

INSPECTION REPORT

Bedford Primary School

Bootle, Merseyside

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104892

Headteacher: Mr Gerard Ashley

Lead inspector: Mrs Anna Dawson
Dates of inspection: May 16 – 19 2005

Inspection number: 266394
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 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll; | 375 |
| | |
| School address: | Quarry Road Bootle Merseyside |
| | |
| Postcode: | L20 9LJ |
| | |
| Telephone number: | 0151 9221467 |
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| | |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr T Nagle |
| | |
| Date of previous inspection: | July 5th 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bedford Primary School is situated in Bootle in the Sefton area of Merseyside. It is a large school for boys and girls aged 4 -11. There are currently 375 pupils on roll. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is high. The school serves the immediate neighbourhood. This is considerably disadvantaged economically. There are 43.1 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals. This is well above average. There are 21.2 per cent of pupils with special educational needs. This is above the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural and emotional difficulties. The percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is below average. Overall, children's attainments on entry to the Foundation Stage are well below average in language development and mathematical skills. At the end of reception, pupils are overall below average and a small minority still have very low attainments in language skills. There is a very small minority on course to attain the Early Learning Goals. There are very few pupils with above average attainments. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language. There are a very small number of pupils who speak French or Chinese and are learning English as an additional language. The school is similar in character to what it was like when it was inspected last.

The school is included in the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme. It is presently working towards Healthy Schools Award and Basic Skills Quality Mark (BSQM).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 11608 | Anna Dawson | Lead inspector | Science; art and design; design and technology; religious education; English as an additional language. |
| 32661 | Peter Hopkins | Lay inspector | |
| 14991 | Alan Hardwicke | Team inspector | English; information and communication technology; history; physical education; special educational needs. |
| 30205 | Therese Kenna | Team inspector | Mathematics; personal, social, health education and citizenship; geography; music; Foundation Stage. |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. There are many strengths with little to improve. The school takes great care to include pupils in all aspects of school life. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is very good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, some pupils find difficulty in speaking at length about their work.
- There is very good leadership and management by the headteacher and senior leadership team. There is excellent provision for the continuing professional development of staff. The school is governed well.
- Pupils behave very well. They have very good attitudes to work and are keen to learn. There is excellent provision for seeking and acting on pupils' views and as a result the pupils make an excellent contribution to school development.
- There is very good and at times excellent teaching which results in all groups of pupils achieving very well. The quality of the assessment of pupils' achievements is excellent. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Most parents support the school. However, despite the best efforts of the school to promote good attendance, the attendance for a significant minority of pupils is well below average.
- There is a very good curriculum overall. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development. In the Foundation Stage, there are insufficient opportunities planned for the outdoor curriculum and there are not enough resources to promote aspects of children's physical development.

The school has improved very well since the last inspection in 1999. It has successfully addressed the key issues raised at that time. The standards, leadership and management, the teaching and learning and the quality of the curriculum have all improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, **pupils' achievement is very good.** In the reception classes, most children achieve well. The majority of children start with well below average language, communication and mathematical skills and below average social skills on entry to the reception class. By the time the children reach the end of the reception year the majority are still working towards the nationally expected goals for children of this age. A minority is on course to exceed them. In their personal, social and emotional development, many are on course to attain the expected goals. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests and assessments for Year 2 pupils, standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Compared with schools in similar contexts, pupils attained average standards in reading and above average standards in mathematics and writing. The pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Improved standards are largely the result of the excellent use of assessment and subsequent targets set to raise standards. This is a rising trend for improvement as more pupils are now attaining at the expected levels than in the last few years, although fewer than nationally expected attain at the higher levels.

Year 6 results

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
| English | D | D | A | A |
| Mathematics | E | E | C | C |
| Science | C | E* | C | C |

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

In 2004, results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils show that compared with all schools nationally, and the schools in similar contexts, pupils attained well above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science. The current Year 6 pupils achieve very well. However, some pupils have limited speaking skills which tend to restrict their attainments, especially at the higher levels. Most pupils in the present Year 6 are attaining the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. However, although there are fewer pupils than is expected nationally on course to attain at the higher level the gap is narrowing as standards have risen within the last two years. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language achieve very well. Pupils achieve very well in ICT to attain the expected standards. In religious education pupils' achievement is good and most meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Well below average attendance, pupils moving in and out of school and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, have a negative impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 3-6.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Most pupils are keen to learn, enjoy lessons and behave very well. There are very good relationships throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good. Punctuality is satisfactory. The school is doing all it can to promote good attendance which is meeting with success. However, attendance is still well below average for a small but significant minority of the pupils. When pupils are not at school, learning is missed and this adversely affects the pupils' achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good with some that is excellent. It is good in the Foundation Stage where the children achieve well. However, there are insufficient opportunities planned for pupils to work outdoors. There is not enough large equipment such as wheeled toys to develop children's skills of balance and coordination. ICT is used particularly well by teachers to enhance pupils' learning. The quality of assessment is excellent. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. They are taught very well by their teachers and teaching assistants and they achieve very well towards their targets. The school provides a very good curriculum. This is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and a very good personal, social and health education and citizenship programme. The quality of the learning resources and the accommodation is very good. The pastoral care of pupils and monitoring of their learning are very good. There is excellent provision for seeking pupils' views and acting on them. There are very good links with parents and good links with the community. The school has very good links with other nearby schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

There is very good leadership and management of the school. There is an **effective** governing body. Governors work well with the school and have a good overall understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Statutory requirements are met. The headteacher demonstrates a very clear management structure and vision for the school. The systems for self-evaluation and improvement are rigorous. The headteacher is aided by a very able deputy headteacher who is also part of the very good senior leadership team. They provide the driving force for continuous improvement. The professional development of the staff is excellent. Consequently morale is high and the staff work together very well as a team. The associate staff, particularly the teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Every opportunity is taken to overcome pupils' barriers to learning and help the pupils to succeed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. Parents feel they are able to communicate very well with the staff. The pupils enjoy lessons and the extra-curricular opportunities offered to them. They feel their opinions are valued and acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards further by providing more structured opportunities to promote pupils' speaking skills;
- develop the outdoor curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and provide sufficient resources to develop their skills of balance and coordination;
- continue to improve the well below average attendance of a significant minority of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The school meets the needs of all its pupils **very well**. Pupils achieve **very well** in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Pupils' development in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well by Year 6. Speaking skills are not sufficiently well developed for some pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Pupils learning English as a new language achieve very well.
- Pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship skills are promoted very well.

