

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HILLSHOTT INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Letchworth

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117123

Headteacher: Mrs J Wilson

Lead inspector: Ms B Matusiak-Varley

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 260567

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	169
School address:	Ridge Avenue Letchworth Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG6 1QE
Telephone number:	01462 621212
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sybil Sinclair
Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> September 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hillshott Infant School and Nursery is an average-sized school with 169 pupils on roll. It has a nursery, which accommodates 26 full time equivalent pupils. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 13.9 per cent, broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils who are of different ethnic minorities is 22 per cent. A teacher funded by the ethnic minorities achievement grant supports these pupils. They are made up of Asian British pupils, Pakistani, white and black Caribbean, Chinese and black British Caribbean with the majority being Asian British. Twenty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs (above average), 5.9 per cent have statements (well above average). The range and nature of pupils' special educational needs consist of moderate learning difficulties, social and emotional problems, speech and communication difficulties and hearing impairment. The school has a speech and language base for 10 pupils who have statement of special educational need. The headteacher has only been in school for two terms. The school received a Schools Achievement Award in 2003. The school provides workshops for parents and drop-in facilities for parents who have children who attend the speech and language base.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19938	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley	Lead inspector	Science History Music Religious education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
1166	Rosemary Hussain	Lay inspector	
11642	Carol Parkinson	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Geography
23010	Loretta Watson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs The work of the special educational needs unit

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# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>30</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Hillshott Infant and Nursery School is a **good school with many strengths**. Pupils learn well within a happy and caring environment. Standards are above national averages in English, mathematics and science due to the good quality of teaching. All pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school is well led and managed by the energetic headteacher and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above those expected of pupils in English, mathematics, science, history, physical education and religious education, and all pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils' achievements in spelling and ICT are inconsistent but are satisfactory overall.
- Teaching and learning are good with several examples of very good teaching seen. Support staff make a very valid contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school is well led and managed by an energetic headteacher who has developed very good systems for school self-evaluation.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and need improving.
- Resources are good throughout the school, apart from information and communication technology (ICT) where they are satisfactory, this restricts pupils' rate of progress.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning and pupils who have special educational needs, in both the base and mainstream school, is good.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities but planning does not sufficiently identify opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning, social collaboration and progressive development of acquiring subject-specific skills.
- Assessment procedures in science and in some foundation subjects are not as well developed as they are in English and mathematics.

Since the appointment of the new headteacher, improvement has been rapid due to the very good systems of self-evaluation, and is now good. Pupils' progress in ICT has improved, co-ordinators are clear about their roles and the majority of teaching is good. Assessment is satisfactory and pupils are aware of their targets. However, more work still needs to be done on using ICT across the curriculum and planning for the progressive development of subject-specific skills. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are now above average.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	D	B	D	E
Writing	C	B	C	C
mathematics	C	B	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

In 2003, results slipped in comparison with all schools and similar schools nationally in reading. The headteacher quickly put measures in place to rectify this and standards, as judged on inspection findings, are **above national averages** overall and pupils achieve well. In ICT, pupils attain only average standards and their achievements are satisfactory over time as more opportunities need to be provided for them to use their ICT skills in other subjects. No judgements can be made on

geography, art and design, design and technology and music, as these subjects did not constitute the main focus of the inspection. By the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all children exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning other than knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, where they attain the early learning goals. Their achievements are good. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those with specific learning difficulties also achieve well as a result of good support. Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal qualities are **very good overall**. Relationships are very good and the school is a caring community. Attendance is below national averages but the school is doing all it can to improve attendance levels.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Teaching and learning are good.** Staff are very hard working and ensure that all groups of pupils receive their entitlement to the curriculum. Teaching is thorough and basic skills are taught well. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the infants but opportunities for enrichment are very good. Pupils receive very good care and support and are exceptionally well looked after. The school treats everyone as being special and ensures that personal successes are celebrated and shared. The school has very good relationships with parents and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the headteacher are good.** In the short time that the headteacher has been at the school she has worked wonders and has established a clear educational direction with very good systems of school self-evaluation. There is zero tolerance of any form of underachievement, by either staff or pupils. Governance of the school is satisfactory and the newly formed governing body is beginning to play an active part in school life. Key members of staff are now performing their duties satisfactorily and are becoming more involved in analysing standards.

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

**Parents are very happy with the school.** Their children enjoy coming to school and find lessons fun. Pupils are consulted on all aspects of school life and love everything the school has to offer.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards and improve resources in ICT;
- Provide more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning;
- Improve curriculum planning by identifying the progressive development of subject-specific skills;
- Extend the good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science, to other subjects of the curriculum;
- Raise attendance levels.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are above average by Year 2 and pupils achieve well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievements of all groups of pupils are good throughout the school.
- Standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, physical education and religious education are above those expected of seven-year-olds nationally.
- Standards in ICT, whilst average across the school, could be better.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in guided reading sessions and in mathematics; they are developing good strategies for recognising number patterns.
- Children in the Foundation Stage of learning achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical and physical development.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.9 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (17.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, history, religious education and physical education and pupils' achievements are good. In the Foundation Stage, children exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development and their achievements are very good. In knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development they achieve well and attain the early learning goals. Overall, standards are high enough for these pupils. Whilst standards are satisfactory, in ICT they could be higher. Generally all groups of pupils achieve well, but in some subjects, pupils who are higher attainers could be challenged further.

2. The 2003 national test results and teacher assessments show a slight dip in standards attained in reading and writing. This is because the group had many more average and below average pupils and too few attained the higher levels in reading and writing. In comparison with all schools nationally, standards in reading and science were below the national averages. Standards in writing were average and standards in mathematics were above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well below average in reading, were average in writing and were well above average in mathematics. Due to the very good systems of school self-evaluation she had put in place, the headteacher, very quickly identified the weaknesses through rigorous test analysis and put effective systems in place to ensure that standards would rise. For example:

- A rigorous analysis of teaching and learning was undertaken;
- Performance management targets were set which focused staff on developing their skills of teaching and learning;
- Assessment data was thoroughly analysed to identify areas where pupils were under-performing;
- Good quality resources for teaching guided reading were purchased;
- Staff received training to improve their practice in the teaching of reading and writing;



- Targets were set for individual pupils;
- Teachers' marking focused on identifying ways in which pupils could improve their work;
- Governors received detailed information on pupils' achievements.

3. All of these strategies have had a positive effect on raising pupils' attainment. The school had identified that boys were under-performing but there was no evidence of this during the week of inspection as all groups of pupils were making equally good progress. Over time trends in results are above the national trend.

4. Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics, science, history and religious education. This is because the quality of teaching is good; basic skills are taught well and good opportunities are provided for writing. However, pupils' spelling, whilst satisfactory overall, is not always correct, especially the spelling of subject-specific words. In mathematics, pupils quickly identify strategies to tackle sums and they have good skills of counting on, holding numbers in their head and identifying patterns in addition and subtraction. Whilst above average attainers make good progress, there are still occasions when they could be challenged even further to work both independently and collaboratively. In science, the recent emphasis on developing pupils' skills of experimental and investigative science is paying dividends, with some higher attaining pupils being able to identify the principle of fair testing. In history, pupils know about old and new objects. In religious education, pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has identified that assessments are not sufficiently developed to track pupils' progress. Standards could be even higher if these systems were in place as the written work of pupils shows that, too often, all groups of pupils are given the same work and this restricts progress.

5. The school places a high emphasis on pupils' physical development. Apart from regular physical education sessions, pupils have the opportunity to go swimming. Pupils are well co-ordinated and agile and use space appropriately. Standards are above the national expectations of seven-year-olds. In ICT, pupils attain the expectations of seven-year-olds and achievements are satisfactory but could be even better with improved planning and resources. Pupils enjoy learning using computers and, during the week of inspection, Year 2 pupils made good gains in learning as they were developing their writing of the Great Fire of London, using ICT, in a history lesson. In guided reading, pupils are making good progress because of the good quality texts used, effective deployment of support staff and good quality teaching of basic skills of reading and comprehension.

6. The inspection did not focus on design and technology, geography and art and design, however, from the work that was seen, pupils attain at least average standards and the school meets statutory requirements.

7. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Standards have improved in English, mathematics, ICT, religious education and history. All this has been achieved in a very short time. The school is well placed to continue improving due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and the very good systems of self-evaluation.

8. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their capabilities and learning targets. Analysis of assessment data shows that some of these pupils reach standards comparable with those of their classmates. This is because of well-targeted support and good teaching over time.

9. Pupils with speech and language difficulties have a range of complex difficulties but achieve well and make good progress towards their targets. This is the result of good support in class to help them to be included, usually effectively, in all activities.

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

Overall pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance is unsatisfactory because it is below the national average but punctuality is **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very good attitudes have a positive effect on their learning.
- The school has high expectations of behaviour and fosters very good relationships.
- On occasions, in lessons, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills of working in a group.
- Opportunities to work independently in lessons are inconsistent, as are those for collaborative work in pairs or groups.
- All pupils are valued equally, regardless of their race, background or ability.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils are happy and enjoy school, which results in very good and positive attitudes and an eagerness to learn. This was very evident in an exciting Year 1 literacy lesson where the teacher held the pupils captivated using balloons as a way of demonstrating speech bubbles. They take pride in their work and achievements because these are justly rewarded and recognised by the whole school in weekly assemblies. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection and the school has maintained its good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

11. Pupils behave very well because the staff have high expectations which are supported by parents. They obey the simple rules, based on politeness and respect for others, that they devised themselves. Pupils' conduct at lunch is very mature for their age because they know this is what is expected of them. It was so impressive, that inspectors had to remind themselves that they were dining in an infant not a junior school. Pupils are very happy to chat. They love their new headteacher and remark that "she makes us work hard, but it's fun". There were no exclusions in the previous year.

12. Relationships are very good as a result of the very good provision for social and moral development. However, on occasions in lessons, not enough emphasis is placed upon helping pupils develop their collaborative skills and contribute fully to group work. Pupils show respect for others, because teachers give them constant reminders and are good role models. For example, in a physical education lesson, before each new activity the teacher ensured that pupils were aware of the space around so as not to harm others. There are few disputes and these are dealt with firmly but fairly, with close monitoring by the headteacher to ensure that, regardless of differences, all pupils feel secure. There are good examples of multicultural learning in religious education but this is less well developed in other subjects. On the whole pupils are very caring towards each other because this message is persistently reinforced in circle time. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to their personal development. Pupils are confident and are well prepared for the next steps of education.

13. Most pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have very good attitudes towards learning. They work hard to achieve their targets. Pupils are closely involved in the writing of their targets and the assessment of their own progress. They have very good relationships with their teachers and support staff.

14. Pupils with speech and language difficulties are keen to learn and try hard. They increase in confidence as they succeed and are thoroughly involved in school life. Their attitudes to learning are very good.

15. Attendance is below the national average because a few pupils are very poor attenders and several families take holidays in term time. The school is working closely with the education welfare service and has had some success in improving the attendance of some of the poor attenders. Most pupils are punctual to school and quickly settle to work on arrival.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided is **good**. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, it is broad and balanced, and teaching and learning are good with some examples of very good teaching seen.

**Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **good** and all groups of pupils learn well. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage.
- English, mathematics and science are taught well with strengths in the teaching of basic skills and guided reading.
- Teaching is inconsistent in Year 1, ranging from satisfactory to very good.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs are taught well.
- There are good assessments in place in English and mathematics and satisfactory assessments in other subjects, but they do not provide a sufficiently accurate record of pupils' acquisition of subject-specific skills.
- Opportunities to work independently in lessons are inconsistent, as are those for collaborative work in pairs or groups.
- Examples of very good teaching were seen in reception, physical education, Year 1 English for pupils with English as an additional language, in Years 1 and 2 mathematics and in Year 2 religious education.
- Support staff make a very valid contribution to pupils' learning.

**Commentary**

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (20%)	22 (58%)	8 (22%)	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.*

16. Teachers are very hard working, conscientious and keen to improve their practice. They have good subject knowledge, plan well and encourage pupils to learn by telling them how well they are doing and making positive comments in their books when marking their work. The quality of planning

for pupils with speech and language difficulties is cumbersome and over-directed. Whilst it takes into account curriculum requirements, it is too heavily skewed towards clinical rather than educational requirements and is over-prescriptive. This restricts the interactions of support staff with the pupils who want to make learning fun. Nevertheless, these pupils are making good progress overall because their needs are being met in lessons due to the good levels of support they receive from the special educational needs co-ordinator.

