent past. They understand that things such as toys have changed over time. They have a sound knowledge of important events and people in the past, for example, the Great Fire of London and the work of Florence Nightingale. In Years 3-6, pupils learn about historical evidence and its reliability. They carry out their own research using people, books, CD-Roms and the Internet. They demonstrate the ability to compare features of different periods in history. Pupils in Year 4 are very knowledgeable about life during the Second World War. Their knowledge has been added to by a very interesting and enjoyable visit to Eden Camp.
85. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning is detailed and makes use of a wide variety of interesting teaching resources. It gives pupils opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in groups and for pupils who find learning difficult to make progress. Whenever possible, teachers arrange visits to places of historical interest in order to bring the subject to life for the pupils. In lessons, teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to share their ideas and make judgements. Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to make use of ICT to carry out research or improve the presentation of their work. Pupils often use the Internet to find illustrations to draw on for their written work. Teachers mark work regularly and provide positive comments. However, marking does not always tell pupils that they have done well or what could be improved. Assessment and recording are not yet sufficiently developed to allow teachers to set individual pupil targets or to match activities closely to what pupils have learned before.
86. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has monitored teaching, planning and pupils' work. This has ensured that there is an interesting curriculum in place and that expectations are appropriately high. She has recognised that assessment is an area requiring development and it is a priority on her action plan. Since the last inspection, teachers' subject knowledge and resources have been improved. This has had a positive impact on the standards attained.

### CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. The creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects were looked at in less detail than other subjects due to timetabling constraints and decisions over mutually agreed priorities for the inspection.

88. In **design and technology**, neither standards nor attainment was judged as there was insufficient time to draw on a full range of evidence. Pupils enjoy their work and find the activities interesting. They have the chance to work with the full range of materials specified in the National Curriculum. Pupils' skills in making items consistently improve as they move through the school and most meet expected standards. Their designs show more limited signs of improvement. They are of an appropriate standard at the end of Year 2, but by the end of Year 6 they lack the necessary precision and careful annotation. Teachers often link work to continuing activities in other subjects, for example, in art and design, geography, history and science. They also provide pupils with the opportunity to take part in local and national competitions, where pupils produce some impressive models. There is sound leadership and management of the subject. Teachers' planning is detailed and in line with recent national guidance. There is a relevant action plan for the future development of the subject. This rightly identifies the need to introduce effective assessment procedures.
89. In **art and design**, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision. This is because only two lessons were seen, both in Key Stage 2, and there was little work recorded in sketch books, especially of the older pupils. The work which was available was of a satisfactory standard and pupils' achievement was satisfactory. However, art skills were not being systematically developed as pupils got older and the verve and enthusiasm which were evident in the work of younger pupils became rather tame and lacking in flair as pupils moved through the school. The exception was in Year 3 where it is clear from the lively and exploratory artwork presented in sketchbooks that the teacher is an art enthusiast and is conveying that enthusiasm to the pupils.
90. Assessment of the art curriculum is currently little more than marking work with a tick and commenting on neatness. This results in pupils having little understanding of what they can do to improve their work and teachers setting the same task for all pupils, regardless of their capability and skills. Artwork is used to brighten the school corridors and classrooms, which are inviting and attractive, and pupils regularly draw and use colouring pencils, on a small scale, to illustrate work in other subjects. The specialist subject leader left the school nearly two terms ago and since then the headteacher has been taking the role of subject leader. This is not a tenable position, given the other demands on her time and the other school improvement priorities, and there are arrangements for a new subject leader to be in place for the beginning of the new school year.
91. **Music** was sampled and **physical education** was not a focus of the inspection. Only two lessons in music were seen in Years 3 and 5 and no lessons were seen in physical education. In addition, no displays or scrutiny of work were available in these subjects. There was insufficient evidence to form judgements about teaching, standards and provision overall. However, discussions with the subject leaders and close checking of their action plans indicate that pupils experience a suitable range of interesting and appropriate activities. Of the music lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. There are no current arrangements for checking on the pupils' levels of work. This lack of assessment information hinders progress, because teachers are not able to plan to support individual needs and build on what the pupils have already learned.
92. Music and physical education subject leaders show commitment and enthusiasm in their roles, and both have secure subject knowledge. Their plans to improve provision and raise standards are appropriate, and have been linked directly to the school improvement plan.

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

93. Not enough evidence was available from the small number of class lessons seen in this subject to judge the quality of teaching and learning or the quality of overall provision. There is a well-planned teaching programme in place. This makes an effective contribution to the very good work that takes place in the school as a whole to encourage pupils' personal development. It links well with activities such as assemblies, the school council and the

residential opportunities organised by the school. In the lessons seen, pupils attained similar standards to those attained by pupils of the same age across the country. They confidently expressed opinions and listened sensibly to those of others. They showed good levels of responsibility for each other and the environment. Pupils enjoyed good trusting relationships with teachers. Teachers take care to value all pupil contributions, even when they are wrong, giving sensitive and constructive responses. As a result, pupils are keen to take part and offer suggestions, even when their confidence is lacking. Teachers ensure that pupils listen well to each other and that everyone has the opportunity to have their opinions considered. The activities planned are relevant to the age group. Health education is mainly taught through the science curriculum, where pupils have the chance to discuss issues related to sex, alcohol, drugs and smoking, and to learn about the associated dangers. The school nurse makes an effective contribution to the teaching of some of these aspects.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

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

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).*