Commentary

1. Children get a good start to their education. The majority enter the reception with language, communication and mathematical skills that are well below average language and mathematical skills and below average social skills. The children achieve well overall in the reception classes because of the good provision that is made for them. There is a wide range of abilities which includes very few higher attaining children. The indications are that the majority of children are still working towards the goals that are set nationally in the areas of learning by the end of reception. A small minority of children have well below average language skills. A significant minority are on course to attain the expected goals and a very small minority will exceed them.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 14.4 (14.4) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 14.0 (12.9) | 14.6 (14.6) |
| mathematics | 15.5 (14.3) | 16.2 (16.3) |

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The above table shows the results for Year 2 pupils in the 2004 National Curriculum tests and assessments. It shows that standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, standards were average in reading and above average in mathematics and writing. Pupils are achieving very well in Years 1 and 2. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. This improvement is the result of the excellent use of assessment and subsequent setting of targets to raise standards. Most pupils are currently working within the nationally expected standards for pupils of this age. The Year 2 pupils are exceeding the national average for attaining this level. However, there are fewer pupils attaining the higher level 3 than the national average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 28.6 (25.9) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 27.2 (24.8) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| science | 28.9 (24.4) | 28.6 (28.6) |

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The table above reflects the National Curriculum test results for the Year 6 pupils in 2004. The pupils attained well above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science when these results are compared with other schools nationally and those in similar contexts. The pupils currently achieve very well in Years 3-6. Most of the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. An above average percentage of the pupils are working within the national expectations. Some pupils struggle to find the vocabulary to express themselves when explaining their work during class discussions which limits their attainment. Fewer than the national average are attaining at the higher level 5.
4. There are several factors which negatively affect standards and pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 more than in Years 1 and 2. For example, between Years 3 to 6 there is a very high proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school other than at the usual time. The pupils joining the school generally enter with lower attainments than those who leave. The pupils needing most help because they have special educational needs are in Years 3 to 6. The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils has an adverse effect on their achievement. The overall results of tests fluctuate from year-to-year because of the differing ability of the pupils taking the tests. There are a high percentage of pupils in the present Year 6 with special educational needs which negatively impacts on the overall standards.
5. Standards in ICT are average in all year groups and pupils achieve very well. Pupils are reaching the expected standard in the development of their skills. The interactive whiteboards are used well by staff as a tool for teaching. However, although pupils use their time well in the ICT suite to develop their skills, pupils do not fully exploit opportunities in lessons to apply what they have learned. Achievement is good in religious education. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have a growing awareness of diversity within society and respect the views and beliefs of others.
6. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well because of the very good provision that is made for them. There are very few pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL). They achieve well when they receive direct help from class teachers or teaching assistants. The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and have access to all aspects of school life, whatever their ability or background. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The attendance of a significant minority is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very positive about school life and have very good behaviour.
- The school actively promotes very good relationships that support teaching and learning.
- There is a clear focus on the emotional wellbeing and spiritual development of the pupils.

- Pupils' cultural development is very good.
- The programmes for improving attendance are showing positive results. However, the attendance levels are still well below the national average.

Commentary

7. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons and school life is evident from discussions with pupils, the way they conduct themselves around the school and the popularity of before and after school clubs. They are interested in lessons, and in the classroom and in assembly they listen carefully and are keen to ask and answer questions. Pupils play well together in the playground. Pupils are proud of their school and this is reflected in the way they treat the facilities they have. A key element of the school ethos is about respect and care for others and pupils demonstrate this throughout the school.
8. The school places a high priority on developing very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. This is evident throughout the school. It is a priority to build the self-confidence and self esteem of the pupils. Each class has developed its own rules of behaviour and the schools 'Guidelines for Good Guys' sets high standards. Assemblies are innovative and interesting with clear messages about good relationships and respect for others. These messages are further reinforced in religious education lessons, in the classroom and by messages placed on walls around the school. One such notice reads 'We live in a society of different colours, creeds and cultures, and we've got to try and live together. Racism is a cheap shot and it hurts'. Staff act as positive role models in the way they relate to the pupils and each other. The staff are clearly committed to the development of the pupils and put a lot of time into various extra-curricular activities before school, during lunchtime and after school. Consequently there is a very friendly and trusting relationship between pupils and staff.
9. In order to support learning, good behaviour and relationships, the school addresses the emotional wellbeing of pupils. Each morning pupils write down how they are feeling and for five minutes every morning the teacher encourages pupils to explain their feelings. This helps pupils express themselves and provides a greater understanding to others in the class. Teachers and pupils also take part in five minutes of exercise called PACE (Positive, Active, Clear, Energetic Brains). Pupils take part enthusiastically and finish with some quiet thoughts. They really enjoy these sessions and say they feel better and have more energy to take part in class. The Learning Mentor uses a toy alien visiting from outer space as a way of getting the younger children to discuss emotional and relationship issues. This is very successful in engaging the pupils. The Learning Mentor is also able to provide mentoring to individuals or small groups that need particular support either emotionally or to resolve conflicts. Pupils are frequently taught to reflect on their own and others beliefs. They gain valuable insights from thinking about important issues that affect their lives and the lives of others. Pupils are taught to show empathy for others. For example, the pupils recently collected money to send to the Tsunami Appeal.
10. Pupils' cultural development is very good. The wide range of work the pupils do to develop an understanding of tolerance and respect for other faiths and cultures is embedded in teachers planning. Work in music, history and art and design for example, gives pupils an insight into aspects of British and European culture heritage. Through studying, for example, African and Islamic art they learn about other cultures and beliefs. Pupils discuss and study positive black role-models such as Martin Luther King. Year 6 pupils say they respected other people's beliefs.

Attendance

The level of attendance at 90.8 per cent is very low in comparison with other schools.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 8.3 | School data : | 0.9 |
| National data: | 5.1 | National data: | 0.4 |

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

11. The vast majority of pupils like coming to school and enjoy the various aspects of school life. The school has taken positive action to improve the level of attendance of a significant minority of pupils. Attendance is monitored and tracked through the SIMS computer program and the school can identify those pupils that have a poor attendance record. Parents/carers of pupils who are absent are contacted on the first day of absence. If a pupil's attendance falls below a certain level the parents are asked to attend an attendance panel where it is explained that if attendance does not improve then formal proceedings may be taken. The Education Welfare Officer works closely with the school and targets problem families. The Transition and Behaviour Support officer works particularly with pupils in years 5 and 6 in order to support their transition to secondary school. The school promotes the importance of good attendance through its newsletters and website, through prizes to pupils and a prize draw every term for those with good attendance. Pupils and parents who have good or improving attendance are praised. The introduction of the breakfast club has had a positive effect of attendance and punctuality. The considerable efforts of the school appear to be producing an improvement as the attendance figures for this current year are approximately 92.8 per cent. When pupils attend regularly this has a positive impact on their achievements. Punctuality is satisfactory. The majority of pupils arrive promptly and the school is taking action to improve the punctuality of a small group of families who are regularly late.
12. There were six fixed term exclusions and one permanent exclusion in the last school year for poor behaviour.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – any other White background |
| Black or Black British – African |
| Chinese |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 366 | 6 | 1 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **very good** quality education. Teaching and learning are **very good**. Assessment is **excellent**. The curriculum is **very good** and **very successfully** enriched. **Very good** care is taken of its pupils and they feel secure, happy and valued. The school provides them with **very good** support, advice and guidance. There are **very good** links with the parents and **good** links with the community and other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** throughout the school. Because teaching is very effective pupils achieve very well. The quality of assessment is **excellent** and teachers make **excellent** use of their assessments to aid pupils, through individual help and guidance. Teachers and associate staff work very well together to give pupils the best, and to insist on high standards in work and behaviour.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school, and pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
- Assessment procedures are excellent, and teachers make excellent use of the resulting information, in order for pupils to move ahead as quickly as possible.
- Associate staff work very well alongside teachers, and show sensitivity and care in their work.
- Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards to enthuse and motivate their pupils.
- The quality of working relationships is very good.

