

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STOPSLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stopsley, Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109553

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Featherstone

Lead inspector: Mr Geoff Cooper

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 264617

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 384

School address: Hitchin Road  
Luton  
Bedfordshire  
Postcode: LU2 7UG

Telephone number: 01582 611 035  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Melvyn Butcher

Date of previous inspection: First inspection as a primary school

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stopsley Community Primary currently has 384 boys and girls on roll. They come from a wide range of backgrounds; mainly White British but with groups of pupils from a traveller background, Asian heritage, Black origin and a fairly substantial minority from a mixed ethnic heritage. Sixteen pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition and for most of these their home language is of Asian origin. The social and economic setting is broadly average. When the children first come to school their acquired skills and understanding are below average. Most needs are in the area of language and communication skills. A broadly average number of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, that is, delay in acquiring the basic skills of learning. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs, that is specifically identified more profound learning or physical needs than is usual. This is about average for schools nationally. Most identified needs are in delay in learning basic skills but a small number of pupils are identified as being autistic. The school is currently recovering from a recent fire, which has destroyed a significant part of the building, many resources and a substantial proportion of pupils' work. It is still subject to a re-building programme. A school achievement award was granted in 2001 to recognise particularly good National Curriculum standard test results in 2000. Pupil mobility (those pupils who join and leave the school at times other than the usual time of joining and leaving) is relatively low. The school has had a period of uncertainty over leadership and a high proportion of staff have joined and left the school in the past two years.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23647	Mr Geoff Cooper	Lead inspector	English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology
32676	Mr Nick Power	Lay inspector	
8845	Mrs Hazel Sumner	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education
11419	Mrs Jeanie Underwood	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **improving and effective** school. Much of the improvement is very recent and has not yet fully shown itself in improved standards. Leadership and management are now good and the leadership of the headteacher is very good. Teaching and learning are good, and beginning to have a favourable impact on pupils' achievement. Achievement is satisfactory although standards in English and science remain below average. Value for money is **satisfactory**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher is well supported by senior staff of the school and the governing body: the school is working successfully to overcome a legacy of past underachievement.
- Children in the Reception Year get off to a very good start in their education; they achieve well.
- The school is working successfully to overcome a legacy of past underachievement.
- Standards in writing, especially those of older boys, remain below average.
- Teaching and learning are good. Exemplary strategies for the assessment of attainment and progress have not yet had time to have a strong effect on achievement.
- The curriculum is very well enriched by additional activities.
- The procedures to encourage pupils' personal development are good, resulting in positive behaviour and attitudes to school.
- Governors are now well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses through the reports they receive but they have no formal strategy for gathering first hand information.
- The role of the subject manager is very well developed in some areas but is ripe for development in others.

The school has not previously been inspected in its present organisation. No overall judgement on school improvement can be given. A period of turbulence in leadership and management has led to a decline in standards attained. This is reflected clearly in the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and in external monitoring of the work of the school. There is considerable evidence of past underachievement. More recently, effective leadership and management have led to arrested decline. All round improvements are evident in the quality of education provided and in school improvement planning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	D	D	D
Mathematics	C	D	D	E
Science	B	C	D	D

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

Achievement is **satisfactory** and improving. Overall, standards are below average. The immediate impact of this has been felt in mathematics where standards are now average throughout the school. Writing standards continue to be below average although speaking and listening and reading are average. When compared to schools nationally and to similar schools, test results in 2003 were below average and sometimes well below average in all areas tested, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All test results show a decline over a three-year period. Achievement is now improving. Standards in science are below expectations while standards in information and communication

technology (ICT) are in line with expectations. Work in religious education matches the expectation of the local syllabus. Standards in geography and history match those expected for pupils of similar age. No judgement is made in other subjects of the curriculum because of a lack of evidence.

The limited amount of work seen was at least in line with expectations for pupils' ages. In the Reception classes achievement is good. Children are on target to achieve the expected standards for their learning, except in communication, language and learning.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. **Positive** attitudes to school and pupils' good behaviour give strong support to their learning. Despite the patchy attendance of a very small number of pupils and despite some parents taking their child on holiday during term, attendance is good overall because it is well supported by school procedures to make sure pupils attend well and come to school on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are both **good** overall. Reception Year children are taught very well. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6. Lessons are well planned, taught confidently and interest pupils. Pupils learn well because they make good use of their speaking and listening skills and they are committed to their tasks. Marking and questioning are used very well to improve progress. Achievement is well enhanced by the care and support given to pupils. Learning benefits from the good home and school links and the very good link with the local community. The curriculum meets requirements. It is very well enriched by other activities, particularly but not only, in after school clubs in sport.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher's leadership is very good and she gets the strong support of her senior staff. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to the life and work of the school. There are some individual strengths within their separate roles. Despite some recent difficulties in financial administration, the school runs sufficiently smoothly and efficiently to maintain an effective learning climate.

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

In general parents are very supportive of the school, expressing confidence in the teaching and their child's progress. A small number expresses reservations about recent management changes. The inspection team is of the strong belief that the changes were necessary and are proving to be beneficial. Pupils are very confident in their school. They talk enthusiastically about their teachers and get good opportunities to express their views through the formal structure of the school council but also informally when talking to teachers and other adults in whom they place great trust.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards of attainment, particularly in writing, by implementing the priorities of the school improvement plan, especially by;
  - Dealing with any imbalances in the relative achievement of boys and girls;
  - Ensuring that literacy skills are used effectively to promote higher standards in writing, science and the humanities subjects.
  
- Continue to develop the work of the school through:
  - Establishing a more formal structure for governors' information gathering, and,
  - Developing and extending the role of subject leaders, especially in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is **satisfactory overall**. Children in the Reception Year achieve well. Their standards are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and ICT are **average**. Despite recent improvement, standards in writing and science are **below average**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception children get off to a good start in their education.
- Achievement is improving but there is still room for further improvement.
- Standards in writing and science are below average and similar to the results of recent National Standard tests.
- Standards in mathematics are now average because of the impact of good teaching and learning, very good use of measurement of pupils' progress and very good subject leadership.
- Girls have done better than boys in recent National Standard tests for eleven year olds and this trend continues to be apparent in the work seen.
- Pupils who find learning difficult and those learning English as a new language achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter the Reception Year with a range of knowledge, skills and understanding that is overall below that expected of children of the same age. Because they are very well taught, they make rapid progress and achieve well. This is particularly the case in personal, social and emotional development where almost all are on target to achieve the expected standards. Early skills in communication, language and literacy are particularly delayed, and this is the only area of learning where children are not on target to achieve the expected standards.

