

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HOWDEN INFANT SCHOOL

Goole

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118121

Headteacher: Mrs Bernie Bridle

Lead inspector: Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 261310

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                           |
| School category:             | Foundation                              |
| Age range of children:       | 3 – 7 years                             |
| Gender of children:          | Mixed                                   |
| Number on roll:              | 198                                     |
| School address:              | Hailgate<br>Howden<br>Goole<br>DN14 7SL |
| Telephone number:            | 01430 430767                            |
| Fax number:                  | 01430 430767                            |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                      |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Helen Holloway                          |
| Date of previous inspection: | 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 1998           |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school occupies a modern building and serves a large village near Goole. There are 198 children, including 48 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Attainment on entry is broadly as expected of most children as they start school, although many children's language skills are weak. All children are white and speak English as their first language. The proportion of children who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, although the school serves a broadly average socio-economic area. Eleven children (7 per cent) have special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties and emotional, social and behavioural problems. One has a statement of special educational need. Both figures are below the national average. The level of pupil turnover is broadly average. The school was awarded the Investors in People standard in June 2003 and recently gained the Activemark, which acknowledges its contribution to the development of sport.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                   |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 7230                           | Rob Crompton      | Lead inspector | The Foundation Stage<br>Mathematics<br>Science<br>Information and communication technology<br>Music<br>Physical education      |
| 13874                          | Jane Chesterfield | Lay inspector  |  |
| 25359                          | Peter Crispin     | Team inspector | English<br>Religious education<br>History<br>Geography<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Special educational needs |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with some excellent features. It lives up to its motto 'Roots to grow and Wings to fly' by providing children with a very good start and enabling them to achieve well. Standards are good in all subjects because the teaching is effective across the curriculum. Children are nurtured within the warm and secure atmosphere. Personal development is promoted successfully through the rich variety of experiences, which means that children behave very well and are eager to learn. Parents play an increasing part in their children's learning and are extremely happy with the school. The school is very well led and managed under the excellent leadership of the headteacher and provides good value for money.

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

- Teaching and learning are consistently good which means children achieve well and reach above average standards
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by key staff
- The governing body works very well on behalf of the school
- The school's commitment to inclusion is excellent, with children with varying needs being well supported
- Very good provision in the nursery and reception classes gives children a good start
- Good provision for personal development means that children behave very well and are keen to learn
- Assessment is very good and used very effectively to determine which individuals and groups need further challenge or support
- Children are cared for very well
- Very good links with parents enable them to contribute to their children's learning
- The good curriculum enables children to achieve well in all subjects
- Within the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, more could be done to teach children about cultural diversity within Britain.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Weaknesses have been overcome and strengths have been sustained.

- Standards are higher in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Provision in the nursery and reception classes has improved significantly.
- The quality of teaching is better and assessment is now systematic and informative.
- Governors take a much fuller part in development planning.
- The playgrounds are no longer hazardous.
- All staff have been trained in child protection.
- Subject managers now monitor planning and teaching systematically.
- Arrangements for the induction of new staff are now excellent.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2000        | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |
| Reading   | C           | B    | A    | A               |
| Writing   | D           | B    | A    | B               |
| Mathematics   | D           | D    | C    | D               |

*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 children eligible for free school meals*

Overall achievement is **good**. Children achieve well in nursery and reception in all areas of learning. Most achieve or exceed the levels expected in personal, social and emotional development,

communication, language and learning, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development.

In years 1 and 2, children achieve well and attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress and reach good standards in all other subjects<sup>1</sup> except in science where attainment is well above average and in religious education where standards are in line with expectations. Children have good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and use them well across the curriculum. **Very good** provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour. Attendance levels are good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **very good**. Children soon settle in to the nursery. Routines are established from the very beginning so that children quickly adapt to the expectations of school life. The excellent range of stimulating activities set up across the spacious indoor and outdoor areas greatly enhances learning in the nursery and reception classes. The teaching and learning are **very good**. Staff work very well as a team, continually noting how children are doing so that they can plan the next step in their learning.

In years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are **good**. Teachers plan in great detail and keep careful records of children's progress. They use imaginative approaches so that children sustain their interest and are keen to learn. Much of the work is practical which appeals to children and reinforces their learning. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Those with particular gifts and talents are well supported.

The curriculum offers good opportunities for children to learn according to their individual needs. Teaching subjects, such as design and technology, in blocks of time works well. A good range of sporting and other activities outside lessons supports children's learning and personal development. The school has very good systems for consulting children and responding to their suggestions. Induction arrangements for the nursery children are excellent, which means they get off to a very good start. Very good relationships with parents enable them to be involved in their children's education. Good links with the community helps to make the curriculum interesting for children and cooperation with local schools supports curriculum developments well.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership is **very good**. The headteacher's excellent leadership has driven school improvements very effectively in the year since her appointment. Her clarity of vision and sense of purpose are pivotal to the success of the school. Key staff provide good leadership. They are increasingly innovative, with a desire to develop their areas of responsibility further so that the good levels of achievement can be sustained and increased.