Commentary

13. Teaching and learning are very good across the school. The quality of teaching has improved very well since the last inspection through effective monitoring and professional development. Particular training needs have been very effectively identified and resulting guidance has been well targeted, and carefully linked to both the needs of individuals, and the priorities of the school development plan. The teaching of reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is consistently very good.
14. The school has very good procedures for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. There are very good procedures for identifying the needs of those learning English as an additional language. The teaching which pupils with special educational needs receive is very good overall, and consequently they learn very well. Teachers include their needs in their planning, and are involved in reviewing and updating their individual education plans. Teachers and associate staff work very well together to provide the correct mix of in-class support and withdrawal in smaller groups, which builds pupils' self-confidence and ensures that they remain keen to work and improve. Assessment systems are very well operated to ensure that these pupils know what they need to do next to improve, and individual needs are appropriately provided-for.
15. The planning of lessons is very good. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, which are carefully planned to be interesting and challenging to pupils of all abilities, and this was certainly confirmed by observations during the inspection. Associate staff, teaching assistants and the learning mentor, make a very valuable contribution to teaching. They show very good skills in working with individuals and groups, and they make a considerable contribution to learning. The recently established role of learning mentor is having a very positive impact on learning in school, forming an additional support for pupils with a variety of needs, and providing a valuable link between learning, care and personal development.
16. As a result of the school's excellent assessment procedures teachers know what their pupils need to do next to improve. Subject leaders and senior managers have access to a wide range of assessment data, giving them a clear picture of how pupils are doing, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Realistic and challenging targets are set for improvement, and pupils are frequently advised how successful they are in achieving these. The quality of working relationships is consistently good. Teachers expect their pupils to work hard and do their best, and pupils respect their teachers, and are eager to do their best for them.

17. Teachers are very good at providing interesting, often exciting activities which motivate pupils very well. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils took part in a debate about the pros and cons of a new bypass scheme. They wrote their own questions for a panel of experts including a local councillor and the headteacher, and then took part in a 'public meeting', with one pupil acting as chairperson. This excellent lesson captured the pupils' interest and helped them understand how democracy and citizenship work. It was very well planned to include pupils of all abilities, and the pace of learning was very good. Good links are made between subjects, such as in a Year 6 healthy eating topic, which included work in English, mathematics and science. Teachers showed how learning in one subject can be closely linked to others, so as to make sense to pupils.
18. The use of 'Brain Gym' and PACE activities is very good, helping pupils to clear their minds and focus on learning. Pupils say PACE is 'great' and examples were seen during the inspection of its effective use.
19. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology to support their teaching in all subjects. They make particularly good use of the new interactive whiteboards, thus justifying the school's investment in new hardware and software. There are times, however, when opportunities are missed to use the computers to help with learning in other subjects. The school has identified this as an area for development, and is putting the necessary training in place. Pupils' learning is made more interesting by the very good range of visits and visitors linked to lessons in school. During the inspection, reception class children visited a local shop, and this gave them very good experience of buying and selling different goods, as well as exploring the locality.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 5 (9%) | 23 (43%) | 23 (43%) | 3 (5%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

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

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum. It is broad and balanced and of very good quality. It enables all groups of pupils to achieve very well. A **very good** range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors all enrich the curriculum very well. The accommodation and learning resources are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good whole school approach to planning, evaluation, and monitoring curriculum innovation, which very effectively supports all pupils' learning.
- The excellent deployment of very good, well trained support staff enhances and supports the delivery of the curriculum to all pupils.
- There are extensive and varied opportunities for curriculum enrichment.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education is very good.
- There is very good quality accommodation and resources. However, use of outside area for children in the Foundation Stage is limited.

Commentary

20. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in the curriculum. It is now very well planned ensuring that pupils of all abilities are able to carry out research and develop investigational skills. Thorough attention is given to long and medium- term planning, and this

helps to ensure a consistent approach, for instance between the different classes in the same year-group. Because of the school's very careful scrutiny of its work, it is able to adopt an innovative, whole school approach to curriculum planning. It is able, for instance, to try different methods for delivery of the core subjects. It then monitors the effectiveness of these methods and either adopts them, or adapts them in the light of their success. For example, the system of delivering the mathematics curriculum through a setted approach in Years 3-6 is having a very positive effect on standards in this subject. In this way the most effective strategies are adopted, so as to help raise standards in the most productive way.

21. The excellent deployment of a very good, highly trained team of dedicated support staff ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability are fully involved and included in all aspects of the school curriculum. The staff are deployed according to their strengths. For example, one member of the associate staff who is a teaching assistant takes classes regularly for art and design and physical education. The class teachers take smaller groups for additional teaching for instance in mathematics.
22. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and makes a very significant contribution to the development of pupils' physical, social and intellectual skills. These are very well supported by all pupils and cover a wide range, such as science, computer, music and art clubs. The sporting activities are a particular strength of the school. These cover a very wide range including softball, hockey, kwik cricket, athletics, football, judo and tai kwando. There is a very good range of visits to places of educational interest, which brings learning alive for the pupils. Also, the wide range of visitors stimulates their interest in music, the arts and the wider local community. A very good example of the school's involvement in the local community is the activities of the school choir. Spanish is part of the weekly curriculum for some of the pupils in Years 3-6. Since last October they have made good progress and learned to understand and speak in simple sentences and phrases. The pupils enjoy learning Spanish. Their weekly lessons are taught by a visiting specialist teacher.
23. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. The exceptionally positive and valuing ethos of the school and the very good relationships between teachers, all support staff and pupils provide extremely well for their personal development. There is a very well structured programme for PSHCE, taught through designated and other curriculum subjects, particularly religious education and science. This programme, combined with exceptionally high expectations by all adults, enables pupils to develop very well and underpins their generally very good attitudes and behaviour. Positive attitudes are frequently promoted. For instance, pupils are constantly reminded by the notices around school that 'if you give a smile away you get one back'.
24. Overall the school's accommodation, grounds and resources are very good. Very good use is made of all space for teaching purposes. The very good range and quality of resources support learning very well in all areas of the curriculum. The Foundation Stage has good outdoor provision. However, absence of a complete perimeter fence limits children's freedom of access. Accommodation throughout is very well maintained and welcoming is of good quality and is used well to promote a warm and inviting atmosphere that is conducive to learning. This contributes very effectively to the very good ethos of the school.

Care, guidance and support

The provision of pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is **very good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **very good**. Pupils' involvement through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school council provides pupils with an opportunity to play a major part in school life.
- The school has a thorough approach to care and safety that ensures a safe environment for the pupils.
- Pupils have a trusting relationship with staff, which has created a happy and friendly atmosphere in the school.
- The thorough induction arrangements allow new pupils to quickly settle into school life.