2. The results of National Curriculum standard tests have declined over the past three years. The tables below show that the school's average point scores in 2003 were lower than the national average and also lower than the school's own scores in the previous year, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. For pupils in Year 2, mathematics was a little stronger than reading and writing but was still below average nationally. The trend in 2003 was for girls to perform worse than boys and this is a consistent three-year trend. That trend is reversed in the Year 6 results, where girls did better than boys in 2003 and also over three years. The difference in the relative achievement of boys and girls is still apparent in the work in pupils' books and in the make up of the different ability groups in the school. Overall, the Year 6 results were below average in English, mathematics and science. The school is now well placed to set very accurate targets which pupils are on track to achieve.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.1 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.8 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.1 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.8 (26.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.3 (28.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. There is a legacy of considerable underachievement. This is evident in the results of standard tests, in internal and external monitoring of standards and in the relative achievements of boys, girls and the achievements of pupils from different backgrounds. There is strong evidence to indicate that achievement is now getting back to where it should be and that it is now satisfactory overall. There is still some way to go before the standards of all subjects are as good as they should be and some groups of pupils are still not doing as well as they could be. Achievement is currently satisfactory because pupils generally are applying themselves well to their work. Most pupils are willing and eager learners, keen to do well and to succeed. Many do so. However, it is evident in the make up of ability groups that there are more girls currently achieving higher standards and more boys currently achieving lower standards. With its very well developed skill at measuring the progress of pupils and analysing its data, the school is well aware of these differences and is closely tracking the value added to each pupil's achievements. The school also tracks closely the progress of pupils from different backgrounds. The tracking of those from different ethnic backgrounds, and especially those who are learning English as a new language, shows that these pupils are frequently among the highest achievers once they are familiar with the language of the classroom. This is because the school generally, and, adults working in the classroom specifically, are aware of these pupils' needs. Tracking of pupils with special educational needs is also good and they get the well-targeted support necessary for them to achieve well. The school is very aware of these differences in achievement. It has appropriate plans to address the remaining pockets of relative underachievement. The installation of new strategies for assessment and improvements in teaching and learning that stem from vigour in leadership and management are ensuring that achievement is satisfactory and that pupils are being given better opportunities to succeed. When they are at school, traveller pupils achieve satisfactory standards when judged against their prior attainment. However, for a number, poor attendance is a limiting factor on their comparative standards achieved.

4. Standards in mathematics have improved rapidly. Pupils now attain standards that match those expected of pupils of the same age. This is because of added rigour in the teaching of the subject and because leadership has ensured a very clear sense of direction and purpose. The assessment and marking of work has also ensured a clear perspective on what needs to be learned next. Both teachers and pupils have this very strongly in mind. The same strategies are being applied to English and to science, with some success but with less immediate effect. Standards in writing and in science remain below those expected. There is some very powerful speaking and listening in all subjects that supports better achievement. Reading skills are about average and pupils have some very impressive book skills that support independent learning. Skills in writing do not fully reflect pupils' knowledge and understanding and this hinders the standards they are able to achieve across the written aspects of the curriculum. It is very apparent that girls are frequently better at reflecting their knowledge and understanding in writing. This is a theme at the front of the school's priorities for development and it is at the heart of the English subject leader's action plan. The strength of the school's approach to standards in science is thoroughness in the practical work and a secure understanding of the need to make science investigations valid and fair. However, the ability to quickly and accurately write written results and conclusions holds back overall standards achieved. Despite some frailties in the computer suite hardware, pupils are achieving well in ICT and their standards are average. Because much of the learning in religious education is achieved through role-play and discussions, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It is not possible to give secure judgements on standards in the other subjects of the curriculum because

insufficient evidence is available. However, in the limited work seen, standards are generally in line with those expected of pupils of the same age.

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

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Attendance is **good** and lessons begin on time. Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attitudes and behaviour of children in the Reception Year are very good.
- The school has very effective strategies to promote good attendance.
- Pupils take a great deal of interest in school life and enjoy the rich range of activities available.
- Relationships are very positive among pupils and with adults.
- School expectations of good behaviour are high and have a positive outcome.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils are very positive about their school life. This is particularly the case for children in the Reception Year. Teachers are adept at settling children in well and giving them good opportunities to develop socially and personally. The children are well on course to achieve the expected standards in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Elsewhere, throughout the school pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They appreciate the learning opportunities presented to them, including all the additional activities planned out of school hours and through visits and visitors to school. Because teachers value their endeavours, pupils value the work they do. Very occasionally, there are minor examples of fragile relationships among pupils or less than positive behaviour. On rare occasions pupils find it difficult to cooperate and sometimes this is across racial origins. However, the overall picture is one of very good relationships and positive attitudes to school life and to each other. Pupils benefit from very good trusting relationships with adults working in the school. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and relationships and the outcomes in pupils' personal development are good.

6. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As well as coming to an understanding of the way some cultures believe in a divine being, pupils have good experiences that take them beyond the immediate and the prosaic. For example, they have opportunities to enjoy poetry and drama, to appreciate music and fine art. Some lessons transmit a sense of awe and wonder, as seen, for example, in a Year 2 ICT lesson when pupils expressed their amazement at being shown a new and wonderfully convenient short-cut to add to their word processing skills. School assemblies and religious education not only promote pupils' spiritual awareness but also promote a strong sense of moral and social responsibility. This has very successful outcomes in pupils' relationships and in the way they work harmoniously together, for example, in physical education and science. Although the school does not have a tradition of promoting visits out of school to a range of places of worship, or of inviting people from different cultures to talk about their values and beliefs, it does have a rich mix of different cultures on its staff and within its pupils. There are good examples of pupils mixing well together across ethnic origins and overall there is good respect for and valuing of cultural difference. It is rare that there is any racial disharmony and school has good policy to uphold individual rights. Rare occurrences are promptly and properly dealt with.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	3.1
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	2.0
National data:	0.4

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

7. The school has very good arrangements for promoting good attendance. The table shows figures for the period before new methods for checking up on and recording absences were introduced. These new strategies have had an immediate impact on reducing the number of unauthorised absences. Most pupils attend regularly and this has an impact on overall achievement. Parents acknowledge that their child enjoys school and is eager to return after illness or holiday. A few parents take their child on holiday during term time. A small number of other pupils have a poor attendance record. Absences such as this have a considerable impact on school attendance statistics. Lessons start on time because most pupils are punctual.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	301	7	1
White – Irish	6	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	16	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	11	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