Management is **very good**. The school carefully monitors and evaluates its work in order to plan strategically. Excellent induction arrangements for new staff and a strong focus on professional development help to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching team. Governance is **very good**. Governors have guided the school very well through an uncertain period, giving firm direction. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the school very well.

### **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents hold the school in high regard. Parents are very happy with the way the school is led and with the progress their children are making. Children are enthusiastic about all the school offers.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to build on the work already started to raise children's awareness of cultural diversity within Britain.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

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<sup>1</sup> Due to timetable arrangements, it was not possible to evaluate the provision or standards in music.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

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

Achievement in the nursery and reception classes and in years 1 and 2 is **good**. Standards in reading and writing are **above average**. Standards in science are **well above average**. In all other subjects, children are working **above** the levels generally expected, except in religious education where attainment is **in line with expectations**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an upward trend in results over the last few years
- Children of different abilities achieve well
- Children have very good investigative skills
- Children's skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are used well in other work

### Commentary

#### Foundation Stage

1. Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes because of very effective leadership and management and very good teaching. Standards are good in all areas of learning. Children meet or exceed the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

#### Key Stage 1

2. In recent years, results of national curriculum tests in reading and writing show that children were about a term ahead of those in other schools. The trend in mathematics was slightly below the national average. Girls have tended to do better than boys. The proportion of children attaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science has been above average, indicating that more able children generally reach their potential.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 17.3 (16.6)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| writing       | 15.7 (15.0)    | 14.4 (14.3)      |
| mathematics   | 16.4 (15.7)    | 16.5 (16.2)      |

There were 35 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Standards seen during the inspection reflected good achievement in lessons, good progress over time and above average standards in reading and writing. Children are achieving very well in science and standards are well above average. They have very good investigative skills which contribute significantly to achievement in science. Attainment in mathematics is good and children are making better progress than recent results indicate. Good standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT are evident in the confident way that children use these skills in other lessons. Standards in religious education are in line with expectations. The fact that children achieve well and attain good standards in all other subjects points to effective leadership and management and good overall provision.

## Achievement of children with special educational needs

- Children make good progress towards their individual targets and achieve well because they are well supported by teachers and learning assistants.

## Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all **very good** indeed. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. There are no exclusions.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children feel special and involved in their school and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development
- Children are enthusiastic and eager to participate which is a strong factor in their good achievement
- Children enjoy a wealth of experiences which enhances their personal development
- Children's multi-cultural awareness needs to be taken a step further

## Commentary

- The Christian ethos which guides the school's work develops within children a sense of their own uniqueness and worth. Areas such as the Thinking Place or the special table at lunchtime bring this home in a very real way to these young children. Because they feel valued, children have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and are very ready to learn. They behave very well and are always willing to have their say in class or have a go at other activities. Children are open to everything that the school has to offer, throwing themselves into role-play for the Victorian washday, for example, or trying out new games with others at the Fun Club.
- The school is aware of the need to give particular attention to multi-cultural awareness and has built up a good range of relevant books and resources. Its programme for global citizenship gives a good insight into different cultures abroad. The next step is for children to be given a similar insight into the different cultures which co-exist in modern Britain.

## Attendance

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 4.6 | School data          | 0.0 |
| 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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Consistently good teaching is underpinned by a well-planned curriculum with many additional opportunities for children to learn. Children are very well cared for, guided and supported. A very strong partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's progress.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and leads to good progress
- Planning is very good and helps to ensure that children of all abilities achieve well
- Very good assessment systems mean that work can be set at the right level for individual children and groups
- Child support assistants<sup>2</sup> make a good contribution to teaching and learning
- Teachers make good use of the time available, although introductions are sometimes too long

### Commentary

7. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is highly organised. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and plan meticulously. Children achieve well because each step in their learning is carefully noted so that the next thing they tackle is more challenging. Children with special educational needs are very well supported. By setting targets for progress, staff ensure that the work is at the right level of difficulty.
8. Good teaching in years 1 and 2 enables children to achieve well. Using their very good knowledge of how children are getting on, teachers plan different work for groups of children, such as those with special needs or those who are very confident. Child support assistants are well briefed about what children are to learn in each lesson. This enables them to work effectively, supporting children by asking relevant questions. They explain things well, often putting things in a different way to help children understand. Most teachers are very good at establishing positive relationships and managing behaviour. As a result, lessons run smoothly, time is used productively and children achieve well. Occasionally, introductions are too long so children lose their concentration and there is not enough time for independent work. However, the large majority of teaching is very successful, as the table below shows.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 3         | 18   | 2            | 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 school provides a **very good** curriculum that effectively meets the needs of all children.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well planned to help children build on their previous learning and achieve well
- Effective and interesting links between subjects support children's learning
- A good range of extra-curricular activities contributes to children's personal development
- The high quality accommodation is used to good effect

### Commentary

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<sup>2</sup> This is the title the school gives to classroom assistants.