Commentary

25. The school council provides an important link between pupils and staff. The members have meetings with the pupils in their class and listen to suggestions. These are then prioritised and discussed with the deputy headteacher in their weekly meeting. Their views are built into the school improvement plan and progress monitored. They have suggested the need for more homework clubs for pupils that need additional support, more books in the library, more extra curricular activities and environmental improvements in the school. These ideas have now been actioned. They have also had an input into the curriculum with suggestions for more use of ICT in lessons and more experiments in science. The school is seeking to provide more healthy options for school dinners and the members of the school council are working with the staff to taste new meals in order to see if they would be popular with pupils. The school is about to appoint a new member of the teaching staff and the school council are to play a part in the interview process. They will ask the candidates a number of questions that they choose and they will make comments on the merits of the candidates. The activities of the school council are providing pupils with confidence and self-esteem and developing the trusting relationship between pupils and staff.
26. The school has clear and thorough policies for health and safety and child protection that are approved by the governing body. The site manager carries out a half-termly check of the premises with the staff health and safety representative and all issues and actions are recorded. The caretaker checks the building daily. All mandatory checks on fire equipment are carried out by specialist contractors. Every six months, a report is presented to the governing body updating them on any issues and action taken. The Fire Service has recently provided a training day for all staff on how to operate a fire extinguisher. Risk assessments are carried out following the LEA guidelines. The school has a range of security systems in place that control entry into the school. There is a nominated child protection officer and all staff are made aware of health and safety and child protection on training days. Child protection issues are an item on the weekly staff meetings. The school works closely in partnership with other agencies in order to support both pupils and parents. Mentoring is provided to pupils with behavioural problems and support is given to teachers. Staff are aware of any pupils who have particular medical or dietary needs and as a reminder there are notices around the school with the names of the pupils and the action to be taken. The school is taking part in the Healthy School Initiative and is promoting healthy food and healthy environment in the PSHE curriculum and throughout the school. Pupils in the reception and in Years 1-2 receive fruit as part of the national fruit scheme and in Years 3-6 pupils have a fruit tuck shop.
27. Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with staff. There is a happy atmosphere in the school and a good deal of humour. The staff relate very well to the pupils and provide good role models for them. In the classroom pupils are keen to answer questions and carry out any tasks that are given to them. In the playground, pupils and staff play games together and pupils readily take any issues they have to the staff. Staff organise a great variety of extra-curricular activities for the pupils and these are very popular.
28. Many of the pupils come into the school from the nearby nursery. There is a close working relationship that provides good data and assessment of the children when they come into school. The nursery children regularly visit the Reception Class in order to become familiar

with school and make a smooth transition. This close working relationship is clearly a great benefit to both the school and the children in terms of their development. A new Children's Centre is planned which will provide all day care for 0-5 year old children and this will further support the development of the children at an early age. There are very strong links with the local high school that support the transition to secondary education. Teachers from Hillside High School visit and talk to staff about Year 6 pupils. Pupils go on visits to the High School to see the school and meet the staff. They are invited to attend arts productions. There is a transition project for Year 6 pupils that is continued in the High School. There is a significant level of pupil mobility in the school and many pupils join the school at different stages. These new pupils are paired with a 'buddy' who will look after them when they first arrive. The school contacts the previous school to obtain information on the pupil and this is taken into account when deciding which class is the most appropriate. They are then assessed regularly to monitor their progress. Parents of children new to the school were very pleased both with the induction arrangements and the progress their children made in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, other schools and colleges. The links with the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides parents with an extensive range of information about the school and the progress their child is making.
- Parents are given the opportunity to play a major part in school life and develop their skills.
- The links with other schools benefit the development of the school.

Commentary

29. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel they are kept well informed about activities in the school and the progress of their children. There is a well presented website which provides information about key dates and activities, the curriculum and the staff and the governors. There is a section that tells them how they can support learning, attend courses and join The Parents' and Teachers' Association (PTA). All parents receive a weekly newsletter called 'The Bedford Bugle' which updates them on current issues. There is a 'Suggestion Box' for parents in the foyer of the school. In addition to the termly parents' meetings, the school has an 'open door' policy and parents feel that that they can comfortably approach the staff to discuss any pressing issues.
30. Many parents help in the school. Many of the teaching assistants and mid day supervisors are also parents and other parents help in the classroom. Many of the school governors are also parents. The PTA is very active and raises money for the school. The school works well with other agencies and partners to provide courses in the school for parents. Sefton Family and Schools Together (FAST) provide courses in literacy and numeracy and these courses are well attended. The children and parents benefit from attending these courses. A local college provides courses in ICT. The Workers Education Association provides adult education courses and Parenting 2000 come to the school every 2 weeks to give advice on parenting. One parent explained how well the school had supported her as she trained as a teaching assistant.
31. The school has strong links with other primary schools in the area, John Moores University, Hugh Baird College and Hillside High School. The headteacher and other staff regularly meet with colleagues from a cluster of primary schools including a Beacon School and consider new ideas and best practice. The benefit of having a learning mentor in the school came out of this process. Literacy has benefited by developing role-play, which has stimulated persuasive writing. The school has a very good partnership with John Moores University and provides a structured training package for student teachers. The school is seeking to be a centre of excellence for training. The close working relationship with Hillside High School benefits the

transition to secondary school for pupils. Such partnerships stimulate a culture of professional development within the school which supports teaching and learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Because there is **very good leadership and management** of the school by the headteacher and the senior leadership team, the drive for self improvement is very effective. This is supported by **good** governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and is assisted very well by a skilled deputy headteacher and hardworking senior leadership team.
- The provision for the professional development of all staff is excellent.
- The school has rigorous systems for self-evaluation and improvement.
- There is an effective governing body which helps the headteacher move the school forward.

Commentary

32. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Under his leadership the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in 1999. The headteacher has developed a strong leadership team. The deputy headteacher demonstrates excellent teaching and management skills. The headteacher works very hard with the senior leadership to continually move the school forward. The aims of the school, understood by all the school community and encapsulated in the phrase 'Together everyone achieves more' reflect the school's high quality teamwork in striving to improve pupils' performance. The staff are skilled and knowledgeable and work very well as a team because there is a very clear management structure. There is an ethos of mutual trust and cooperation between staff and associate staff where open debate is valued. Ownership of policies and schemes of work is carried out in relevant phase and management meetings. There is full involvement in the work of the school by the staff, pupils, parents and governors.
33. There is a continuous climate for improvement. Emphasis is placed on meeting staff development needs. The provision of continuing professional development for all staff is excellent. Teachers and associate staff share the results of their in-service training with others to improve practice. This leads to staff learning and making decisions together and enhances job satisfaction. Consequently staff morale is high. As shared understandings are built between staff this has also enabled them to respond to new initiatives quickly. Where any barriers to learning or teaching are noted such as lack of expertise in music this is quickly overcome as different ways of working and sharing expertise are sought. Whole school new initiatives are often developed from in-service training for all staff from experienced and well-qualified consultants.
34. The very well thought out school development plan stems from the rigorous evaluations of the pupils' achievement as well as the school as a whole. The primary aim of the school is to meet the needs of all pupils. Sentences such as 'We believe that everyone in our school is equal and should have their culture and background treated with respect'; devised by Year 5 pupils are endorsed by the other pupils and the rest of the school community. They serve as a constant reminder of what the school stands for. Work is carefully planned and teachers and associate staff deployed so that teachers use their strengths and pupils work to their capacity. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are excellent. They have been refined so the school is able to review its performance thoroughly. This provides valuable information which is used by the school to set its targets for improvement to overcome any barriers to learning.
35. There is an effective governing body. The governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Although they have a high regard for the leadership of the

headteacher, they are clear about their responsibilities and act as critical friends as they plan, monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Statutory requirements are met. Governors question the work of the staff and the pupils' performance before making decisions to effect change. Their decisions are made carefully and wisely before committing to expenditure and are advised by the very able school bursar who is also a member of the school management team. Best value for money is sought and judgements are linked to the educational planning and the priorities set for improvement. The budget is carefully monitored. The present reserves are for staffing and to enhance the accommodation.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 988841.47 | Balance from previous year | 68864.90 |
| Total expenditure | 916272.41 | Balance carried forward to the next | 141433.96 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2615.98 | | |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year is **good**. Children have a good start to school life.