17. Teachers use a range of teaching methods to keep their pupils interested. In a very good literacy lesson, pupils with English as an additional language made very good gains in learning because the support teacher gave very good explanations and modelled the language patterns of using *the, next, first, second* and gave a pupil a silver wand to point to the full stops in the text used. This device really gripped the attention of other pupils and they all wanted to have a go. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 1, the literacy co-ordinator showed pupils a tiny silver pot which, as a child, she used for 'the tooth fairy'. This led very well into the introduction of the story 'The Wobbly Tooth' and caused a splendid moment of awe and wonder in the classroom.

18. Throughout the school, teachers teach basic skills of literacy and numeracy well, as a result pupils learn how to write correctly. Staff are focusing on developing a more rigorous approach to teaching spelling, especially the spelling of subject-specific words which are often spelt incorrectly.

19. Support staff make a very valid contribution to pupils' learning. They are vigilant to those pupils who struggle with understanding learning objectives. They offer very good support and keep checking pupils' understanding, but above all, they ensure that pupils are made to work things out for themselves and become independent learners.

20. Where teaching is less secure (in one of the younger classes in the infants) learning objectives are too broad, insufficient focus is provided in group work and plenary sessions do not identify what pupils found easy or difficult in learning. Especially in group work in these lessons, pupils stay off task and do not contribute to learning. This limits the development of pupils' skills of collaborative work. However, these incidents are rare, support is being provided and the effective implementation of performance management is addressing these issues.

21. Assessments are good in the Foundation Stage and are satisfactory overall in the infants. They are good in English and mathematics and in science and foundation subjects they are satisfactory overall but are not sufficiently rigorous. Overall, teachers are experienced, know their pupils and generally match tasks to meet the needs of the pupils. However, there is an over-emphasis on whole-class teaching in foundation subjects and not enough thought has gone into planning different tasks to meet the various needs of pupils, and pupils' rates of progress slow down. The recent introduction of target setting is helping to raise standards in English and mathematics and pupils know what they need to do in order to improve their work.

22. Teachers use ICT satisfactorily to promote pupils' learning but pupils with special educational needs would benefit from using ICT more to support their learning. The school has maintained the good teaching identified by the previous report, but pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language now make faster progress. However, there is still room for improvement in ensuring that assessments are developed and are more closely linked to short-term planning.

23. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and consequently they learn well. Teachers know the pupils' learning needs well and brief support staff effectively so they can provide the help the pupils need. In most lessons teachers take care to involve the pupils in class discussions and ensure that they participate fully in all activities. Teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is consistently good with examples of very good teaching seen in literacy and numeracy when teaching is funded by the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant.

24. Work for pupils with speech and language difficulties is very thoroughly planned by speech therapists and the teacher in charge of the base. Pupils are often taught by learning support assistants, who are beginning to be more involved in planning for literacy and numeracy. Their skill

and sensitivity when working with pupils in these lessons is hampered to some extent by the rigidity of some of the work set. This, on occasions, has a more clinical than educational focus, and pupils' access to the content of the literacy hour has limitations as a result. Individual teaching sessions are satisfactory but, while relationships between the teachers and pupils are very good, teaching lacks pace and purposefulness on some occasions, and pupils are not clearly informed of what it is they are learning and why they are learning it.

## The curriculum

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 meets statutory requirements and provides satisfactory breadth and balance. The school's provision for opportunities that enrich the curriculum is **very good**. Accommodation is good and used well. The quality of resources is good overall, with the exception of ICT, where resources are satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of the provision for children in the nursery and reception class ensures that children learn well.
- There is very good support for enrichment and learning outside the school day.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good and pupils learn well.
- All pupils have full access to the learning opportunities offered.
- There are weaknesses in medium-term planning to develop subject-specific skills.
- Resources are good and used effectively in lessons, but resources for ICT are not yet developed as well as they could be, especially for pupils with special educational needs.

## Commentary

25. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and makes provision for religious education which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school provides daily acts of collective worship. The curriculum for children under five is good and provides a good and varied curriculum, which meets the children's needs well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged as satisfactory.

26. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is soundly planned to ensure that all subjects are adequately covered. The school has decided to teach subjects such as geography and history, in blocks rather than concurrently, so that pupils would have a better grasp of the subject and make better links with English, mathematics and science. This is proving to be effective in raising standards because pupils have more time to study aspects in depth. However, there are weaknesses in developing pupils' skills progressively in most subjects except in English and mathematics. This is particularly noticeable in experimental and practical work in science, where there is a lack of a rigorous framework for the development of pupils' experimental and investigative skills.

27. The school has improved and raised the profile of its provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Time is suitably allocated to different subjects. The school makes very good provision for enrichment and learning through its extra-curricular provision. Many pupils attend its clubs. These include a number of sports clubs which include basketball and football and rugby. The school also provides a good French club and a recorder and computer club. Pupils talk enthusiastically about them. They enjoy the visits to Letchworth and Luton museums and are very interested in working with authors and artists. All these activities make a good addition to the pupils' love of learning.

28. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education and pupils are taught how to identify their emotions, care for themselves and respect others. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use their skills of literacy and numeracy in all subjects but the use of ICT, whilst satisfactory, could be better because at present teachers' medium term planning does not

sufficiently identify opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Parents are very pleased with the learning opportunities offered for the children.

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils learn well with adequate support. The school fully meets statutory requirements and the pupils' individual education plans are effective in raising rates of progress. However the school has yet to fully explore the use of modern technology in aiding these pupils' learning, especially in response to language and literacy. The school is in negotiation about which sign system should be used to improve pupils' grasp of language. Present arrangements are satisfactory and the use of sign is practical, effective and easily accessible.

30. Accommodation and resources are good. Accommodation is well kept, attractive and used to best advantage. Although the school does not have a room for a library, the books are of good quality and well presented but there is a lack of quiet space for independent study and research which inhibits pupils' progress. The school has improved its provision for ICT but, while this is now satisfactory, additional equipment would be helpful to improve further the understanding and participation of all pupils in lessons, especially those who have special educational needs. There are no interactive whiteboards at present. Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, there is more work to be done on developing ICT across the curriculum and planning the progressive development of subject specific skills.

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

The school offers its pupils **very good** care and guidance in a safe and supportive environment. Support for pupils' personal development is very good and this is monitored effectively. Pupils who are new to the school benefit from good quality induction information and arrangements. The school is very good at seeking pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very well cared for and receive a high level of individual support and guidance regardless of ability.
- Pupils' views are sought on aspects of school planning and feel their contributions are valued.
- All pupils are valued for their uniqueness.