9. Effective links across subjects bring the curriculum alive and make it relevant for children. For example, a successful design and technology project in year 2 contributed very well to children's achievement in English, mathematics and science. They drew careful plans, made lists of materials, constructed their vehicles, tested them travelling down a slope, measured the results and wrote critical evaluations. Whole days that focus on a particular topic - such as the Victorian 'wash day' planned as part of a series of lessons about 'Homes in the Past'- successfully stimulate children's interest and help them to learn through practical experience.
10. Club activities are well attended and a good range of visits make learning more interesting and contribute to children's personal development. For example, visits from internationally known musicians attending a local music festival provide worthwhile cultural experiences.
11. The spacious and well-maintained class areas are organised very well for the benefit of the children. Good quality resources are stored methodically, and children are helped to find, use and put things away with clearly labelled drawers and templates that match the equipment. The recently completed 'Reflective Garden' contributes effectively to the children's personal development by providing a place for them to take part in quiet activities, to look at the shrubs and plants, and to chat quietly to their friends or children from the junior school.

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

Pastoral care and health and safety are **very good**, and issues arising from the last inspection have been thoroughly addressed. Children are **very well** guided and supported.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pre-school involvement and nursery induction are excellent
- Pastoral care notes build up a very clear picture of personal development
- The school involves children very closely in its work

### **Commentary**

12. A very careful programme for pre-school visits and staggered entry ensures that children are happy and settled from the moment they start nursery. The school takes exceptional steps to assess children's needs before they arrive so that any help and support required is already in place from day one. As children progress through the school, teachers keep notes of pastoral matters which could affect children's well being, relationships and readiness to learn. In this way, staff are able to spot patterns of behaviour and to understand the children and their needs more closely.
13. Children have many good opportunities to express their views on matters affecting them through the school's ample provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. In addition, the Friendly Faces scheme for playground helpers operates very successfully as a form of school council. All children have the chance in turn to represent their classmates and to think about how to improve the school, for example by suggesting new toys for the wet play boxes.

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

The school's partnership with parents is **very effective**. Links with other schools and the community are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with new parents of nursery children are very close which eases the transition from home to school
- Good quality information for parents helps them to contribute to their children's learning
- The school actively involves parents and listens to their views which contributes to the very good relationships between home and school
- Outside links enhance children's experiences and contribute significantly to their learning and personal development

### Commentary

14. The nursery encourages parents to get involved with their children's learning from the start, through borrowing books and sharing in activities. This contributes significantly to children's progress. Parents throughout the school are kept very well informed about what their children are doing and how they can help through 'Hail', the half-termly curriculum newsletter. Target sheets are also a very good way of getting parents to think about their children's learning needs. Annual reports to parents on their children's progress, however, do not tell parents enough about how well their children are doing for their age. Parents and children have very good opportunities to work and learn together with support at the weekly Family Internet Club. The school regularly consults parents about issues affecting their children so that it can tackle both general and individual concerns.
15. The school has particularly strong links with the junior school and the church within the local community, opening up a wealth of additional experiences for children. They get the chance to play a part in local events, such as the Howden Festival, and an insight into what it means to be part of a community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance of the school is **very good**. The head teacher provides **excellent** leadership. The leadership of other key staff is **good**. The school is managed **very effectively**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership of the head teacher inspires everyone to work towards the school's aims
- Excellent team spirit and working relationships amongst all staff and the governors impacts strongly on children's progress and achievement
- Good procedures for staff induction, monitoring, support and performance management
- The excellent commitment to inclusion helps to ensure that all children do as well as they can
- Coordinators lead and manage their subjects well

### Commentary

16. Leadership and management have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The head teacher's excellent leadership provides a very firm steer that encourages constant improvements. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school and a clear focus by all staff on the need to evaluate what they are doing. This is in no small part due to good communication, effective use of meetings and the recognition and appreciation of what people have achieved. The school's work in this area was recognised with the 'Investors in People' award in June 2003.
17. The head teacher, all staff and the governors share a clear vision and a strong sense of purpose. Governance is very good. The governing body makes a very strong contribution to the leadership of the school. Governors are well organised, knowledgeable and take their work seriously. They are given very good information by the head teacher and have a firm grasp of the school's

strengths and weaknesses. They have been fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school and are instrumental in seeking further improvements.

18. Systematic monitoring of lessons, coupled with discussions with children help to ensure good quality teaching. Subject leaders take their roles seriously and are keen to support colleagues and also to ensure that children do well. All staff are encouraged to think creatively and are currently considering various innovations to improve children's performance further.
19. There is an excellent commitment to inclusion in the school. The head teacher is a first class role model in this regard. Good procedures for financial management help to ensure that resources are focused on the needs of all children, so that good support can be provided for individuals and groups. The governors plan the budget carefully; a large potential budget deficit, for instance, has been cleared by careful purchasing plans and consideration of cheaper alternative sources.