8. Exclusions are rare. There have been none in the current school year. Exclusions are usually a last resort, judged to be necessary on safety grounds. They are invariably the result of very specific emotional and behavioural difficulties.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Learning is good because teaching is effective. Pupils' achievement is well supported by very efficient strategies for checking up on progress. The Curriculum meets requirements and it is very well enriched. Links with the home are valuable in supporting pupils' confidence in their school work.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. The school has **exemplary** strategies and practices for assessment that are beginning to have a strong effect on achievement. These strategies are now being used **effectively**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school and very good in the Reception Year, reflecting the emphasis now placed on these by the leadership and management.
- New, but exemplary, strategies for assessment are beginning to make a strong impact on learning and achievement. In some subjects arrangements for assessment still require development.
- Consistently, across the school, effective teaching gives praise, recognition and encouragement to pupils
- The skills of learning support assistants are used very well.
- Staff are determined to include all pupils in the work in the classroom.
- Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to encourage pupils to become effective learners.
- Throughout the school, but especially in Years 3 to 6, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do next to improve.
- Current improvements have raised the quality of learning but there is still a legacy of previous underachievement to overcome.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 56 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (7 %)	24 (43 %)	26 (46 %)	2 (4 %)	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.*

9. The table above reflects the strength of successful teaching where one lesson in two is very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This is a measure of renewed vigour in leadership and management where there are rigorous strategies for identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching and developing school measures to improve learning and raise standards. Excellent lessons were found in a range of subjects: English, mathematics and religious education. Overall, English, mathematics and science are well taught. Although there is still room to improve standards in these subjects, the impact of better teaching is already having an impact on achievement. Added to this, there is now a strength in the way strategies have been developed and implemented for whole school, year group, ability group, and individual pupil assessments. These strategies are now being used very effectively to plan meaningful activities for boys and girls, for pupils who have the potential to attain high standards and for those who find learning more difficult. Assessment is successfully identifying the needs of pupils learning English as a new language and those pupils who have big gaps in their prior attainment. Although the strategies are new this academic year, and their effect is yet to be fully felt, there is a great deal of evidence from the

tracking of progress that a decline in achievement has been overcome and that standards are rising. This is felt particularly strongly in mathematics but also it is noticeable in English and science.

10. Good learning is found throughout the school. Children in the Reception Year are very well taught. The skills of teachers and nursery nurses are used very effectively. There is strong promotion of children's achievements measured against the stepping-stones identified for their learning by the end of the Reception Year. Although there are strengths in the teaching in each year group, the strongest teaching, where all the excellent lessons were seen, was in Years 3 to 6. In all year groups, because staff have a very good grasp of pupils' progress and because staff know their pupils well, lessons are very effectively planned for what individuals need to learn next. This is a strong support for providing equal opportunities. The school shows a determination to make sure that all pupils are included in learning. As a result, boys and girls, pupils from different backgrounds, those who find learning comparatively easy and those who find it difficult, make progress that is at least satisfactory, and, most now learn well. There is still a legacy of underachievement to overcome, particularly evident in writing and science, although the school now has the strategies well in hand to manage this.

11. There is a consistent warmth to relationships between teachers and pupils that encourages an environment for learning. Teachers and learning support assistants work together well to acknowledge and praise effort and endeavour. This motivates pupils well towards learning. Teachers are very skilled and make confident use of their subject knowledge. This, too, strongly motivates pupils towards learning. A particular strength in the quality of learning is that pupils increasingly have a secure understanding of what they need to do to improve. Frequently, they have to decide for themselves whether or not they have achieved the learning objectives set by the teacher. Teachers mark pupils work very effectively. Good questioning techniques both enliven lessons and interest and engage pupils in the learning. A common strategy throughout the school is the sharing of learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson and checking up on what has been learned at the end of the lesson. This ensures that pupils have a good idea of what they have to do and whether or not they have been successful. It also clarifies, both for the pupil and the teacher, what needs to be done to make further improvement.

## The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. The curriculum is **very well** enriched. Resources and accommodation are **good** overall, mainly because the school is well staffed and staff are well deployed.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for literacy and numeracy.
- The curriculum for children in the Reception Year is good and based on a secure knowledge of how children of this age learn. Provision for pupils with particular educational needs is very good.
- Curriculum enrichment opportunities are very good.
- Teachers and support staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum.

## Commentary

12. The school recognises that its curriculum, though satisfactory, is in need of further development. Senior managers are poised to develop an innovative, three-stage initiative to enhance it, with planning starting within weeks. Curriculum planning will be based on new thinking that emphasises pupils' thinking and creativity. The aim is to provide more stimulating learning opportunities that match the particular learning needs of the pupils in the school. There are already small indicators that the process of change has begun as teachers increasingly draw on other subjects to support the main focus of learning in lessons. The new curriculum initiative will include a multi-cultural emphasis.

13. New management has already led to an improved interpretation of the curriculum in the Reception Year. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are firmly embedded in daily timetables, ensuring that pupils get lessons in both areas each day. The school has established setting arrangements that provide effectively for the differing needs of pupils within each age group. 'Booster' classes are available for pupils in need of extra support in Year 6. There is also very good specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs, traveller children and those learning English as an additional language. The school is in the early stages of identifying gifted and talented pupils and is aware that provision for them will require curriculum adjustments. Whilst the school's scheme of work for personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned and delivered as a subject in its own right, opportunities for teaching through other subjects have not yet been identified.

14. Though broadly satisfactory, provision for learning in most other subjects is in need of refreshment, having been somewhat neglected in recent years. The planned curriculum innovation is likely to focus on topics to which a range of subjects will contribute, so the school is committed to their reorganisation in favour of more stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences for the pupils. Subjects such as science, history, art and design and ICT are seen as permeating the curriculum. The current curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits to places of educational interest, the expertise of visitors and out of school activities such as provision for sports of various kinds, an ICT club that publishes a half-termly newssheet and residential experiences.

15. A good match of teachers meets the requirements of the curriculum with very good contributions from learning support assistants. Accommodation and resources have been badly affected by the recent fire in the school and, except for the very good facilities for Reception children, are currently satisfactory. At present, the fire has affected the quality of the curriculum provided. Some parts of the school are less conveniently accessed and learning resources in some areas have been destroyed or spoiled.

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

The school gives its pupils **good** support, advice and guidance. The care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils are **effective**. Pupils' views are sought and respected **well**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils.
- Some non-teaching staff are unsure how Child Protection procedures function.
- The system for recording late arrivals operates inconsistently.

### **Commentary**

16. The very good relationships between staff and pupils and the school's thorough care procedures mean that pupils are well cared for and supported. The school monitors pupils' personal and academic development well and makes good use of this information to tailor the support given to pupils.