### **Commentary**

31. Hillshott School is a caring community and as a result pupils feel confident and secure. All pupils are valued for their uniqueness and the school is inclusive in all of its practices because the headteacher firmly believes in equality of opportunity for all pupils. The administrative staff ensure that everybody is welcomed with a smile which sets the friendly tone. Clear guidelines through the policies ensure consistency across the school concerning matters such as child protection, discipline and first aid procedures. The high quality of care has been improved even more since the last inspection.

32. Pupils gain significantly in their self-esteem because they know their opinions are valued, and they are very confident when performing or meeting visitors. Even those children new to the Reception class initiated conversations over lunch. They proudly showed they were familiar with routines by offering to help inspectors. Pupils are able to settle in very quickly because of the good induction arrangements. There are very good child protection procedures, and the headteacher is very vigilant in all of her duties.

33. Pupils' development of mature attitudes is in part due to class responsibilities but are also whole school decision making. They decide on the school rules and have a say in what the school can do to help them to learn through discussions in class and in assembly. The pupils have four wishes each year, which are built into the school development plan. These are fulfilled quickly so that

pupils learn the positive results of collective responsibility. This year they voted to have new classroom furniture, compact disc players in classrooms for listening to music and using it as a signal for tidying up time and a cuddly class toy to hold if they are sad. This increasing maturity though is not always built on in lessons. Not all teachers offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their independence or their collaborative skills in group work. For example many pupils show they are capable of choosing resources, or using computers or the library to develop their research skills. They are good communicators and when given the chance to work in groups or pairs pupils increase their awareness of how to interact with others and develop each other's learning but, at times, opportunities are missed to further develop pupils' collaborative skills. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported. Their progress is carefully monitored. They are encouraged to discuss their needs and ways in which they can make progress towards their targets.

34. Support for pupils from the speech and language base is very good. Speech and language provision is frequent, relevant, regular and very highly integrated with the work set for pupils with speech and language problems in class. Pupils have regular sessions with speech and language therapists at school and the valuable information provided is an integral part of individual education plans. All records are up to date so that information is shared usefully to support pupils' learning. There are very good links with all agencies concerned with pupils' welfare.

35. The issue about thorough recording of health and safety concerns, raised at the last inspection, has now been rectified.

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

Overall links with parents and the local community are **very good** because of the well-established partnership and the recognition of the importance of the parents' role. Parental involvement both with work at home and support for the school is also very good as is the quality of information for parents. Links with the Junior School and the local community are also **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Information provided to parents about the school and their children's standards and progress is of a high quality.
- Links with parents contribute very well to pupils' learning at home and at school.
- Parental involvement through the Parent Teacher Association and help in school is very good.
- The school has established very good links with the local community which support pupils' learning well.

### **Commentary**

36. Parents are viewed as true partners in their children's learning. The very good links identified in the last inspection have been maintained. Parents at the meeting were positive about the school and the responses to the questionnaires were positive overall. Parental links are very good because the school places strong emphasis on the importance of the partnership between home and school from the very start, at the parent induction meeting, and encourages parental participation in several ways. Their views are sought through questionnaires on how well the school is supporting their children's learning, and also via the annual reports. As a result, parental support is very strong because they know their views are valued. Several parents help regularly in school and on trips. The Parent Teacher Association is well supported by parents and raises substantial sums to enhance curriculum resources so directly benefiting the quality of pupils' learning.

37. Information for parents is very good because they are given a wide range of information in the school brochure. This is very comprehensive and includes plastic cards, with vital school information and guidance on how to help their child with reading, to keep as a reference along with curriculum information each term. Special needs pupils have a daily contact book which is used by both teacher

and parents to exchange relevant information on pupils' progress. Consequently parents are very supportive of pupils' work at home. Weekly newsletters keep them up to date with events and changes in school and parent consultation evenings take place each term. Annual reports are very personal to the pupils and are a good record of what he or she has achieved over the year and how they can improve. They include examples of pupils' drawing and writing so that parents have an ongoing record of their child's work. Pupils know their targets for improvement well and work assiduously to achieve them. Parents are invited to share in their children's achievements through many opportunities to attend school events.

38. The school involves and consults parents of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language from the earliest stages of identification and in subsequent regular reviews of their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to participate in the drawing up of targets and their knowledge and experience of their children's progress is highly valued.

39. The teacher in the base makes sure that parents and carers are kept very well informed of their children's progress and are properly informed of events affecting their children during the school day. This is particularly important as children attending the school are not necessarily living in its catchment area.

40. Most parents are confident that concerns will be listened to because they are encouraged to meet class teachers as soon as possible so that any problems can be ironed out quickly. Parents find the teachers very approachable and willing to share any concerns. The teachers act quickly and effectively.

41. Community links are very good because they are based on constructive support for pupils' learning. Regular trips to the local church enhance the religious education curriculum. Several other links contribute to the development and awareness of citizenship. For example pupils raise funds for the local hospice and perform their nativity play at the Christmas lunch for the elderly. They visit the gardens of neighbours close to the school to learn about plants but also to learn to value and respect other's property. Pupils have a smooth transition to the Junior School because of links such as shared performances and sports days so they have the opportunity to get to know the Junior School well before moving on.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's self-evaluation procedures are very good.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning and providing support for staff's professional development are good.
- The headteacher has a clear vision, high aspirations and has created effective teams.
- Day to day administration is very good the office is the hub of the school with the administrators giving a friendly welcome to everyone.
- Management of special educational needs and English as an additional language is good.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

### Commentary

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	597 837	Balance from previous year	
Total expenditure	585 069	Balance carried forward to the next year	



Expenditure per pupil	2 773		
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42. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and strategies to raise standards, are very good, and raise standards rapidly.

43. The governance of the school is satisfactory and has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The governors, who are largely new to the school, monitor the progress of the school's development plan and have a clear understanding of the school's priorities. The governing body supports the school well and there has been good improvement in this area since the previous inspection. While governors work closely with the headteacher and senior management team, they are not yet established enough to challenge them strongly, but are rapidly becoming more knowledgeable and confident. All statutory requirements are met.

44. The leadership and management of the school are good with very good features in management and school evaluation. The headteacher has a clear vision and high standards, and she communicates her aspirations effectively and puts plans into effect to implement the rapidly. For example, new and successful strategies have been put in place to improve standards in reading in response to lower than expected standards in the 2003 national reading tests. The new headteacher is working closely with the established senior management team and is remodelling and promoting their skills to make an effective team. The headteacher, together with members of the senior management, is knowledgeable and forward looking with a clear grasp of how the curriculum should be developed and training necessary for staff to achieve this. The headteacher is strongly committed to including all pupils in every aspect of school life and works tenaciously to make sure that all pupils have the same level of opportunity to make progress.