## Financial information

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 428166 |
| Total expenditure          | 411284 |
| Expenditure per child      | 2350   |

| Balances (£)                        |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance from previous year          | 20958 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 16882 |

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

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

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **very good**. The quality of teaching is very good and children's achievement is good.

20. The provision is led and managed highly effectively. The coordinator has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and is supported by a very strong team. Significant weaknesses identified during the last inspection have been overcome to provide a very good foundation for children's learning and personal development.
21. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work very well together. Meticulous planning follows the same format so the transition from nursery to reception is seamless. Every activity is planned in detail. The intentions for children's learning are spelled out for every activity, including those set out daily, such as sand and water play, and whole class sessions. This helps teachers and support staff to focus on what children are learning, not simply on what they are doing. They use the excellent assessment system to keep track of how children are progressing and to provide new challenges for them. Children with special educational needs are identified early and are well supported. Plans are displayed for parents to provide a good link between home and school.
22. The quality of teaching in each area of learning is **very good**. The spacious indoor and outdoor areas contain a wealth of stimulating resources; all are set out carefully so children can find them easily and put them away in exactly the right place. Through a combination of whole class, small group and individual work, children's learning flourishes and they **achieve well**. They come to school happily and eagerly. **Standards are good**, most children meeting or exceeding the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

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

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

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

- Excellent induction arrangements help children to settle in quickly as they start school
- Adults establish warm relationships with children and support their personal development very well
- Structured opportunities help to develop children's social interaction and independence

#### **Commentary**

23. Before children start in the nursery, teachers and nursery nurses visit their homes. In addition to discussing aspects of children's development, they note every child's particular interests. They use this information to set up activities during the first few days to help ease the transition from home to school. Children were observed on their first day in school. The teacher provided a 'conducted tour' of all the activities on offer and children were soon absorbed. They were happy to conform to the conventions of wearing bands when playing in the sand, putting on aprons for painting and taking turns. One child who was upset was warmly comforted by the nursery nurse and was able to join in with the others. Extensive preparation had been made to meet the special educational needs of a newcomer. This level of individual care and attention is evident throughout the nursery and reception classes and contributes significantly to how well children settle in.
24. Great care is taken to develop children's social skills. Activities are set up which encourage children to work together, such as sharing equipment and tidying up. The 'drive in' fast food

outlet set up in the outdoor area had children queuing up on various vehicles, placing the 'orders' and happily setting off with their 'burgers and chips'. Such activities, with adults playing a central role, help children to move away from playing individually alongside their classmates and develop the confidence to take part in group activities.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and extend their vocabulary
- Very well planned activities help children to develop early literacy skills

### **Commentary**

25. Many children have difficulty in communicating when they start in the nursery. Some are reluctant to speak and others cannot structure their language. Staff talk to children a lot, successfully encouraging responses. Playing alongside them in the role play area, they devise imaginary situations which require dialogue, for example, when 'eating' food and saying how much they enjoy it. As children tackle the wide range of activities on offer, there is frequently an adult alongside to stimulate language through gentle questioning. As a result, children make good progress and achieve good standards in speaking and listening.
26. Children enjoy stories because teachers read to them expressively. Building successfully on earlier teaching, children in the reception classes are introduced to letter sounds systematically. For example, teachers use sentences such as 'Sam the snake slides and slithers' and ask children to identify the initial sounds. Children quickly learn that writing can convey meaning. Systematic teaching means that early 'pretend writing' in the nursery gives way to plausible attempts to write as children learn how to write conventionally. Staff make detailed notes of children's progress. For example, one piece of work was annotated, 'Good pencil grip, tries really hard to follow verbal prompts'. World Book Day, when children dress up as story characters, extends their knowledge and enjoyment of literature. This very good provision means that children reach good standards in literacy by the end of the reception year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Imaginative approaches stimulate children's interest
- Structured teaching through the nursery and reception classes means that children build very well on earlier skills

### **Commentary**

27. From the moment they start in the nursery, children have very many opportunities to learn about number and shape through practical activities. When building with large wooden blocks on their first day at school, children delighted in wearing 'hard hats' and were thoroughly absorbed. Early ideas of shape and position were reinforced very well as staff engaged them in conversations about their constructions. In the reception class, children responded with great interest as they were each given a doll with a numbered bib. With some judicious prompting by the teacher, they put the dolls in order up to fourteen and most confidently counted them in the correct sequence, indicating very good achievement. During the activity, the nursery nurse closely observed children's individual responses and noted the level of their understanding.