17. After a period of turbulence in the school's life, the recently appointed headteacher has put in place effective systems and procedures to ensure the safety of pupils. The governors' health and safety committee has embraced its responsibilities well and has also played a key part in ensuring that pupils are safe while in school. All teaching and classroom support staff have undergone recent training in child protection. However, some non-teaching staff are unaware of all of the implications of the school's arrangements for child protection. Procedures to control the dispensation of medicines are very good and are operated by knowledgeable, competent members of staff.

18. The recent fire and subsequent rearrangement of classrooms and reception area mean that the system for recording pupils' late arrival to school operates inconsistently. As a result there are safety concerns which have been brought to the school's attention. The school has good strategies

for listening to pupils informally. The vast majority of pupils have an adult whom they can trust and talk to in confidence. There is also a formal mechanism for listening to the views of pupils through the work of the school council.

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

The school has **very good** links with the community. Links with parents are **good**. Links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

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

- The community is very supportive of the school.
- The school's links with other primary schools are not sufficiently developed.
- Arrangements for pupils' transition to secondary education lack rigour.

#### **Commentary**

19. After the school was damaged by fire in Autumn 2003 there were many very generous offers of support and help from parents, local businesses and organisations, many of which had been involved with the school prior to the fire. The school has valued this support tremendously and is building very effectively on these links to support pupils' education. For example, the local supermarket, after providing replacement lunch boxes after the fire, is now involved in helping to provide the school's sports teams with strip.

20. Nearly all parents are very happy with what the school provides. The school provides parents with good information about its work and about how well their children are doing. The school is working hard to build productive relationships with all parents and parents' confidence in the school is increasing.

21. Whilst the school has some productive links with other primary schools to help the development of the school's management and methods there are very few links, other than sporting ones, that are designed to enrich pupils' education. The school is aware of this and intends to develop links further.

22. Pupils' transfer to secondary school is not yet actively managed to ensure that the transition is as smooth and productive as possible. This means that the secondary schools may not be fully aware of the academic strengths and weaknesses and personal qualities of the pupils they are going to receive.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good** and is well supported by the effective leadership of other key staff. The governance of the school is presently **satisfactory** with developing strengths. All statutory requirements are fully met. The overall management of the school is **good**, ensuring the school runs smoothly and calmly.

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

- Under the very good leadership of the headteacher the school is improving rapidly.
- The governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities, but have no formal strategies for school visits.
- The role of the senior management team and other key staff is beginning to have an impact on standards.

- An effective and inclusive school development plan is providing the school with clear priorities for the future.

## **Commentary**

23. The governing body is well organised and manages its work efficiently through relevant committees and delegated responsibilities. All statutory requirements are met. The governors understand the school's main strengths and areas for improvement but until recently had little involvement in the strategic development through planning. They are beginning to act as a critical friend but as yet have no formal protocol for visiting classrooms. They are aware this needs to be developed further so they have clearer first-hand information about the curriculum provision and standards. The governing body is being steered by the very capable guidance of the chairman, who is very supportive of the headteacher.

24. The headteacher leads the school very well and, although very recently in post, has already prioritised the improvements that are needed to raise pupils' behaviour, attitudes and standards. This is important because of the turbulence experienced by the school over the past year or so and the devastating fire. All staff are appropriately focused on raising standards in English, especially writing, mathematics and science. They have a good understanding that more needs to be done to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum. The monitoring role of these subject leaders is well defined, but that of other subject leaders such as history, geography, art and design, is underdeveloped. This is partly because some leaders are newly in post and partly because of the focus on improving standards in basic skills. The very good action plans and priorities identified in the school improvement plan are gradually having a positive affect on raising standards. The school's vision for the future is shared by everyone, but at the moment is being driven by the headteacher. The school improvement plan is well calculated to raise standards and to promote the good achievement of all pupils, irrespective of their background and culture.

25. The headteacher is in the process of creating a team of teachers who are fully committed to evaluating and improving their work. Members of the senior management team have additional roles: assessment co-ordinator, Year 3/4 leader, Foundation Stage co-ordinator and assistant headteacher who is also the special needs co-ordinator. They are already beginning to have an impact on the running of the school and in raising standards, despite having been recently formed. The deputy head, also a member of the senior management team, has responsibility for pastoral care and this is having a considerable affect on social development and behaviour, particularly at lunchtimes. All subject leaders are expected to devise action plans and follow them through. This is being done well. The creation of a positive climate for learning ensures all pupils have good opportunities for learning, whether they are boys or girls, have special educational needs or are learning English for the first time.

26. The school has good strategies for self-evaluation. The headteacher regularly observes teachers working with pupils, as do members of the senior management team and targets are set for the necessary improvements. Performance management is linked to a programme of observing teachers and other members of staff and is effective. All staff are committed to continuing professional development that is strongly linked to the school's priorities. Although there have been many changes of staff recently, the positive ethos of the school and opportunities for staff to be more involved in moving the school forward, are helping all to be more committed to the school. The school has been very effective in recruiting new staff and is aware of the need to ensure retention of its committed members.

27. The financial management of the school has caused some difficulties. A recent auditor's report was very critical of a range of school procedures. An effective action plan is resolving these difficulties. The governing body, through the chair of the Finance committee, is more involved in monitoring the budget and improvements are being made in the administration of delegated finance. The school spends an amount of money per pupil that is average for its type. Given its context and provision, value for money is satisfactory.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	999 726	Balance from previous year	139 165
Total expenditure	1 000 497	Balance carried forward to the next	135 394
Expenditure per pupil	2 436		

28. In the previous financial year, the school carried forward more money than is usual or desirable. A recent audit highlighted steps that the school needed to take to bring its financial management into good order. Many of these steps have already been actioned and progress is being made in others.

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

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

The provision in the Reception Year is **very good**.

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

- The organisation of the Reception classrooms provides a welcoming, stimulating environment for the children. The very good teaching and teamwork have a positive effect on children's learning.
- Children are offered a wide range of activities and experiences in all areas of learning to help them achieve the expected learning standards.
- The leadership of the Reception Year is very good, characterised by enthusiasm and expertise.

29. The recently appointed Reception Year leader has improved the education of children in the Reception and the area has the potential to become a real strength of the school. A recent external evaluation of provision has identified very good and significant provision in the past two terms. The Foundation Stage provides the children with a very good start to their education. They are admitted to the school in the September before their fifth birthday. The Reception classrooms contain a wide range of activities, providing a stimulating environment for the children. Although there is a secure outdoor play area, there are limitations in its use because of health and safety concerns.