45. Management is good. The evaluation of the school by the headteacher is very good and is closely and realistically linked to the performance management of all staff so that they are able to raise standards in school as well as developing their posts effectively. The school monitors performance data very effectively to provide the basis for evaluation of its own performance and what it needs to do to raise standards. The contribution to teacher training is good with students being well-supported and involved in school life.

46. The school's careful self-evaluation gives it a good foundation for managing its finances well so that they can be used to raise standards. In the short time she has been at the school, the headteacher has worked quickly and effectively to link finances with educational outcomes. The school provides good value for money and the senior management team, with the governors and administrative team, works well to ensure that the principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of its resources. Day to day administration is very good, and its cheerful management helps the school to have a welcoming and efficient atmosphere.

47. The management of special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. There is an effective team of support staff. The co-ordinator regularly liaises with teaching staff and support agencies. There is a good range of resources within the school. The school's documentation for the pupils is clear, concise and kept up to date. The school spends its allocated funds well, although more software is needed for computers to support learning in all subjects.

48. Management of the speech and language base by the headteacher is good. The vision of the headteacher in her plans for the base is good. The present management by the teacher in charge of the base is satisfactory. There is an over-reliance on the speech and language therapists for guidance. Planning by staff in the base takes up too much valuable teaching time at the beginning of the week, while the pupils are in class. Management of pupils' individual education plans and administration are very good. The provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties has been implemented effectively since the last inspection and, under the leadership and management of the headteacher, the base is well placed to make good progress now that systems are established and are being evaluated by the headteacher and governing body.

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

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

Provision is **good** in the Foundation stage.

49. The school provides a welcoming, secure environment in which children achieve at least well in all areas of learning. They achieve very well in communication language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and physical development due to the high emphasis placed on developing basic skills. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Attainment on entry to reception is broadly in line with that found nationally. By the end of the reception year, children achieve the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, with many exceeding them in their communication language and literacy and in personal, mathematical and physical development.

50. There is a strong emphasis placed on learning in the Foundation Stage and many reasons why children achieve well. Teaching is always at least good and both in the nursery and the reception classes, teachers teach basic skills well. The committed team of adults has high expectations and provides a good and varied curriculum that meets the children's needs well. There is a strong emphasis on the children's personal development throughout the curriculum and staff have worked hard to successfully improve the provision for these children. Many opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility, tidy up after themselves, although this is hard going at first because not all children have had the opportunity at home to be responsible for themselves. Relationships are very good and as a result children have a very positive attitude towards learning. There are now effective procedures in place which enable staff to monitor and assess children's progress and attainment and hence plan appropriately for their future learning. The accommodation is good with very good facilities for outdoor activities. The good quality resources and secure, stimulating environment provide children with an exciting place in which to learn.

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

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

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

- Very good relationships have been established so children feel confident and secure and are keen to learn.
- All staff have high expectations.
- Children are encouraged to be responsible.

#### **Commentary**

51. This area of learning receives a high profile when the children start in the nursery and they achieve very well. They make very good progress, both in the nursery and in the reception classes, and by the time they start Year1 most children have exceeded the early learning goals. Teaching and learning in this area have improved and are now consistently good with examples of very good practice. Children are taught to identify their emotions, they read stories with strong moral messages and the behaviour code is applied well in that children work in a secure learning environment. They know what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and very clear boundaries are set for them. The very good relationships and well planned environment enable children to settle quickly and feel secure. Children are encouraged to share resources and discuss ideas. They respond well to the very good example set by adults, helping to promote their moral and social development. Children are encouraged to be independent and are regularly given opportunities to select their own activities. Behaviour is very good and stimulating challenges lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a strong desire to learn.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills.
- Guided reading and learning of initial letter sounds are taught very well.
- All groups of children achieve very well.

### Commentary

52. Teachers plan well for this area of learning. This enables most to exceed the levels expected of them by the time they start Year 1. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Children are taught very well and learn quickly. Those with special educational needs are effectively supported and achieve equally well. Children are treated with respect and make very good progress developing their listening and speaking skills. They follow stories with understanding and interest. In the reception class, guided reading is taught well and children quickly learn how to recognise words and letters. They form letters correctly and are beginning to read and write simple sentences. In the nursery, for example, children took great delight in sounding all the words ending with 'ing', such as growing, showing. In the reception class, listening skills are encouraged through the use of 'sound' walks around the school, where children are asked to identify sounds of common objects. The well organised classrooms ensure that children have regular access to a wide range of stimulating books and writing materials. Carefully planned activities provide very good opportunities for children to learn and parents are encouraged to support this learning at home.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures children achieve very well.
- Every opportunity is grasped in all activities to promote children's mathematical development.
- The good quality of resources supports learning.

### Commentary

53. The high quality teaching of numeracy skills helps children to achieve very well. Most exceed the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. They have a very firm grasp of number bonds and they are taught to explain their thinking when it comes to solving simple problems. Standards are higher than those reported at the last inspection. Adults make very good use of good quality resources and plan activities to promote children's counting and their good understanding of terms such as more than and bigger than. Children learn to correctly calculate and record simple additions to ten and recognise two-dimensional shapes. Sand and water play provide good opportunities for children to begin to understand the concept of capacity. They enjoy comparing containers and testing to discover which will hold the most. Lots of practical activities support learning and children are encouraged to record accurately with high insistence on correct number formation.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- Staff use questioning effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

## Commentary

54. Most children reach the expected levels by the end of reception year and achieve well. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Children are given well-planned opportunities to broaden their experiences and gain greater understanding of the world. They experience a sense of wonder when watching their teacher make popcorn. They know that cooking involves heat and that care must be taken at all times. On a walk round the local area, they learn to make better use of their senses to give them a greater awareness of their environment. Visits to a local farm and vegetable garden, and the opportunity to grow beans from seeds and flowers from bulbs, enrich children's experiences giving them a greater insight into the needs of animals and plants. Children celebrate many of the important festivals of the world and know that Diwali is the festival of light and that the focal point of Chinese New Year is the dragon dance. Role play enables children to gain a greater understanding of these events. Staff encourage parents of different faiths to visit classes and share their beliefs with the children. Children have regular access to computers. They learn the name of each part and demonstrate good mouse skills when drawing pictures and matching patterns. They are beginning to become familiar with the keyboard and many of them have good keyboard skills.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are very well planned and stimulating which ensures children enjoy learning and enables them to achieve well.
- Children are well co-ordinated and are capable of undertaking intricate tasks of cutting, threading and using minute beads and sequins in collage tasks.
- All groups of children achieve very well.