28. When children are sure what numbers represent, they are taught systematically how to 'write' them first using sand and play dough and then more conventionally with pencil and paper. Frequent references to numbers in daily routines reinforce children's understanding very effectively. Because nursery and reception teachers work closely together, the level of challenge in daily tasks increases children's understanding progressively. Practical activities abound. Reception children were choosing number cards and throwing the relevant number of beanbags into a hoop, while others were 'building a house for the hedgehog'. Throughout these activities, staff were extending children's mathematical vocabulary very well. Children's comments indicated good achievement: "It's massive...The hedgehog can't fit in now...We can make it bigger".
29. Children's workbooks indicate a successful structured approach to teaching and a good level of challenge. Building on earlier work on identifying and naming shapes, children sort shapes into 'triangles and not triangles'. They extend their understanding of number by counting in twos – a skill not usually taught until year 1. Children's increasing ability to record their work is evident as they move from drawing pictures to using conventional mathematical symbols, such as + and =.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' planning is very good and ensures that the children have a wide variety of experiences
- The emphasis on practical work stimulates children's interest and helps them to learn new things

### **Commentary**

30. As a result of the very good provision, children reach good standards. Every opportunity is taken to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world outside their immediate home and school environment. A cycle of themes during the year ensures that children learn through direct experience. Photographs of children collecting autumn leaves, exploring ice-covered puddles in the school grounds and enjoying a trip to a farm exemplify teachers' success in providing a wealth of opportunities for children to broaden their horizons and stimulate their curiosity.
31. Direct experiences successfully promote learning. Supported by adults, children bake biscuits, cakes and bread, cook spaghetti and make pizzas and beans on toast. They plant beans and record their growth in pictures. Their understanding of human growth and development is enhanced as parents bring in their newborn babies and talk to the children about how they look after them. Early mapping skills are taught effectively through drawing the route of Little Red Riding Hood's walk through the woods. Such activities provide a very good foundation for subsequent work in subjects such as science and geography.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The spacious and well-equipped outdoor areas support children's physical development very well
- Frequent use of classroom tools and equipment helps children to improve their control and dexterity

### **Commentary**

32. Children spend part of every day using the extensive outdoor facilities. They are very well supported and encouraged by staff and gain increasing confidence using the wheeled toys and climbing frames. Adults take every opportunity to help children to extend their skills, providing positive comments as they try something new, such as balancing or sliding in different ways.
33. The use of pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, scissors and glue is an everyday part of children's experience. Teachers and support staff frequently work alongside them, demonstrating techniques and encouraging children to refine their control.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very good range of activities stimulates children's creative development very successfully
  - Skills are taught systematically which leads to good standards
34. Children respond imaginatively to the wealth of creative activities on offer. Teachers encourage children to refine their work with paint and pastels, rather than be content with their first attempts. As a result, children achieve well and reach good standards. This is evident in the very good paintings of animals on display in the reception area. Children are taught effectively to cut and sew accurately. Working carefully with fabric, sequins and gold and silver thread, they produce lively collages. Their good level of achievement can be seen in their individual sketchbooks. For example, self-portraits in the early pages lack detail but just a few months later are far more accurate.
35. The role play area is used very well to stimulate children's creative development. Children are encouraged successfully to play with one another, improvising imaginative scenarios – often with an adult playing a leading role and prompting cooperation and extended play. Music makes a good contribution to creative development. Children are learning to sing in tune and many demonstrate a good sense of rhythm as they play percussion instruments along with recorded music.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

The school makes good provision for **English**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lively and interesting lessons create enthusiasm for English and help children to achieve good standards
- Thorough and detailed curriculum planning helps children to build on earlier learning
- Very good leadership and management is sustaining good standards

### **Commentary**

36. Good provision has been sustained since the last inspection. Children achieve well in lessons because they respond positively to the good level of challenge. Lessons move at a brisk pace and children pick up teachers' enthusiasm. Rather than keep to the same format, teachers vary their approach, often linking work to current topics. For example, as children were learning about Victorian washing days through first hand experience, teachers extended their speaking and listening skills and ensured that they were learning relevant vocabulary. Basic skills are taught well. Staff monitor children's progress during lessons, and the review time at the end of the

lesson is used effectively to assess what children have learnt, and to identify the next step. Children with special educational needs are supported well. Teachers plan specific work for them and they are often helped in class by child support assistants. Although girls have tended to do better than boys in national curriculum tests, no significant differences were found during the inspection.

37. Children achieve well in speaking and listening due to the high expectations of staff and the planned opportunities for discussion. For example, children are frequently asked to discuss possible responses to questions with a partner, before whole class discussions. Supported effectively by systematic teaching, children read with growing fluency and enjoyment. By reading expressively themselves, teachers encourage children to do so. Many children read avidly and are supported well in school and at home. Carefully structured plans for teaching writing ensure that the work is challenging for each group of children. Teachers' enthusiasm is picked up by the children and they are keen to improve. Regular handwriting sessions instil good letter formation. Spelling patterns and lists are learnt for homework, with the consequent tests showing high standards. Children of all abilities are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.
38. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject coordinator provides very good leadership and management. She has been instrumental in ensuring that lessons are consistently well planned and taught and promotes the subject very successfully. The value the school attaches to literacy is reflected in every classroom. They contain attractive book areas and lists of word families, letter blends and other vocabulary are prominently displayed.