Children enter one of two reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they will become five. The majority of them have received nursery education at a nursery adjacent to the school. The overall attainment of the children starting their full time education is well below what is usually expected for children of this age, except in their social development where it is below the expected level. This attainment is lower than reported previously during the last inspection and reflects the decline since the last inspection of the overall attainments of the children entering the school. With good achievement, the children are working towards the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year except in their personal, social and emotional development. In this area of learning many children are on course to achieve the expected Early Learning Goals. There has been good improvement in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection, particularly in the light of the decline in standards of attainment on entry to the school.

Both reception classes provide a stable and caring environment and the quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas. Children with special educational needs are very effectively supported and have full access to the curriculum. As soon as children begin their schooling they are assessed against the nationally recommended targets. This results in effective planning by both teachers and classroom assistants with work specifically aimed at the needs of individual children. Further daily assessment ensures that planning is constantly adapted to meet the changing needs of all the children in all the areas of their development. Teachers have very good links with parents. There are very good procedures to help the parents, carers and children to settle into school and so they become involved in their work. Both classes have their own teaching areas that are well equipped and established. They have restricted access to the outside play area, which they use to develop children's physical skills and imaginative play. There is no direct access from one of the reception classrooms. As a result of this, teachers are restricted in planning activities in the outside area that are an integral part of their daily planning, and to which all children in the Foundation stage have direct continuous access.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular routines are quickly established.
- Good classroom organisation develops social interaction.
- All staff adopts a consistent approach to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

36. In both reception classes routines are well established and are helping these young children to work in various groups, to take turns and share. As a result children are growing in confidence and developing positive attitudes to their work. They understand classroom rules and routines and their behaviour is very good. For example, lining up for lunch is accomplished in a sensible and careful way.

37. Children enter the reception classes with personal, social and emotional developments that are below the levels expected. The teacher and classroom assistants place great emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills, and in order to do this they design activities supporting all areas of learning. The classroom has been carefully organised to enable children to select what they do from a planned range of activities and many work independently, alongside others or co-operatively using the available equipment, apparatus, computer, tools and materials. Children make choices sensibly and most work confidently in the various areas of the classroom. They concentrate for appropriate periods, at times sitting quietly or working as part of a group or the whole class. Some children willingly share the resources available and take appropriate responsibility for putting away what they have used. Others choose to work alone or alongside others, and have not as yet learned to share.
38. The quality of teaching and learning is good and at times very good. All staff give clear ideas of what is expected of the children including the difference between right and wrong. Well planned learning opportunities, where children are encouraged to work together and collaborate in their tasks, result in happy and confident children who learn well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's communication skills are being developed well.
- Great emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Writing activities are made relevant and interesting.

Commentary

39. In the reception classes teachers give children very good examples of how to use speaking and listening skills by listening carefully to what they say, interacting with them as they work and at times joining in with their activities and play. This has a positive impact on the progress children make. Some children enjoy conversation and are beginning to take turns in speaking and listening, particularly with adults. However, a significant majority do not listen well either to other children or adults. Many are reluctant to, and others have difficulty in expressing themselves in order to be understood. However, as a result of good and at times very good teaching strategies many children answer questions posed by their teacher and are eager to express their ideas in words. Some show confidence in speaking to adults and to other children, and many initiate conversations in their play. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing a book with an adult. Many children know some letter sounds and can draw the shapes of letters.
40. Children understand that writing is used to communicate and at times they enjoy working at the writing tables, making books and lists. They have opportunities to write during their imaginative structured play sessions. In one session observed, the children made lists of objects and equipment they would need to set up a greengrocer's shop following a visit. Staff work with small groups of children giving them very individually focused help. In one lesson observed, the teacher gave valuable support and help to a group who were sequencing the story of their visit to the greengrocers in order to write an information book about it. Many demonstrated the ability to use their knowledge of sounds to match words to the fruit and vegetables in the greengrocer's shop. Others used their knowledge of sounds to write words that were phonetically recognisable.
41. Children are aware that books are a source of information and pleasure. They handle books with confidence, and are eager to retell the stories. Some are able to recognise some familiar words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's counting skills.
- Mathematical concepts are made relevant to children's experiences.

Commentary

42. Children are making good progress in developing their awareness and understanding of mathematics. They enjoy counting. Most children can count accurately to ten, and many can count beyond ten. The teachers make good use of every opportunity to encourage children to count and use the correct mathematical language. For instance, children count how many are present each day. They count their water bottles and work out the total and if more or less are needed for the number of children present. Number rhymes are also regularly used to reinforce children's counting and children count while they sort objects as they play.
43. The teachers organise the classrooms effectively to enable them to meet the mathematical needs of all children. Planning ensures that children are provided with a balance of teaching and activities. Mathematical learning opportunities are planned into a range of activities that children choose for themselves.
44. Most children recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They know circle, square, triangle and rectangle. They combine two groups of objects and find the total, and use correct mathematical vocabulary and symbols.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a good range of interesting activities that lay a strong emphasis on practical investigation this makes learning interesting and exciting.

Commentary

45. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. Activities are interesting and are well planned with an emphasis on investigation. For example, following their visit to the local greengrocer's shop, children used some of the fruit they had bought to make 'smoothies' and were fascinated by how the fruit changed following its process in the liquidiser. As part of the same topic, children planted bean and pea seeds.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Access to outdoor facilities for the children is limited.
- Children are taught well to handle resources safely.

Commentary

46. Children do not have direct access to the outdoor facility. Teachers compensate for this by ensuring that children experience challenge in their physical development through the use of climbing apparatus and wheeled toys within the outside area during their allotted times, and in the school hall. This helps to develop children's skills of balance and coordination. However, there are insufficient opportunities planned for pupils to work outside. The children's skills of balance and coordination are underdeveloped. This is because there are insufficient large apparatus and wheeled toys for them to use. The children move around the classroom with growing confidence. They show an increasing awareness of space for themselves and for others. Many use small equipment with increasing control, as they draw or write. However, many have difficulty in manipulating scissors, though are able to manipulate construction materials. Children are taught well to handle equipment with care, and most are aware of the need to do things safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of experiences and materials are used to stimulate children's imagination.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.