## Commentary

55. Standards are above those expected of children of this age and children's achievements are very good. Staff plan a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Support is very well organised, enabling children of all abilities to achieve very well. Most children exceed the early learning by the end of the reception year. The high quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and children continue to make good progress. Resources and facilities are used well to promote children's physical development. Activities are challenging and ample time is given for them to gain confidence and improve their skills. They learn quickly to use tools such as scissors and paint brushes and always work with care. They demonstrate good eye-hand co-ordination when throwing and catching and good spatial awareness and control when moving around the hall and when playing on larger equipment in the outdoor area.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers know the children well and plan well-supported activities which enable children of all abilities to achieve well.
- Children have very good attitudes to learning as they use good quality resources.

### **Commentary**

56. Most children are working at levels expected for their age and achieve their goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Children make good progress and achieve well. Resources are of good quality and well organised and children are encouraged to develop their own ideas and work independently. Teachers model skills of paint mixing well and encourage children to observe carefully and, as a result, children produced some very good examples of circles in the style of Kandinsky. They are given opportunities to show each other their work, such as designs using different mathematical shapes and hence develop a sense of pride in their achievement. This promotes their spiritual and social development. Children are encouraged to share resources and work co-operatively. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for children to enjoy music. They develop a good sense of rhythm and sing tunefully. They enthusiastically sing rhymes and songs and quickly learn to use intonation. They work hard to improve their performances. There was no opportunity to observe children using instruments during the inspection, but the good emphasis put on role play, especially using puppets, enables children to develop their creative skills well.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average and pupils' achievements are good.
- Spelling is a weakness.
- Support staff are used very well to promote learning.
- The range of writing opportunities is good and it is well linked to pupils' spoken explanations and interpretations.
- Guided reading is a strength and is taught well.
- In a few classes pupils are not sufficiently challenged when undertaking independent activities and do not always contribute sufficiently to the group when working with a teacher.

#### Commentary

57. Standards in speaking and listening and reading and writing are now good. Results in national tests of 2003 indicated that pupils achieved better than in most schools nationally in writing, although they were in line with similar schools. Results of national tests in reading were below average when compared with those of all schools nationally, and well below those of pupils in similar schools. Having analysed data thoroughly, the headteacher set about putting rigorous systems in place to raise standards, such as implementing performance management targets, monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and improving the teaching of guided reading. Other elements include deploying and training support staff effectively and using assessment data rigorously to plan the next steps of pupils' learning. This has resulted in standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, being raised effectively.

58. Pupils enter school with broadly average attainment in all aspects of English. There is a significant number of pupils with complex and persistent special educational needs. The majority of these pupils attain levels below or well below those normally expected, but they achieve well and some of them attain average levels.

59. The great majority of pupils speak clearly with normal language constructions, and can make themselves understood easily. Language in other curriculum areas is well taught. For example, it stresses subject-specific language in religious education, such as 'lectern' and 'font' when pupils are preparing for a visit to a church, by looking at a computer program. Speaking and listening are well linked to reading and writing. On one occasion, the teacher used the story of 'The Giant Stromboli' very well to glean what pupils understood, what they predicted ensuing events to be, and then asked them to write about what will happen next. Vocabulary is explained and extended well and appropriate emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' sentence structures. Pupils are reminded of punctuation and use it well. Spelling is less good and pupils sometimes repeat errors and so establish some incorrect spelling patterns at an important stage of the development of their literacy skills.

60. The quality of teaching is good with examples of very good teaching seen, especially when pupils are taught by the co-ordinator. Lessons are generally vibrant, teachers have secure subject knowledge and guided reading, which was identified as an issue in the previous report, is taught well. Teachers have high expectations but, at times, in independent activities pupils do not always contribute to the group's learning when working without a teacher. Support staff plan well with teaches and are used very well to develop pupils' learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good with examples of very good practice seen. Good explanations are given to pupils of unknown vocabulary used in text and

effective modelling of sentence construction enables pupils to make good gains in their writing. Occasionally, plenary sessions in the younger classes of the infants are not sufficiently focussed to enable pupils to identify their particular limitations in learning and as a result progress wains.

61. Pupils' attitudes to work are very good. They are keen to take part, persist with their work, and concentrate well so that they make very good use of their time. Pupils of different abilities collaborate well. Pupils who have special educational needs work confidently with adults in the literacy hour, though they tend to relate more to an adult than to each other. Often pupils with a lesser degree of learning difficulty work well with others, and teachers intervene successfully to support pupils' collaborative work.

62. Subject management by the co-ordinator is good. Assessments and evaluations of the school's progress are used well to plan training for teachers, to set targets for pupils' progress, and to choose resources to help pupils learn. Resources are well chosen and used. The school does not have enough room for a library and this restricts above average attaining pupils from undertaking private study, but books are carefully chosen and attractively presented in an orderly way.

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

63. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good. Subject-specific language is suitably emphasised and taught, and the good use of assessment by teachers helps pupils improve all aspects of literacy in different subject areas. Good examples of writing were seen in history and the vast majority of pupils read well and have full access to the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good subject management has effectively raised standards over recent years.
- The teaching of numeracy strategies is good and pupils are encouraged to use their skills across the curriculum.
- Individual targets contribute significantly to raising standards and the quality of assessment is good.
- Class relationships and management are good. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and lessons proceed at a good pace.
- The use of ICT to support learning, whilst satisfactory, is limited but is improving.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards have been improving steadily and pupils reached above average standards in the 2003 tests at the end of Year2. These standards are reflected in the current Year2 pupils' workbooks. Pupils achieve well, developing their knowledge of mathematical facts and methods. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Standards have improved since the last inspection. All pupils are making particularly good gains in using the four rules of number and their skills of mental recall are good. Pupils are able to see patterns and connections and squeal with delight when they realise that  $6 + 4 + 2$  is the same as  $5 + 5 + 2$ .

65. The good teaching reported at the last inspection has been maintained. Lessons are stimulating and challenging and teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported. As a result, pupils of all abilities learn quickly and achieve well. Teachers know their pupils well and set challenging but achievable targets and, as a result, pupils have very good attitudes to learning.