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

39. Children use their literacy skills well in a range of other subjects. These opportunities are identified in planning, which ensures that all children have similar opportunities. In science, older children produce effective information books on 'Spiders', complete with contents page and index. In history and geography, technical vocabulary is explained in lessons, and children use it in their accounts. Written evaluations in design technology show children's ability to evaluate their models and explain how they could be improved. Speaking and listening are successfully promoted in all subjects, particularly when reviewing work at the end of lessons.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and management is leading to better achievement and rising standards
- Teaching and learning are consistently good which leads to good progress
- More able children are suitably challenged.

### **Commentary**

40. The subject leader has effectively contributed to the consistently good teaching throughout the school by observing all teachers teach and by giving them support and advice about how they can improve. The increasing challenge in the level of work in children's books shows that this is having a good impact on their rate progress and levels of attainment. The good level of provision has been maintained since the last inspection.
41. Good teaching means that children achieve well and attain above average standards. Teachers build well on children's previous learning and provide good support for children of differing

abilities. Children with special educational needs get a good deal; for example, they are supported well in smaller groups so that many reach the expected level by the end of year 2. The below average results in the 2002 national tests when compared to similar schools was not typical. The school carefully analysed children's responses to individual questions and ensured that any gaps in learning that emerged were addressed during the next year.

42. Teachers use a wide variety of methods to help children learn fundamental aspects of mathematics. Children's understanding of number facts to 10 was skilfully reinforced in year 1 as they sorted objects into sets of 10 and recorded  $6+4$ ,  $7+3$ ,  $8+2$  and so on. In year 2, magnetic numbers helped children to understand two digit numbers. "It's not just 5 it's a 50" said one boy when asked the value of the 5 in 56. Lessons are well planned so that teachers and children share a clear sense of purpose about what exactly is to be learned. Teachers use methods that appeal to the different ways that children learn. They include activities involving hearing, seeing and doing very successfully in most lessons. Teachers are good at assessing how well children are learning and in adapting their approach as a result of what they find out. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly when working with children drawn from both classes in a year group. This means that teachers and assistants can work with small groups with similar needs and provide more help for individual children. Sometimes, teaching assistants play a less effective part in the introductions to lessons, which reduces their impact on learning.
43. More able children tackle challenging tasks, such as learning the four times table, measuring lines accurately and using quick methods to add on 9. Their above average attainment is evident from their knowledge that division is the inverse of multiplication and in their recording of equations such as  $10 \times 5 = 50$ ,  $5 \times 10 = 50$ ,  $50/10 = 5$  and  $50/5 = 10$ . This level of work is not usually taught until year 3.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

44. The school enables children to develop the skills they have learnt in mathematics within other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in geography, children create bar charts to record the time it takes them to travel to school and when carrying out traffic surveys. When children are learning about the human body in science, they measure the size of their feet and put these in order, which reinforces ideas of shape and size. Such activities provide good opportunities for children to practise and consolidate mathematical ideas.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strong emphasis on practical work helps children learn through direct experience
- Children respond well to the high expectations

## Commentary

45. Children achieve very well and attain well above average standards; a good improvement since the last inspection. The teaching is very good. Children enjoy lessons because teachers make them interesting. Through well-planned practical activities, children learn how to observe closely and record what they find out. When investigating which fabric was most suitable to make 'a raincoat for Barnaby Bear', children cooperated well as they experimented with different materials. The teacher, two support assistants and a parent supported their learning very effectively, extending children's scientific thinking by careful prompting. Most children showed a level of understanding well above that expected at the beginning of year 2 as they closely observed, made predications, considered the evidence and carefully recorded their findings. Children with special educational needs benefited from sharing their ideas with more able children and contributing to the success of the investigations.
46. Teachers challenge children by asking them to think scientifically. Children rise to this and make rapid progress. Children in year 2 made very good attempts at explaining the outcomes of their investigations, such as, 'The cotton is less waterproof because it's got more holes in it.' Children's scientific vocabulary is extended very effectively because teachers use the appropriate terms. For example, when describing the properties of water and ice, children use words such as *transparent* and *semi-opaque*. Expectations are also high in year 1. One child's account of hearing included, '...our ear drum vibrates and then the bones vibrate and then the cochlea sends a message up our brain to tell you have been listening to', indicating a level of understanding well above that expected in this year group.
47. The subject is well led and managed and very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Clear guidelines help to ensure that work is more demanding as children move through the school. A portfolio of work helps teachers to assess children's work accurately and to identify what needs to be taught in order to raise attainment to the next level. The work planned includes much that is usually included in later years which helps to ensure that children are sufficiently challenged in both year groups. The coordinator ensures that science has a high profile. The subject is promoted very well through displays which encourage a hands-on approach. For example, children are prompted to sort objects into different hoops according to whether they are made from wood, metal, plastic and glass.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities helps children to achieve well in most aspects of the subject
- Children benefit from teachers' good level of expertise