30. Attainment on entry is below average particularly in language development. Attainment tends to vary with each cohort. Most Reception Year children are on course to achieve the expected levels in all areas of learning apart from writing where less than half have the necessary skill.

31. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children mean they are provided with a very wide variety of experiences in all areas of learning. This ensures they make very good progress towards achieving the expected standards for children at the end of the Reception. Planning is closely linked to these expected standards and is a shared activity between all staff. Questioning is used effectively to encourage children to develop their speaking skills and extend their vocabulary. Very good relationships give children confidence to respond to adults' questions and to share their thoughts and opinions. The very good support provided by the nursery nurses, including a shared teaching commitment, means all children benefit, including those identified with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language. The children are grouped by ability so teachers can plan work that is closely matched to their needs. This is having a positive effect on their learning, ensuring all have access to tasks set. Regular assessments are carried out and staff have devised a quick, easy and comprehensive method of recording day-to-day successes or difficulties. This information enables staff to plan future lessons more closely matched to children's needs. It is very well used for this purpose.

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

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

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

- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development through very good teaching and well-planned activities.
- Very good relationships ensure children feel happy and secure.

## Commentary

32. Because of very good teaching and many opportunities provided to develop personal and social skills, many children are on course to achieve the expected levels. Most children find it easy to conform to the high expectations of good behaviour set by the staff. Children know the routines very well and settle to tasks quickly and quietly and with minimum fuss. They are well focused and interested, and even when not directly supervised, sustain their concentration. A calm working atmosphere pervades each session. The very good teamwork of all adults provides the children with good role models of cooperation, which they try to emulate in their role-play and shared activities. Children can be seen sharing construction toys or playing with each other in the flower shop. All adults expect children to listen carefully and to respect the opinions of others. The majority of children understand this and wait patiently for their turn. There were many examples of this observed. Because of very good relationships children are confident to ask for help, feel happy and secure.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and provides children with a wide range of experiences to develop reading and writing skills, helping them achieve very well.
- Every opportunity is used to extend vocabulary and develop language skills.

## Commentary

33. Early indications are that most children are on course to achieve the expected levels except in writing. They are making very good progress in developing their language skills as a result of all the opportunities provide for speaking and listening. Many children are articulate and confident speakers often replying to questions in complex sentences. All adults use every opportunity during activities, particularly directed activities, to develop vocabulary through probing questions and insisting correct terminology is used. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. Books are handled with care and pages turned carefully. The higher attaining children read accurately at an appropriate level and are just developing strategies for working out unfamiliar words. Lower attaining readers answer questions about their books using picture clues and are beginning to recognise a few familiar words. They take great delight in retelling stories and singing nursery rhymes and number songs. Children are given a variety of opportunities to explore writing, developing their skills through mark making and then to writing recognisable letters. In more formal lessons children practise letter formation. The higher attaining children try hard to write for themselves and show elements of early writing skills. However, too few children are successfully developing the necessary skills to achieve the expected level. This is despite the wide range of opportunities planned for pupils to use these skills. Children identified with special educational needs or those learning English as a new language are very well provided for through the very good support given by nursery nurses and teachers.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is very good so children make good progress and achieve well.
- Every opportunity is used to develop children's counting skills, including the use of number rhymes and songs.
- A wide range of activities is offered to support learning in this area so children become confident in understanding numbers.

### **Commentary**

34. Because of very good teaching, the majority of children are on course to achieve the expected standards in this area by the end of the Reception Year. Adults use every opportunity to develop children's counting skills, even during self-chosen activities. The higher attaining children count confidently to 20 and understand how to add and subtract numbers to 20. The lower attaining children need support to match number and objects. They enjoy weighing parcels and expressing their mass in terms of 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Early recording skills are encouraged. Because adults are enthusiastic children are well motivated to succeed and enjoy the subject. Children use practical situations, such as registration to practise numeracy skills. For example, they count the number present and work out how many are absent. Children use their knowledge of number to find missing numbers in a sequence and get good opportunities to explain their answers.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many relevant visits and visitors help to enhance children's understanding of the world around them.
- Teaching in this area is very good and children achieve well, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language.

### **Commentary**

35. During the inspection the main topic was growth. The children had planted sunflowers and cress seeds. They were amazed how much three sunflower plants had grown over the weekend. The nursery nurse led a very good lesson. Through a story and first hand exploration of the garden children discovered more facts about growing plants, fascinated by the new shoots visible in the garden. Children visit the local shops and use the school grounds. Special occasions from other cultures such as Holi and the Chinese New Year are celebrated as well as Christmas. The computers are available in most lessons and children are confident to use them. All these opportunities enhance the children's knowledge of the world. Because they are well taught and get good opportunities to achieve well, most pupils are on course to achieve the expected levels for their age.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff plan a wide range of activities to stimulate physical development.
- There are many activities planned for the outdoor area but for health and safety reasons free access is limited.
- The area is too small to accommodate all the Reception children at once.

### **Commentary**

36. Children are provided with many activities to develop pencil control through specifically designed worksheets or colouring. Other activities encourage them to use scissors and cut out carefully, and to use simple tools to roll out and make patterns in play dough. There was no opportunity to observe any lessons in the hall but during a music lesson in a classroom, children enjoyed a storm dance sequence. They moved with good body control and well developed spatial awareness. Most children are on course to achieve the expected levels. Although activities are planned for the outdoor area free access is limited. The area is also too small to allow all the children, especially if the wheeled toys are in use, to be out together. The school has already highlighted this as area for future development.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have many opportunities to explore different media.
- Role-play is an important part of this area of learning, helping to develop personal and social skills and extend language.

### **Commentary**

37. Children are on course to achieve the expected levels in this area of learning. They experience a range of different media. The teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm for music motivates the children to succeed and they all enjoy the lessons. At Christmas they performed a simple story for their parents. Theatre and dance groups have visited and these experiences enhance and extend children's enjoyment of the creative arts. They enjoy role-play but these areas are uninviting and need further development. This has already been highlighted.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Learning is good because pupils are well taught.
- Achievement is improving.
- The school keeps track of pupils' progress very well and the information is well used.
- The subject is led effectively.
- Some opportunities are missed to make best use of pupils' writing skills which are below average at 7 and 11.
- More consistent use can be made of pupils' ICT skills in presenting their work.
- While reading skills overall are average, pupils are unfamiliar with the conventional layout of a library.