66. Pupils are taught a good range of strategies when learning to add and subtract tens and units and solve simple problems involving money. The quality of teaching is good overall. A very good lesson was seen taken by the teacher who supports pupils with English as an additional language. In this lesson, a very high emphasis was placed on developing pupils' vocabulary and understanding of mathematical concepts. Very good modelling of adding on, doubling, identifying strategies for working out sums, kept pupils focused and, as a result, they made good progress. Higher attaining pupils are challenged with larger numbers and their good understanding and confidence ensure they respond very positively. Teachers consistently encourage all pupils to contribute to discussions and skilfully use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to level questions appropriately. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils enjoy their learning. Building "fairy-tale-castles" using three-dimensional shapes made from a variety of materials reinforces their knowledge and understanding of these shapes. This activity provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to discuss their properties, using the correct vocabulary and to work co-operatively within groups. They demonstrate initiative and imagination when working on their models. There is a consistent approach to marking pupils' work and constructive comments enable pupils to learn from their mistakes. Pupils know their individual targets and are keen to achieve them. Pupils' progress is tracked termly and pupils' needs are assessed. The quality of assessment is good. This data is used effectively to plan future teaching and learning.

67. The school has worked hard to successfully raise standards and the scheme of work provides a good range of learning opportunities. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator promotes the subject well and has undertaken a good analysis of standards. Resources are good and are well organised and are used effectively. However, the limited software available to staff restricts their use of ICT to promote pupils' mathematical learning.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievements are good.
- Plenty of good 'hands-on' activities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of hypothesis and observation.
- More opportunities could be provided for pupils to record their findings independently and be more eager to take the initiative in group work.
- In planning, there is a lack of an experimental and investigative framework, which builds up pupils' skills progressively, and, too often, pupils of above average ability undertake the same work as pupils of average ability.
- More opportunities could be provided for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, and all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Assessments need to be improved.

### **Commentary**

68. National test results in 2003 show that, by the end of Year 2, pupils attained standards that were below average. Inspection findings show that, based upon this year's group of pupils, standards are above average and pupils are achieving well. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, a high emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' skills of experimental and investigative science. Pupils are now developing their skills of hypothesis, prediction and observation, but too often the same work is set for different ability groups and this restricts progress.

69. In group work, there are some pupils (a minority) who do not use their initiative and are happy for others to do the work for them. Furthermore, insufficient opportunities are provided for several higher attaining pupils to develop their skills of independent learning. Whilst the library is well

provided with good quality resources, there is a lack of quiet space for pupils to develop their research skills.

70. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, but new to her post. Teaching and learning at present are not monitored by the co-ordinator, but monitoring of planning and looking at pupils' books have been undertaken.

71. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning because of the good quality of teaching. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, offer good explanations and provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to offer their own suggestions; this has a positive effect on their speaking and listening skills. However, the use of ICT could be developed further. Whilst there are examples of pupils identifying objects which can be pushed or pulled, higher attaining pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to enter their findings into simple databases. However, at times in group work, not all pupils contribute sufficiently to developing group learning and do not always use a full range of strategies to record their findings. The co-ordinator has recognised this as an area for improvement alongside the need to further develop assessment procedures, which at the moment focus on the pupils' acquisition of scientific facts rather than their use of scientific skills.

72. Pupils have good knowledge of the conditions needed for plants to survive, they know that magnets attract metal and that pushes and pulls are forces. They can name a range of materials suitable for wear in wet weather and they know that the heart beats faster when we exercise. Pupils know how to use a variety of simple equipment and recognise that taking one reading is likely to give a less accurate result than taking several readings. They know how shadows are formed and are very interested in the planets. Pupils generally have very good attitudes to learning, their work is neatly presented and they take a pride in what they do.

73. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have risen and are now above average, but insufficient progress has been made in developing rigorous assessment procedures. This is only now being addressed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High interest in using computers amongst pupils.
- Insufficient hardware and software restricts teaching and learning.
- Planned use of ICT across the curriculum is not yet fully developed.

### **Commentary**

74. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards are average overall and at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. They have been maintained since the last inspection.

75. Pupils enjoy opportunities to use computers and make good progress developing their skills. They know how to use programs such as "Colour Magic", demonstrating sound mouse skills when producing pictures of snowmen and individual designs for pencil cases and "multi-coloured glasses". Older pupils are becoming familiar with the keyboard and are gaining confidence correcting given text and producing their own simple stories by cutting and pasting. They are keen to learn and demonstrate good levels of concentration and perseverance. The school has programmable "roamer" toys but pupils were not observed working on control technology due to timetable arrangements.

76. Teaching and learning have significantly improved since the last inspection and are now good, and whilst pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall too few opportunities are provided for them to undertake independent learning. The school has recognised this as an area for development. Staff are now more confident and are secure in their subject knowledge. Demonstrations and explanations are clear. Teachers and support staff work patiently and effectively with pupils of all abilities to ensure they understand what is being taught. Programs are used well to support pupils whose English is an additional language, for example developing their knowledge of names for facial features. These pupils and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress due to the support they now receive.

77. The quality of provision has improved since the last inspection but there is still room for improvement. The purchase of more resources, such as whiteboards and projectors, would help pupils with special educational needs. The suite is now regularly used by all classes and pupils are given opportunities to use the computer in each classroom to support their learning. However, the school recognises the need to improve the quality of these computers and increase the range of software available to staff and pupils. Pupils have access to a computer club, which provides further opportunities to develop their skills. Leadership and management of the subject good.

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

78. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory but could be better. The school is aware that it is a priority for development. Examples of ICT being used to reinforce literacy skills were observed but planning in other subjects does not formally incorporate the use of ICT to broaden pupils' experiences. As teachers are knowledgeable, they ensure that pupils do have access to ICT but this is not rigorous enough to ensure that pupils' rates of progress are even faster. Opportunities to use modern technology, for example interactive whiteboards, to enhance the learning of pupils with special educational needs have yet to be taken.

## **HUMANITIES**

No judgement was made on provision for **geography**, as no teaching was available for observation during the inspection. Planning for geography is sound, although there is insufficient emphasis on teaching subject specific skills, and resources are good. At present, the school is following the round world trip of a member of its staff with Barnaby Bear, who communicates regularly by post and Internet. There is a large map of the world with journeys marked clearly and with photographs, and pupils are intrigued and involved. This venture helps them to develop an idea of distance and other environments, and contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good knowledge of historical facts and standards exceed expectations for seven year olds.
- ICT is used well to support learning.
- Pupils love history and have very good attitudes to learning.
- Higher attaining pupils would benefit from being challenged even further.
- Assessments, whilst satisfactory, do not take sufficient account of historical skills.