Commentary

47. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned art and craft and role-play experiences to stimulate their imagination. They concentrate well on these, making pictures and models with a variety of materials and paint. They are beginning to relate well to each other and share in imaginative ideas to create stories and events. All the children enjoy singing and making music. Children learn very well from role-play. Their responses indicate that they are observing and remembering real-life situations well. An example of this was seen when they went through the actions of buying and selling fruit, following their visit to the greengrocers.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- The basic skills are taught very well and pupils' achievement is very good.
- There are excellent procedures for the assessment of pupils' work.
- There is excellent use of assessment to promote pupils' learning.
- Positive attitudes to learning are promoted very well.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to speak about their work.

Commentary

48. Pupils achieve very well. By the time they are in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach the standards expected for their ages. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
49. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reach the expected levels in reading, writing and speaking and listening. This compares very well with similar schools, and shows very good

achievement from the levels at which they come into school. There has been an upward trend in test results over the last few years.

50. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers at all stages are very good at teaching basic literacy skills, and their excellent assessments enable them to provide work which is very well matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities. As part of their management responsibilities, teachers have identified pupils who could make further improvement. They set targets which are realistic and challenging for all pupils, and check regularly to evaluate progress. They motivate their pupils very well and have high expectations that their pupils will work hard and behave well. The quality of teaching is very good overall and ranged from excellent to satisfactory, representing a very good improvement since the last inspection. In a Year 5 lesson pupils investigated viewpoints about a bypass scheme. They listed points in favour and against, and the activities were very well set up by the teacher, for pupils of all abilities. The excellent teaching led to a fast pace of work, and generated very good questions and ideas in a short time.
51. Opportunities for speaking and listening are regularly taken up, but there is scope for further development in a variety of subjects, so that pupils are able to make more sustained spoken contributions to discussions. Most pupils are confident speakers, but do not always have a wide range of vocabulary with which to express them. At present such opportunities are not fully exploited, and speaking skills could be further improved. The school has identified this as a key issue for improvement next year, and speaking and listening opportunities in official subject guidelines are being cross-referenced.
52. Standards of reading seen during the inspection were in line with those expected nationally, and pupils make very good progress. Pupils take their books home regularly and teachers and other adults keep regular checks on progress. There is a good range of books available, and the school's library, although small, is well used by pupils of all ages. Pupils say that they enjoy reading, and they have good understanding of the roles of authors and illustrators. They understand how to use dictionaries and other reference books, as well as using the Internet for research.
53. There has been a sustained focus on writing, and this is now being seen to have good impact on standards. Pupils are given many opportunities to write in a variety of contexts. The school's good variety of interesting cross-curricular topics provides many opportunities for writing about different subjects, and in a variety of genres. Handwriting is systematically taught, so that the great majority of pupils develop a neat, joined and legible style.
54. The subject is very well led, and the co-ordinator is also a member of the senior management team. This gives her a very clear overview of how literacy fits with the rest of the curriculum, and enables her to see how strategies for improvement can be brought together to benefit all the pupils. The senior management team are very well focussed on raising standards. Their strategies are well thought through and have been successful, for instance, in raising standards in writing. The assessment system is an effective tool, and clearly identifies pupils at different levels and enables appropriate targets to be set for groups and individuals. Monitoring of all aspects of teaching and learning has been effective, and very well used as a tool for raising standards.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

55. Pupils' reading and writing skills are used and reinforced well in other subjects. In science lessons, for example, pupils record the results of their investigations in a variety of ways. In a Year 4 religious education lesson, pupils read fact sheets and then produced written reports on aspects of the life of Mother Theresa. They used the report format well, producing writing which was grammatically correct, with punctuation properly used. Pupils' work displayed around the school shows a very wide range of writing, reflecting its use in all curriculum areas. While many pupils are confident to express their ideas, they often lack a wide vocabulary with

which to do so. There are insufficient systematic opportunities planned so that pupils can speak more fluently and at greater length than they do at present.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
- In Years 3-6, the use of small group teaching and teaching pupils with similar abilities is having a positive impact on standards.
- There is a very good emphasis on the pupils' application of skills to solve problems and in understanding and using correct mathematical vocabulary. However, insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to speak at length about their work.
- Teaching assistants give very good help to small groups and individual pupils who need additional help.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

56. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is very good. Standards match the national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and their achievement is very good when compared to their prior attainment. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be well below the national average.
57. The rise in standards is due to improvement in the quality of teaching, the more rigorous assessment and planning, and the use of grouping pupils into ability groups for teaching in Years 3-6. Throughout the school staff are very aware of pupils' individual needs and levels, which are targeted very well. This very good strategy of grouping pupils by their abilities enables the higher achievers to apply their knowledge to more demanding investigations, while in the lower ability group, pupils felt more secure in asking questions and seeking clarification to their problems.
58. The teaching of mathematics is very good overall in all classes, teachers provide stimulating, well-prepared lessons and explain the work very well. There are excellent assessment systems, which lead to clearly defined target teaching groups throughout the school. This gives teachers clear information about what their pupils know and can do, and what they need to do next. Lessons are very well planned, and teachers are good at keeping their pupils fully involved in their work. Pupils have clear targets to improve their work.
59. In lessons, teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to solve problems. In the very best lessons, teachers challenge their pupils with a lively pace of work, and inspire them to try harder. In an excellent Year 6 lesson observed, pupils were challenged to calculate the amount and cost of fruit and vegetables they could buy from a greengrocers shop without exceeding their allocated amount of £10. The teacher's very lively approach and excellent teaching methods ensured that all pupils achieved this. The most able, moved on to calculate the cost of 4 items when percentage reductions were available. Many achieved this to the exact amount of £5. In another excellent lesson seen in Year 5 where problem solving was used, pupils were discovering patterns in 3 digit numbers when the digits added together gave the same total This strategy was then used to devise a personalized car number plate. Accurate mathematical vocabulary and language are promoted well and pupils are constantly involved in discussions, leading to full understanding of calculations and concepts. However, there are insufficient opportunities given for pupils to speak at length and explain their work and findings of mathematical investigations. This restricts their thinking and their ability to organize their

thoughts. Pupils' work is generally well marked, so that pupils know how well they have done. Teachers often include helpful comments, which guide their pupils, and show them how to improve.