#### **Commentary**

38. After a period of decline, achievement in English is now improving. The results of National Curriculum standard tests have fallen in recent years. In 2003 the results for seven year olds were well below average in reading and writing compared with all schools nationally and compared with schools in a similar social and economic setting. For eleven year olds in the same year, results were below average against schools nationally and when compared with their results when the same pupils were seven. The school trend for seven year olds is that boys attain better results than girls, although over three years both boys and girls perform below the national average. The trend for eleven year olds is that girls do a little better than boys. Because the school now tracks pupils' progress very effectively, there is considerable evidence to support the view that achievement has stabilised and is improving. It is now satisfactory. However, standards in writing remain below those expected when pupils are seven and eleven. There are strengths in speaking and listening and in reading where standards are at the level expected for pupils' ages. However, in writing, while pupils have good ideas and express them well orally, written work frequently has errors of punctuation, spelling and grammar. Boys continue to perform less well than girls. This is clear in the work seen and in the results of school assessments. For example, more girls work in the higher attaining groups and more boys in the lower attaining groups. This is something the school is now dealing with well and strategies are in hand to raise the attainment of boys and to raise standards in writing generally.

39. The period of decline has been arrested largely because teaching has improved through good leadership and management, both of the school at large and within the subject specifically. The recent improvement is well supported by excellent arrangements for assessment, While procedures are excellent and the school is beginning to make good use of the information about attainment and progress, the use of assessment still has a room to make a stronger impact on achievement. Teachers and support staff have well used strategies for marking and questioning and effective targeting of pupils' individual needs. Lessons are well planned for different ability groups. Not only do pupils work in classes set by prior attainment but also within the class tasks are well planned to cater for different needs. This ensures that progress is effective for those who are currently achieving more highly and for those who find the acquisition of basic language and literacy skills more difficult. There is good support for those who are learning English as a new language and for Traveller children who often come to the school with considerable gaps in their prior attainment.

40. Lessons usually go confidently with good pace. Good relationships between adults working in the classroom and pupils support learning well. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together in support of pupils' identified needs. Because teachers are prompt to give recognition and praise where it is deserved, pupils feel that their efforts are valued and appreciated. This encourages

them to try, to concentrate and to work hard. Teachers have good command of their subject knowledge and lessons are frequently interesting and at times inspiring. There is some valuable use of ICT for the presentation of pupils' work but there are occasions when these developing skills could be used more effectively for presenting and editing their work. The school gives good encouragement to speaking and listening through teachers' challenging questioning style. Many pupils relish these opportunities and some pupils are adept in presenting their ideas and arguments. Reading is taught effectively. Pupils' word recognition skills are generally efficient. They have a good understanding of book features, such as the use of the contents, index and glossary pages but their knowledge of how books are arranged in a library is limited.

41. The subject is well led. The role of the subject leader is a challenging one, including the oversight of the outcomes of lessons through work sampling and the observation of lessons. There is also a budget to manage. An added challenge to the leadership of the subject has been some rapid changeover of staff, the modification of teaching styles and coping with the loss of resources as an aftermath of the recent fire. The challenge has been responded to well.

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

42. There are notable examples of pupils using their speaking and listening skills and their reading skills to support learning in a range of other subjects. This is particularly noticeable in science, history, geography and religious education. However, limitation to pupils' knowledge of library skills makes it difficult for them to undertake independent research. Good examples of the use of writing skills are evident in a range of other subjects. However, the effectiveness of the use of writing skills varies with the planning of activities. Some tasks, usually those involving worksheets, do not make best use of writing skills and restrict opportunities for the higher attaining pupils.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**An excellent Year 6 lesson, used very effectively to promote pupils' understanding of authorial intention and to develop their own skills as writers.**

This was a breathtaking lesson well placed to enlighten pupils about the way authors achieve their impact on the reader and to support pupils in using authorial devices to grip their reader. The teacher skilfully created a speaking and listening environment where pupils were confident to expose their own ideas and understanding. They talked about 'this is a very emotive passage' and 'the author has been particularly successful in getting a response from the reader at this point'. The discussion was very fluent, lively and expressive, inspired by the teacher's own knowledge and love of writing. The ensuing task – to write a passage well calculated to grip and engage a reader - was addressed vigorously by the pupils and resulted in standards of work significantly better than that expected for their age.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall.
- Provision for mathematics is well organised.
- Good use is made of information about pupils' progress.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning in mathematics are good.
- Assessment and tracking procedures are very well organised.
- The curriculum for mathematics is well developed.
- Good leadership and management are giving effective support to pupils' achievement.

## Commentary

43. Most pupils are achieving well in mathematics. Overall standards are broadly average, though some groups of older pupils are behind schedule because of inadequacies of provision in the recent past. They, along with other age groups, are now benefiting from good, often very good and occasionally excellent teaching. Teachers have a good, sometimes very good understanding of the subject. Lesson planning is meticulous and well matched to pupils' needs. In an exceptional Year 4 lesson, for instance, six different levels of challenge were provided for learning about equivalences between decimals and fractions, all brought together through the use of a number line. Usually, three levels meet the needs of pupils at different levels of prior attainment in the classes already set by ability, with class assistants providing invaluable support for slower learners. In this learning environment, the achievement of pupils sometimes exceeds expectations, as in a Year 2 lesson where pupils understood that division sometimes leaves a remainder.

44. Arrangements for teaching mathematics are good. From Year 2 onwards year groups are divided into two sets so that learning challenges can be better matched to pupils' needs. In Year 6, a 'booster' class is provided for pupils who find mathematics difficult. The very good teaching in this class is enabling pupils to make steady progress. The well developed assessment and tracking procedures enables the school to pinpoint every pupil's achievement to date and match provision to each individual's needs. Where advisable, pupils are moved into different sets.

45. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are positive. Most show good capacity to work both independently and co-operatively. They find learning activities motivating, with just enough challenge to make them exciting and to produce the pleasure of success when met. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, for instance, pupils with average attainment applied their mathematical skills to shopping for a party. This involved them in the four number operations, as applied to money. They responded to the challenge with imagination and fervour. Teachers throughout the school have high expectations of the pupils who usually show a determination to succeed. Teachers are constructive in their comments on pupils' progress, both in class and when marking their work

46. The curriculum for mathematics is well balanced. A survey of pupils' previous work showed all four main aspects of the curriculum are well represented. There is a particularly strong use of every day, real life problems requiring the use of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils also have good opportunities to explore the mysteries of mathematics itself. In a motivating Year 5 lesson, for instance, pupils learned the rules for recognising prime numbers as they pursued a 'lucky lottery' game. Pupils learn to apply alternative strategies as they explore mathematical problems.

47. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is now poised to adjust delivery of the well established numeracy strategy to further the development of pupils' mathematical skills and understanding through modifications in the programme of study, the way lessons are taught and the increased use of numeracy skills in other subjects.