## Commentary

48. Children achieve well and attain good standards; a good improvement since the last inspection. They enjoy using computers to word-process, to create images and to make graphs. Children's positive attitudes, together with effective teaching means that they progress well. Teachers introduce skills step-by-step following clear guidelines, which spell out precisely what is to be learnt at each stage. From early word-processing work using word banks, children are taught how to enter text and to make simple changes such as altering the size and colour of fonts. By year 2, children confidently insert clip art pictures into their work - for example, when producing Mother's Day cards. These skills are above the level expected. Good teaching is also evident in the level of skills that children develop in using painting programs. Building on children's existing skills very well, teachers extend their competence in using a wider range of drawing and effects

tools. Children approach such work imaginatively, often exceeding teacher's expectations and prompting more challenging tasks.

49. Under the strong leadership of the previous and current coordinator, teachers have worked hard to extend their expertise. All have taken part in training and have increased their knowledge and practical competence. This level of confidence is apparent as they use the interactive white board<sup>3</sup> to provide very clear demonstrations and to enable children to share their ideas with the whole class. Teachers have a good knowledge of early database work and this enables them to teach children to create pictograms (graphs using pictures) and bar charts. Similarly, teachers have a good understanding of the progression in control work, which enables them to provide children with a good introduction to programming a floor robot with a sequence of commands.
50. The recently appointed subject leader has a good idea of the strengths in the provision and where improvements can be made. A good start has been made in providing samples of work to illustrate work at different levels and to refine the assessment system.

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

51. ICT is used well to support learning in other subjects. Children's work in literacy is enhanced as they follow 'talking stories' on screen. Word-processing is used frequently to record work in science and children's art and design work is extended as they explore 'painting with light' on the computer screen. When they investigate living things in science, older children construct 'branching' databases including yes/no questions such as, 'Does it have two legs?' when exploring their characteristics.

## **HUMANITIES**

52. The school provides a rich curriculum in these subjects. Leadership and management are good. Coordinators have a real enthusiasm for their subject and enrich the lessons with special events. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

### **Geography and history**

53. Provision for geography and history is **good**. No teaching was seen in geography, but inspectors scrutinised children's work and discussed it with them. Documents and displays of work formed part of the evidence.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good curriculum planning ensures that children tackle more challenging work as they move through the school
- Visits and visitors to the school enhance children's learning

### **Commentary**

54. Both subjects remain strong elements of the curriculum. Imaginative curriculum planning brings the subjects to life. This enables children to develop their knowledge and understanding by engaging their interest. The school provides a range of relevant visits and visitors to provide expert knowledge and opportunities for hands-on learning. Resources are very well managed, and are well supplemented by those provided by visiting organisations.
55. Teaching in history is good. A Victorian washing day gave children an excellent opportunity to experience at first hand the hard work involved. Visitors brought a wide range of authentic

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<sup>3</sup> The interactive white board system projects a large image onto a specially adapted screen. Teachers and children can operate the computer by touching the screen rather than by using the keyboard and mouse.

equipment and children of all abilities achieved well. Good achievement is evident as children recall what they have learnt previously about ancient Egypt, and place pictures of houses in time order. Good links are made with children's families as older children write letters to their parents and grandparents and receive replies explaining how different seaside holidays used to be. In geography, the journeys of 'Barnaby Bear' enable children to identify places on maps, atlases and globes, developing good early research skills. These subjects contribute effectively to the development of the full range of literacy skills as children talk, read and write about what they are learning.

## Religious Education

Provision for religious education<sup>4</sup> is **good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum reflects the school's Christian ethos
- The subject is well led and managed
- The variety of religious interests in the wider community is under-developed.

### Commentary

56. Religious education lessons make an effective contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in keeping with the school's central Christian values. Resources linked to each area studied are managed well and used to good effect in lessons. Good procedures for assessing how children are getting on enable the subject leader to support teachers in planning the next step of learning. There are clear and relevant priorities for further developments in the subject. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when weaknesses in leadership and management were identified.
57. Teaching is satisfactory and often good. Through skilful, thought provoking questioning and the effective use of visual aids, children grasp ideas and make links in their learning. Sometimes, however, opportunities to extend learning to include other faiths are not explored. In a lesson where children learnt the meaning of people's names, non-Christian names were not considered. Overall, children are achieving satisfactory standards and their rate of progress is increasing due to improvements in provision.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

58. Good provision has been sustained since the last inspection. These subjects are developed well in all classes. Displays throughout the school are testimony to the quality of work produced, particularly in art and design. The recent award of the Activemark Gold national standard is acknowledgement of the good quality of provision for sport. No design and technology lessons were seen, but inspectors looked at a sample of children's work and discussed it with them. There were too few opportunities to evaluate the provision for music.