60. Teaching assistants and associate staff provide very good support for those who need it and they make an extremely valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Some help is given within the classes. This is very effective in building pupils' confidence for instance to answer questions correctly during discussions. Other pupils have additional group teaching when they are withdrawn from classes. This is given by teaching assistants and teachers. These sessions are effective in ensuring that pupils learn basic skills and grasp the main teaching points. This results in pupils of all abilities developing a broad and secure understanding of the subject.
61. The subject is very well led and managed. The excellent use of assessment to group pupils ensures that they are taught very well so they make maximum progress. The aim is to raise standards and the action taken is having a positive impact. Pupils' achievement is frequently checked and effective strategies put into place to ensure that pupils reach their potential. There is a well thought out action plan for further improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. The development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is good. Teachers identify well occasions when pupils can use their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum. For example, as part of a geography topic, Year 6 pupils used graphs when studying climate and mountain heights. In science pupils record their work effectively in tables and graphs. Older pupils use ICT successfully to construct spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well.
- The quality of the teaching is very good with good emphasis placed on scientific enquiry and investigation. The use of assessment is excellent. However, teachers do not always sufficiently promote pupils speaking skills.
- Pupils enjoy science and find lessons interesting.
- The subject is very well led and managed. There are good opportunities to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

63. Pupils achieve very well in science to attain the nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2 and 6. Standards were similar at the time of the last inspection. However, the curriculum and the quality of the teaching have improved. The pupils' very good achievement is a result of their consistently very good attitudes to the subject and the very effective help they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels by Years 2 and 6 in science has consistently exceeded the national picture.
64. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. The teachers plan their lessons very well. A very good feature of the pupils' work is the high level of scientific enquiry which was apparent in all year groups. For example, in Year 2 pupils investigated the similarities and differences between different types of plants and drew sensible conclusions about the different habitats they come from based on their findings. In Year 6, pupils investigated different types of drinks to ascertain how much acid they contain. The pupils linked their findings successfully to

the likelihood that certain drinks would harm teeth. Teachers make very good use of ICT during lessons. They use the interactive whiteboards very well to demonstrate teaching points. However, pupils' use of computers in lessons to record their work is not as well established. The technical vocabulary is taught very well. The procedures and use of assessment is excellent. Teachers know the achievements and the abilities of the pupil very well. Teachers question pupils very well to promote their learning. However, pupils' speaking skills are not sufficiently well developed. Teachers do not always insist on pupils giving them full answers and explanations of their work. This tends to limit their attainment at a higher level as some pupils struggle in writing full answers to questions, giving explanations of solutions to problems. Some very effective links are made between some subjects and science to extend pupils' understanding of the relevance of science and enrich their personal development. For example, pupils are taught the importance of staying healthy by eating a well-balanced diet and taking regular exercise. Their study of electricity is enhanced as they make torches with batteries and switches to light a bulb in their design and technology lesson. In science and in their personal, social and health education lessons pupils learn how to take care of the environment.

65. Pupils enjoy investigating and experimenting. There are very good relationships between the staff. Consequently pupils are happy and keen to learn. They work well both individually and in small groups, sharing resources sensibly.
66. The subject is very well led and managed. There are excellent systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the pupils' work and setting targets for improvement. Effective links have been established with the local high school to stretch the most able pupils. A science teacher takes weekly lessons for the most able in Year 6. Their work is aimed at a high level. The science club has a positive impact on learning as pupils gain their bronze, silver and gold awards. A weekly lesson with the high school science teacher enriches the learning of the higher attaining pupils. Good use is made of the local area, for example, to study plants and mini-beasts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The hardware and software are very good resources.
- The teachers have very good subject knowledge and skills.
- Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards in teaching.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects.

Commentary

67. In the school's last inspection, the standards achieved in information and communication technology by the end of Years 2 and 6 were unsatisfactory. The school has undertaken an effective action plan to remedy this. As a result, standards have improved to levels that are in line with the national expectations across the school. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.
68. Pupils enjoy their work in ICT. They develop their basic skills very well as they move through the school. Pupils of all ages work confidently at the computers. They can log on, find their work and save it when finished. They enjoy working on the computers, and they generally share and co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Such work makes a worthwhile contribution to their personal and social development. All areas of the curriculum are given good coverage and the school has acquired suitable software and hardware to support the pupils' work. This enables pupils to learn effectively, such as when a Year 5 class learn how to give a series of instructions to control the working of a lighthouse. The interesting

activities, as well as the teacher's very good understanding of the subject, ensure that pupils of all abilities learn very well. Most computers are linked to the Internet and this is well used for research and communication purposes. The school now has its own website, which is developing well.

69. A particularly successful improvement has been the introduction of interactive whiteboards in most classrooms. This represents a considerable investment for the school, and managers and class teachers are making sure that they get the maximum benefit from it. From the youngest classes teachers use them very effectively, such as when a Year 2 teacher was teaching simple counting games. Pupils were able to move numbers on the board for themselves and this made their learning more realistic and memorable. Older pupils can animate elements of their multi-media presentations, and show great enjoyment in developing their skills and using the interactive whiteboard to show the results to the class.
70. The teaching of ICT is very good. Much has been done to develop teachers' skills, and this has now led to greatly improved teaching of all aspects of the subject. Teachers have been given a range of training opportunities, and these have helped them to make the best use of the resources available. This training has also developed their abilities and increased their confidence in teaching specific skills. In building the use of ICT into lessons, however, there is still need for further development. In some lessons seen during the inspection teachers missed opportunities to use different aspects of ICT, when they would have been valuable aids to learning. The application of pupils' skills in lessons across the curriculum is not planned well enough. The school is aware of this need, and is planning to provide further training in the near future and more opportunities for pupils to use ICT in lessons.
71. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of the subject, and on priorities for action. Ongoing enhancements in software and hardware are well managed, and the imminent upgrading of computers in the suite will continue this improvement. Resources for the subject are now very good, and continuing to improve. The provision of an extra-curricular ICT club makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills. The school's accommodation for ICT is very good. The suite is large and well appointed, and there is room around the school for other computers to be readily available, either in classrooms, or close by.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Some examples were seen during the inspection of ICT being well used in a variety of lessons. In a Year 6 history lesson, for example, one group of pupils was sent to work on the computer, using desktop publishing software to present their work about scurvy in the 18th Century navy. Pupils in Year 2 used ICT effectively to develop an information poster about the Island of Struay. At present, however, such occasions are insufficient. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to review subject planning so as to ensure the greater use is made of all aspects of information and communication technology as tools for learning.

HUMANITIES

No judgements on provision are made in geography or history as too few lessons were observed in each subject. These subjects were sampled during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, attaining the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- There are good links made between religious education and art and design, English, information and communication technology, and these contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- The subject is enriched well by visits to places of worship.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

73. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils achieve well to reach the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is good improvement in standards since the last inspection where standards were below expectations by the end of Year 6. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good with some that is very good. Pupils who have special education needs contribute well and learn at a similar pace to others. Their views are valued. Pupils develop a good understanding of Christianity and Judaism in Years 1-2. For example, pupils in Year 1 have studied Bible stories such as Daniel in the Lion's Den and learn the meaning of trust. In Year 2, pupils study Judaism and understand the importance of The Torah. They learn to value the natural world as they study the Christian story of creation. By end of Year 6 pupils have developed a good knowledge of Christianity and the other major world faiths. This is aided by a series of trips to various places of worship and visitors who come into school from different faith communities. In Years 3-6, pupils are encouraged to develop their own views about religion. During discussions, pupils respect each other's views. Increasingly challenging questions lead pupils into thinking about values which determine how they and others act.
74. The teachers are good at exploiting the opportunities which lessons present for developing skills in other subjects. For example, in art and design, pupils in Years 1-2 make a colourful collage of Joseph's coat of many colours. In Years 3-4 pupils study the significance of Islamic patterns. In Years 1-6, teachers encourage class discussion and accounts of visits helps to develop their writing skills. However, occasionally teachers miss opportunities to extend pupils' speaking skills. Teachers generally value the pupils' personal opinions. Consequently most discussions are open and pupils feel confident in expressing their opinions. This makes a good contribution to their personal development. There are good links made with ICT. For instance, pupils studying Judaism go on a virtual tour of a synagogue in the absence of one in the vicinity. Pupils in Year 4 research the life of Mother Teresa.
75. Trips to places of worship and the visitors who come into school enrich the subject well and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils, for instance, have visited a mosque, the Anglican cathedral, a Christian church and Kingdom Hall. Work that results from these trips is of a good standard. Pupils are able to write about the relevance of church traditions and symbols. Visitors into school from different faiths help pupils to understand differences and similarities between the major world faiths.
76. The subject is well led and managed. There is a well thought out scheme of work which follows the locally agreed syllabus. The subject leader has successfully raised the profile of the subject within school and organised a successful art and religious education week. There is a clear plan of how to develop the subject further.
77. In geography work seen indicates that the school delivers a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils achieve well to meet the expected standards nationally. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. In the one good lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 were studying the sources of various foods, as part of a Healthy Eating topic. They used atlases to find the different countries, and then identified them on the world map displayed on the interactive white board. All knew and understood latitude and longitude.