### **Numeracy across the curriculum**

48. There is limited use of numeracy in subjects such as science and geography. There is potential for developing competency in mathematics through its application in other subjects. Currently, pupils collect data, take careful measurements of time and distance and record their data in graphs. Satisfactory use is made of numeracy skills.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is well promoted by a practical and investigative approach to science.
- The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds in 2003 fell below average.
- Pupils' writing skills hold back achievement in science.
- Science is well organised and taught.
- Provision of resources has suffered recently because of fire damage.

### Commentary

49. In all year groups there is a suitable emphasis on learning science by conducting practical work. From Year 1, pupils are beginning to learn to observe carefully, make suitable scientific deduction and to record their findings. Their investigative tasks grow increasingly sophisticated. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a very secure understanding of the methodology of investigation, even to the point where they can criticise the teacher's demonstration investigation because they could identify more than one variable. This made the test scientifically invalid.

50. Teaching and learning are good and well placed to ensure pupils' achievement. This includes the achievement of those who find learning difficult and those learning English as a new language. Pupils' enthusiasm for practical work and their ability to cooperate in groups are strong factors in their achievement. They complement this through good use of speaking and listening skills and through effective use of skills in reading. Currently their standards are below those expected for their age overall and this is largely because some lack the writing skills to effectively record what they know, can do and understand. This is one reason why recent National Curriculum standards have fallen to below average. Unusually for this subject, boys have not performed as well as girls. Significantly more boys are finding the acquisition of basic literacy skills difficult, affecting their overall achievement.

51. Despite this, science is well led and managed. The approach to curriculum is thorough and ensures comprehensive coverage. There is a good sense of direction. The subject leader has an action plan well calculated to raise standards. The provision of resources has been made difficult recently because of fire damage. The school is working hard to overcome these difficulties and to make sure that current improvements in achievement are maintained.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are eager to do their best in the subject.
- Teaching is good and in particular teachers make good use of their subject knowledge.
- Good use is being made of the 'mini-suite' of laptop computers.
- There are difficulties with the serviceability of desktop computers in the ICT suite.
- While there are strategies for assessment of progress, these are not consistent across the school.
- There is scope for greater use of ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum.

### Commentary

52. Achievement in ICT is satisfactory. Two factors have a strong effect on pupils' achievement: the attitude that pupils bring to their learning and the good teaching in the subject. While achievement

is satisfactory, it still has to catch up with the learning from an improving standard of teaching. Serviceability of some machines is also a barrier to achievement. Pupils are very positive about the use of computers. They have an increasing understanding of how ICT can have an impact on everyday life, speeding up and facilitating processes. Pupils enjoy demonstrating their skills, for example, the Year 6 pupils who gave a PowerPoint presentation to the whole school as part of their assembly. Teachers have confident subject knowledge and use it well. Year 2 pupils, introduced to the suite of laptop computers were taken at rapid pace through a well-planned activity that catered for the needs of a wide range of abilities. By the end of the lesson some pupils had developed their skills sufficiently to be given authority to teach what they had learned to others. The pupils were very confident and this was the result of very good and confident teaching. Two pupils, with already well-developed skills, were in a good position to teach others in the class a number of keyboard shortcuts to achieve the learning objectives.

53. The desktop machines in the computer suite are reaching the end of their serviceable life. There are frequent occasions when machines break down and this is frustrating for pupils and teachers. Despite this, pupils are attaining the levels expected for their age throughout the school. This is a measure of the enthusiasm brought to the subject by pupils and adults alike. Teachers motivate pupils well and they respond appropriately with concentration and endeavour. The computer suite is not easily accessible to pupils in Years 1 and 2. The laptop computer suite overcomes this difficulty as it can be wheeled from classroom to classroom, compensating for lack of access for these pupils. This is proving to be a very effective way of ensuring enough opportunity for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to practise their developing skills.

54. The subject is well and enthusiastically led. There is a good understanding of the current effectiveness of work in the subject. A detailed action plan outlines how the subject needs to develop. One aspect to develop is assessment. There are a number of strategies for checking up on the progress pupils make but not a single whole school method that gives a secure understanding of what is being covered and how well standards are being maintained.

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

55. There are numerous examples of ICT being used to support learning across the curriculum. It is used for work in literacy, for example, to present pupils' poems attractively. It is used to support learning in geography, when pupils use PowerPoint presentations for work researched for a study on mountains. In history, pupils have created a brochure of the information they have found out about World War 2. Pupils are competent in combining text and graphics to make their work attractive in a range of subjects. Pupils have recently been introduced to the digital microscope and found much to be amazed at when examining specimens in science. There is some evidence of spreadsheets being used to collect and interpret data in mathematics. Much of this work is incidental to current topics rather than consistently planned for. There is scope to further develop the way pupils' ICT skills are employed to support learning right across the curriculum.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

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

- Mapping skills are underdeveloped.
- Too little cross-reference between units of work reduces achievement.
- There are good links between geography and other subjects.
- No systematic assessment procedures are in place.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator has not been a priority and is underdeveloped.

## Commentary

56. Only two lessons were available for observation so judgements are supported by a survey of pupils' work, itself limited by fire damage. In the lessons seen Year 2 pupils were engaged in successful study of the daily life of a family in a Mexican village. Good teaching, including very good rapport between the teacher and pupils, supported good learning as pupils explored aspects of the traditional culture and prepared masks for a carnival. Those in a Year 3 class learned to understand weather signals and used them to assess climate in an underdeveloped part of the world. Eventually they identified the location, but their uncertainties about the use of atlases and the very limited evidence of map work in pupils' workbooks indicates a weakness in systematic provision for developing their mapping skills.

57. Year 6 have carried out a reasonably effective study of mountains, including references to tectonic plates, avalanches, and volcanoes, together with emphases on mountains as environments for wildlife and leisure activities. Though the range of topics studied satisfied National Curriculum requirements, continuity and cross-referencing between them are too limited, with no mention of river sources in the mountain topic, for instance. There are, however, useful links to ICT, science and opportunities to apply literacy skills. Such links are due to be reinforced in the near future, as part of the overall review of the school's curriculum. Currently, the role of subject co-ordinator is not a major focus. It is underdeveloped and there are no assessment procedures in place, though pupils are encouraged to make self-assessments of their progress in this, as in other subjects. While work is well marked, there is no coherent whole school strategy for keeping track of pupils' progress.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes towards history are good.
- Teachers make good use of links with other subjects of the curriculum.
- There are no systematic assessment strategies in place.
- The co-ordinator role for the subject is underdeveloped.