### Art and Design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

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<sup>4</sup> As this is a Voluntary Controlled school, collective worship is subject to a separate inspection.

- Art lessons are carefully planned, well resourced and well taught which means that children's achievement is very good
- Sufficient time is allowed for refining skills and techniques, leading to high standards
- Quality of observational drawing and watercolour work is very good
- Effective links are made between art and other subjects

### Commentary

59. Art and design enjoys a high profile. Carefully sequenced and well-planned lessons give children a chance to learn a range of techniques. They also provide sufficient time for them to develop their skills. As a result, children achieve well and attain good standards. For example, year 1 children created good quality self-portraits and year 2 children used leaves imaginatively to create collages as part of a project on 'Mother Nature'. Effective use is made of the work of well-known artists of different periods. By studying such work, children gain inspiration and a good insight to a variety of artistic styles.
60. Teaching is good. Careful questioning by the teacher encouraged children in year 1 to observe closely as they used mirrors to examine their own faces. With knowledgeable advice from adults in the classroom, their drawing of specific features improved and representations were increasingly accurate. Because the children are interested in the variety of activities planned, they show high levels of concentration and collaborate well. In a year 2 class, one group used their very good knowledge of colour mixing to reproduce faithfully the colour of autumn leaves. Another group, using a William Morris design as a stimulus, created their own leaf print designs. Good use is made of ICT to support work in art as children confidently use an introductory graphics program to create images on screen.
61. The subject is well managed. The coordinator is a knowledgeable practitioner and shares her expertise with colleagues, who have increasing levels of confidence. She ensures that good quality resources are available so that children can use a good range of media. A collection of children's artwork is maintained, providing a useful measure of standards across the school.

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Progress is good through the school and children achieve well
- Children evaluate their work thoughtfully

### Commentary

62. The curriculum is planned well which means that the level of challenge is increased as children move through the school. As a result, children make good progress. Good standards are evident from children's careful design plans and their use of materials. They construct models from their designs with care, and make adjustments and refinements to their models as they proceed. Children collaborate well. Models are tested for 'fitness for purpose', and are carefully evaluated. For example, a year 1 child commenting on equipment for a toy playground remarked, "I think it's very good. Its wobbly, but it works". Older children made careful observations of their wheeled vehicles, having rolled them down ramps - as indicated by one evaluation which regretted painting the wheels as 'they rubbed and slowed it down.'
63. Visits enable children to carry out activities in realistic settings. For example, older children visit a local restaurant and learn how to make pizzas. They also learn the importance of careful hygiene whilst preparing food, and how to lay a table correctly. Evidence from teachers' planning, completed models, written evaluations and photographic evidence indicates good provision.

## **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching means that children achieve well
  - Children have good opportunities to take part in sport
64. Lessons are taken at a brisk pace and children pick up teachers' enthusiasm. Children respond positively to teachers' encouragement to move with increasing control and refinement. During warm up sessions, children show a good understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies as teachers ask them questions relating to their breathlessness and pulse rate. The level of challenge increases through the school and this helps children to build well on their earlier work. Year 1 children demonstrated a good level of control as they moved about the hall at different heights and various speeds. In year 2, more was expected as children worked with partners on 'mirror movements' and developed good movement sequences, such as ' a cat chasing a ball', darting and leaping with good control. Children are good at evaluating their achievements because teachers often ask for their comments and opinions. For example, one half of the class often watches the other and children offer suggestions for improvement.
65. Good leadership and management are evident in the way learning is planned and in the on-going initiatives to extend opportunities in sport. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Children can take part in a good range of activities, including football, Tai Chi and short tennis; more than is usually found in an infant school. The award of the Activemark Gold reflects the considerable effort made to develop the subject and to encourage children's interest in sport, fitness and health.

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

The programme for personal, social and health education is good. Children have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and they take their responsibilities as monitors or 'friendly faces' seriously. Early ideas of citizenship are developed well because the school consults children and responds to their suggestions.

## 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  | 1            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 2            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 3            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>3</b>     |
| Children's achievement   | 3            |
| <b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>     | <b>2</b>     |
| Attendance   | 3            |
| Attitudes  | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 2            |
| Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development         | 2            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>2</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 3            |
| How well children learn  | 3            |
| The quality of assessment  | 2            |
| How well the curriculum meets children's needs                       | 2            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 3            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 2            |
| Children's care, welfare, health and safety                          | 2            |
| Support, advice and guidance for children                            | 2            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on children's views               | 2            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 3            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 3            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>2</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 2            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 1            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 3            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 2            |

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