78. The work seen in history indicates that pupils achieve well and standards meet the national expectations throughout the school. The teaching of history takes the form of 'topics' which take place at intervals through the year, and are often very well linked with other subjects such as geography, design technology and art. Teachers are good at presenting the work in interesting ways, so as to engage the enthusiasm of pupils of all abilities. They also supplement work in the classroom with visits to places of relevance to their topics. In the week before the inspection Year 1 pupils visited a local museum, and the follow-up work to this visit gave very good opportunities to look at similarities and differences between aspects their own lives and those of people in former times. The use of photographs of pupils at different locations in the museum was very effective, and gave very good opportunities to write about what they had seen. The work sampled indicates that the subject is well managed and the school is building up sets of resources to go with each topic. Those for topics such as the Victorians and World War 2 are very well chosen and give children good insights into aspects of those times.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No judgements on provision are made in art and design, design and technology, physical education or music as too few lessons were observed in each subject. These subjects were sampled during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.

79. In art and design, the teachers have a well thought out scheme of work and systematically develop the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This is very good improvement from the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and introduce pupils to a wide range of materials to work with and other artists work to stimulate their thinking. In Years 1-2, pupils explore a wide range of materials and use them to good effect in their work. Year 2 pupils, for instance, used different coloured papers, paints and chalks effectively to create their scenes of the 'Great Fire of London'. In Years 3 and 4 pupils inspired by the work of abstract artists such as Kandinsky, draw their black and white pictures using ICT in his style. They design patterns based on natural and religious themes such as leaves and Islamic patterns in batik and ink prints. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make collages and use ICT to draw in the style of Matisse. The pupils' work on the human form in the style of Henry Moore and Picasso was of good quality. Some pupils' skills are above average in drawing in three-dimensions. The work seen indicates that the subject is well led and managed. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are enhanced by visits from artists to work with them on three-dimensional art for example, from North America. Pupils' work is linked very well to other subjects such as history, information and communication technology and religious education. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development in particular, raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

80. In design and technology by the end of Year 2, pupils are developing a good knowledge of the key processes of planning, making and evaluating. They work with a range of materials and identify the sequence of the making process. By Years 4 and 5, pupils work carefully in the detail of their designs, for instance, as they investigate and make purses in the style of the Tudor period. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop their designing and making skills and their evaluation skills have become more considered. The pupils designed and made slippers. Much thought went into the design and quality of materials chosen. The pupils' work was in line with the expected standards. The curriculum is well managed and planned and consistently builds pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This is very good improvement from the last inspection. Pupils enjoy designing and making their products. They say it is challenging but interesting and fun. They learn from each other as they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their work.

81. In music insufficient opportunities for lesson observation and absence of the co-ordinator mean that judgements cannot be made about standards, teaching and learning. However, analysis of documentation, discussion with teachers, observation of extra curricular groups and one lesson

seen, indicate that the school delivers a good curriculum. During one very good music lesson observed, pupils in Year 5 were able to recognise patterns of rhythm and cadence to create mood. They then produced their own composition, using many everyday items around the classroom. Some percussion instruments and an old piano were added to create the mood music for 'The Haunted House'. During assemblies pupils listen to music, and tunefully join in with songs and hymns. The school provides several extra-curricular activities including choir, ocarina and guitar groups. The two teachers who support the extra-curricular activities have a very clear vision for raising the subject's profile within the school. They involve as many pupils as possible in the activities and each year produce a musical performance that is open to all through auditions.

82. In physical education pupils are given a very good range of activities, both in classes, and in lunchtime and after-school sports clubs. Clubs are very well supported and enjoyed by pupils of all ages, and provide very good enrichment of the basic curriculum. All aspects of the curriculum are given appropriate coverage. Teachers and other staff are very good at instilling good sporting attitudes. They teach children to take part in a spirit of friendly competition, and to play by the rules. Such attitudes make a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The subject is well managed, and the school is working hard to ensure that pupils get the recommended amount of physical activity during each school week. The large field, good hall and well marked playground enable all sports and games to be offered, and a good range of resources is also provided. Pupils are taught the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and the good effects which exercise has on their wellbeing.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' social awareness is developed very well through their involvement in school and community activities.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school development through the very strong school council.
- The school is supporting children's personal, social and health education very well.

Commentary

83. Pupils of all ages are given good opportunities to develop their roles as informed citizens through a very wide range of activities. Citizenship is taught well as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are encouraged to actively participate in the life of the school and community, which helps them to contribute towards the development of their community and neighbourhood spirit in the area. During one excellent lesson observed, pupils took part in a lively debate concerning the building of a by-pass across the school field. This excellent activity tackling a real life situation enabled pupils to weigh up the pros and cons of an argument, thus developing their understanding of the democratic process very well.
84. All pupils are involved in a number of activities to help others. Pupils act as buddies supporting others as they play. They have good opportunities for strong influential involvement in the work of their school through the school council. This work helps pupils to have a better appreciation of the ways in which the school can develop how they can influence this, and what needs to be done to overcome any barriers to improvement. The school council is very well developed, and gives pupils insights into the workings of democracy, and how their views can influence decisions. The involvement of the pupils in actively participating in the process of electing candidates for the school council enables them to experience citizenship in action.

85. The school has clear strategies for working in partnership with parents to help pupils to develop good social and personal skills. The very good role models provided by all adults in the school, the high quality of concern and care shown to the pupils and the effective encouragement for pupils to see their school as one big family create a positive ethos for the personal and social development of all pupils. Sex education is taught well. Pupils' attitudes mature as they progress through the school. They learn to be active and responsible members of their school family, to watch out for the needs of others and to seek ways to help those who need it. The recent introduction of the Healthy Schools initiative has led to the Year 6 pupils requesting a study of healthy eating; which has influenced the eating habits of the whole school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|---|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 2 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 2 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 2 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos) | 2 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 2 |
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| How well pupils learn | 2 |
| The quality of assessment | 1 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 2 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 2 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 2 |
| 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).