## Commentary

58. Though only one lesson was available for observation, a scrutiny of pupils' previous work indicates that they reach average standards. Pupils' responses to history are very good. Older pupils' recall of history in previous lessons indicates that learning is good. Year 5 pupils, for instance, recalled the lifestyle of many Victorian children as they studied the lives of street children in Mexico today. Year 1 pupils made good contributions to a study of toys 'then and now' as they brought in relevant artefacts and made card versions of Victorian toys. They were also delighted to play carefully with genuine older toys and their replicas, the whole experience reinforcing their burgeoning awareness of chronology. Lessons for pupils with special needs, a number of whom are travellers' children, have been introduced to the history of travellers as an oppressed social group and the ways in which their situation is being gradually improved. This is having a strong effect on pupils' understanding of difference and enhances their ability to empathise with others.

59. Teachers make effective use of other subjects to enhance learning in history. Pupils' work on World War 2, for instance, was well supported by computer-based research. All opportunities are used to enhance literacy skills by their application in the context of history. The place of history in the curriculum is about to be reviewed. Currently, no systematic assessment and record keeping strategies are in place. This makes it difficult to check whether or not all pupils are making expected progress. School priorities have been focused leadership within the core subjects. The role of the subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall; some teaching is very good.
- A good balance is achieved between learning about religions and learning from religions.
- Good links with other subjects enhance learning.
- Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped.

### Commentary

60. Provision for religious education is based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject, which introduces pupils to several world religions. Standards match those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is satisfactory. The main emphasis in the curriculum is on festivals and symbolism, with references to the beliefs and values that underlie them. Similarities, such as the pervasive focus on light, as well as differences are explored. For instance, younger pupils compared Christian and Sikh wedding ceremonies. Occasional visits are made to places of worship as when Year 2 pupils visited the local Christian church to learn about baptism, reinforcing their knowledge and understanding through role-play of the ceremony. Pupils have explored the facts and meaning of Easter, learning about forgiveness and sacrifice. The teacher made the profound messages of the Easter story easier to grasp through use of the story of a mother hen who gave her life for her chicks and through application of the learning to family life.

61. Teaching is based on secure knowledge of the subject. Strategies and learning activities provide good support for pupils' knowledge and understanding as when older pupils were asked to design a Muslim prayer room. In a good lesson on Buddhist communication through hand positions, the prior exploration of road signs and hand signals observed in pupils' daily life made understanding more accessible. The importance of concern for others was brought home through study of the work of a charity that supports the welfare and education of street children in South America. Pupils responded with interest and concern and are now planning a fund raising initiative in the school. This particular lesson was enhanced by references to pupils' previous learning in history about poverty stricken children in Victorian times. They recalled the work of philanthropists such as Dr. Barnardo.

62. Where possible, activities that support literacy skills are used to reinforce learning, though no examples of the use of ICT resources were evident during the inspection. Learning in religious education contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Because it has not been the main focus of school improvement planning, the development of the subject has not been a priority. As a result the role of the subject leader is underdeveloped.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

As **art and design** was not a focus for the inspection there was limited opportunity to observe any art and design lessons and judge standards. However, evidence from displays and a small amount of children's work show that an appropriate range of activities is offered to the pupils. Sketchbooks illustrate how various techniques are explored and developed: for example shading and colour mixing. Those of older pupils contain some very carefully executed observational drawing. Two Year 5 art and design lessons were briefly visited where pupils were making a tapestry of traditional fairy stories. Well thought out drawings were made as a guide, prior to commencing the sewing. Some of the pupils struggled with the sewing finding threading a needle almost impossible! However, the end product looked interesting, especially where pupils had used stuffing to create a three dimensional effect. Sadly, the recent fire has destroyed a great deal of the pupils' work and many resources, but the school is endeavouring to replenish materials. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader, only recently in post, has had insufficient time to have impact on the quality of art and design

work. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in **design and technology** because there was little opportunity to observe lessons. However, two Year 6 lessons were visited to get a flavour of the subject. Pupils were designing umbrellas. Although the appropriate processes had been used – researching the topic, designing and making a prototype before making the final one, opportunities were missed to extend pupils’ investigative skills. For example, they had no opportunity to explore different ways of attaching the straws to the paper umbrella cover. But importantly the teachers stressed the need for safety when using saws. Younger pupils made models with moving joints. Across the school pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and say how they would have improved it. Because of the recent fire many examples of pupils’ work have been destroyed. The subject leader’s monitoring role is not well developed. An action plan has been written that has not yet had time to take effect. During the inspection only one **music** lesson was seen so no judgements can be made about standards. The only element of music observed was singing, in assembly and singing practises. The quality of singing was good, mostly tuneful and usually with clear words and some expression. The subject leader was observed taking two hymn practices and the teacher’s enthusiasm and knowledge motivated the pupils to sing well and enjoy the session. Both sessions were effective in developing pupils’ musical knowledge and their confidence to sing. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn a range of musical instruments including non-western instruments such as Indian drums. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided: recorder groups, choirs for both key stages and a samba band. The recently appointed subject leader has already begun to move music forward as this a priority for the school. During the inspection three **physical education** lessons were observed. These included work in dance and developing racket and ball skills. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in this subject. Younger pupils in Year 2 enjoyed and responded very well to a dance tape, moving with good control and using a variety of imaginative moves. Year 6 pupils demonstrated how their tennis skills were being improved as they practised controlling the ball on the racket. There is very good use of specialist expertise from the local high school as pupils enjoy the experiences these teachers offer. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class were highly motivated by the dance teacher and worked very well together to devise an interesting ceremonial dance based on animals and warriors. An involvement with the sports council has had a beneficial effect on the provision for physical activities through tuition and the use of equipment. A wide range of after school sports is available, with pupils often competing in matches against local schools. All these help to broaden the curriculum and enhance pupils’ enjoyment of sport. The very effective subject leader has put a great deal of effort into developing sporting links and to providing pupils with a range of activities and coaches.

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

It was possible to sample only limited work in personal, social and health education. No judgements can be made about overall provision and teaching. All classes have some personal, social and health education time available weekly and the way this is handled varies a good deal from class to class. Discussion with the coordinator shows that the school takes its responsibility for this area of pupils’ personal development very seriously. The content of lessons has a strong bearing on the successful outcomes of pupils’ attitudes, behaviour and values. Lessons are supplemented by teaching in religious education and assembly themes. Visitors support the school’s provision, for example, through the work of the community nurse and policeman.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). In the table above, 8 indicates that there has been no previous inspection as a primary school.*