### **Commentary**

79. By the end of Year 2, pupils exceed the expectations for seven year olds and their achievements are good. All groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils write about the Great Fire of London and use ICT well to structure their sentences. They are amazed

that the fire spread so quickly and comment that if it were to happen today, our emergency services would have the fire out in no time. Pupils know that, over time, things change, for example, they know that they are different now from what they were as babies and they have good sequencing skills. Technical vocabulary is used well, such as the passage of time, and pupils can arrange events in order using a time line. Younger children, having visited the Luton Toy Museum, talk eagerly about the lack of play stations in children's bedrooms long ago. They are fascinated by the work of Florence Nightingale and they know that hospitals of today are clean and have a better range of medicine.

80. Pupils know a lot of historical facts about old and new toys, how holidays have changed and how quickly the Great Fire of London spread. However, they are not always given sufficient opportunities to communicate their learning in a variety of different ways, such as using ICT presentations and using examples of extended writing.

81. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use a variety of good resources to help pupils understand about life long ago. However, opportunities for quiet study and research are limited and higher attaining pupils, whilst making good progress overall, would benefit from even greater challenge. Subject-specific skills of chronology, cause and effect, presenting information in a variety of ways, comparing and contrasting, are not sufficiently well identified in planning.

82. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator had ensured that the subject is well resourced and that planning has been monitored. Overall, good improvement has been made since the previous inspection as standards are now above average, but there is still room for improvement in developing assessment and identifying subject-specific skills in planning.

## **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils struggle with understanding the concept of religious communities and lifestyles.
- Pupils know many parables, and stories that Jesus told.
- Religious education contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good links are made with literacy, especially the development of writing and speaking and listening.
- Pupils have good knowledge of other faiths.
- Assessment procedures need to be developed.

### **Commentary**

83. By the end of Year 2, pupils can name the most important parts of a church, such as a lectern, font, altar, and they know that the Bible is the holy book by which Christians live. Pupils know that Jesus told many stories and that many of these stories have relevance to our lives today, for example, pupils know that the Good Samaritan helped a man in need and they equate this with helping their friends when they are in need. This contributes positively to their moral and social development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to marvel at the significance of holy books in the lives of different faith groups. Pupils know that the Qu'ran must be handled with care, that it contains valuable messages for the lives of Muslims, and that the beautiful script in the Torah is one of the ways that Jews show reverence to God.

84. Pupils have good knowledge of celebrations such as baptism, weddings, and eagerly talk about their visit to the church. Good links are made with literacy where pupils are asked to write about their experiences. The school places a high emphasis on enabling these young children to

explain their responses to the many stories that are read to them. This is instrumental in developing pupils' standards of speaking and listening. Pupils have visited the Gudwara and this has contributed to their cultural development and knowledge of other faith groups. Pupils struggle with understanding the concepts of religious communities and how religion affects their lifestyles, such as fasting during Ramadan, but they do know that, in Judaism, families get together for celebrating Hannukah. Pupils have good knowledge of the Rama and Sita story and write in great depth about the Nativity story and the many stories that Jesus told. At present, there are no assessment procedures and as a result there is an over-emphasis on whole-class teaching which results in higher attainers not always progressing as well as they might. The school has recognised this as an area for development.

85. The quality of teaching seen is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and planning is satisfactory, but medium-term planning does not sufficiently identify expectations of different ability groups in terms of what they should be achieving in knowledge, skills and understanding, and too much emphasis is placed on all groups of pupils, regardless of their prior attainment, undertaking the same work.

86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Good evaluations are undertaken of pupils' responses, but they are not sufficiently well linked to the content of assessments as defined by the locally agreed syllabus. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection and standards have risen.

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

Information was too limited to make a judgement on **design and technology**, although it is clear from planning that the subject is delivered adequately. From the **art and design** work seen on display and pupils' folders, a broad and balanced curriculum is followed with all programmes of study addressed effectively. The use of ICT supports learning appropriately and work on display had a strong ICT element to it, especially in pupils creating their own patterns. Teachers' planning, whilst satisfactory, could be improved further by emphasising the progressive development of subject specific skills. From the work seen, standards are in line with those generally expected for pupils of this age. Portraits show satisfactory observation skills and colour mixing. Collage presentations indicate a reasonable use of a variety of materials, and works of great artists, such as Van Gogh and Kandinsky, have been studied. **Music** was not the focus for inspection. Therefore no judgement can be made other than that the pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum and sing well and tunefully, and keep a rhythm, as evidenced by aspects seen of their Christmas productions and singing in assemblies.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are well planned and teachers provide good role models.
- Pupils support each other well and have very good attitudes to learning.
- Resources and facilities are good.
- There are no significant weaknesses, other than the need to develop assessment procedures.

### **Commentary**

87. All pupils achieve well. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2. Similar standards were found during the last inspection. Pupils have good spatial awareness and develop a good sense of balance. Their eye-hand co-ordination is good and pupils of all abilities demonstrate this well when throwing and catching and working with bats and balls. They listen carefully to instructions and work hard to improve their performances. They are very supportive and contribute positively to each other's learning, sharing resources sensibly and acknowledging their peers' achievements.

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Due to weather conditions it was not possible to observe outdoor activities.

88. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers, lessons are well prepared and the pace of lessons is brisk. A good warm up at the beginning and cool down at the end of lessons develop good habits early. Lessons are stimulating and teachers give clear instructions and demonstrate well the skills pupils are to develop. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and encouraged to participate fully. They make good progress, as do the pupils with English as an additional language.

89. Resources are good and have improved since the last inspection. There is a good scheme of work in place. More time is now allocated to physical education including weekly swimming lessons for Year 2 pupils. Parents are pleased with this provision. The school recognises the need to develop a consistent approach to assessing pupils' standards and progress. At present, assessments are satisfactory but are not sufficiently rigorous to record pupils' progress in all aspects of the programme of study. The range of extra-curricular clubs and experiences offered to pupils is very good.

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

Very little teaching of **personal, social and health education** was seen but curriculum planning shows that the school places a high emphasis on developing confidence and responsibility within pupils and ensuring that they are aware of healthy lifestyles. This is fostered well in science. Pupils are taught how to recognise their own feelings and how to behave appropriately in a variety of situations. Pupils care about their environment and are particularly interested in aspects of conservation and grasp that they have responsibilities for caring about their school and local community. They know which medicines are harmful if not handled correctly and they know basic road safety rules. They know that bullying is wrong and genuinely look after one another well.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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