

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MIDSOMER NORTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

High Street, Midsomer Norton

LEA area: Bath and North East Somerset

Unique reference number: 109080

Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Hope

Lead inspector: Martin Kerly

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 267321

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	330
School address:	High Street Midsomer Norton Radstock
Postcode:	BA3 2DR
Telephone number:	01761 412289
Fax number:	01761 412289
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Evans
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> March 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Midsomer Norton Primary School is a large mixed school with 330 pupils on roll aged three to eleven years. The nursery, which provides part-time places for some 60 children, is an 'area resource' admitting children from a wider area, but most of the pupils aged four and over come from the local community. Pupils are almost all from a white British background. The proportion qualifying for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs and those having statements of special needs is broadly in line with the national average. There are no refugees', asylum seekers' or travellers' children. There are six pupils who speak English as an additional language and who are at a relatively early stage of English language acquisition. Although the full range of ability is represented in the school's intake, children's ability on entry is broadly in line with that found nationally. The school has gained *Investors in People* status, received an *Achievement Award* in 2002 and is currently applying for the *Gold Arts Mark Award* and for *Healthy School* status.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12783	Martin Kerly	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
13548	Patricia Bowen	Lay inspector	
22359	Jean Havard	Team inspector	English Geography History
18502	Viv McTiffen	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Personal, social and health education Music Religious education
22729	Robert Arnold	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Midsomer Norton Primary school is a good school with many strengths and few weaknesses.** Pupils achieve well. They enter the school with average levels of attainment and leave with attainment above the national average. The school provides good value for money.

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

- By Year 6, standards achieved in speaking and listening, mathematics and art and design are well above national expectations for 11-year-olds; in reading, writing, science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history and music, they are above expectations.
- Leadership by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and team leaders is very good and the school is very well managed with excellent arrangements for professional development of staff.
- The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, it is often very good.
- The quality of provision within Years 1 and 2, whilst satisfactory overall, is too variable and there is a significant change in style of provision between the reception year and Year 1.
- Assessment is good in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but there is no consistent approach to assessment and recording in most other subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as are their relationships with their teachers.
- The good curriculum is strengthened by many enriching experiences, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- There are good links with parents overall but some tensions exist with a minority who do not feel sufficiently consulted or comfortable about raising concerns.
- Governors demonstrate good support and commitment to the school; they have not yet fully developed their role as 'critical friend' in monitoring its strengths and weaknesses.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in 1999, having addressed all the main weaknesses identified then, particularly in relation to standards in mathematics and ICT, the use of performance data for target setting and tracking pupils' progress, and financial planning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	B	A	C
mathematics	A	C	A	B
science	C	B	A	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.*

**Pupils achieve well during their time in school** with standards of attainment in line with national expectations on entry to the school and above that level by the time they leave in most subjects. In the Foundation Stage, pupils make sound achievement. Almost all are in line to achieve the goals expected for their age group by the end of the reception year and some will exceed them. They achieve well in personal and social development. Pupils' achievement in the infant years is good overall, and standards of attainment by Year 2 in mathematics, writing and ICT are above nationally expected levels. In Year 1, achievement is less pronounced than in other years. By Year 6, pupils attain standards above those expected nationally in most subjects. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in Years 3 to 6.

**Pupils' personal development is very good, including their moral, social and cultural development. Their spiritual development is satisfactory.** Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they behave very well. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education across the school is good. The teaching is good and pupils learn well.** Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and it is good in the junior years where almost half of the observed lessons were very good or excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and share their plans for classes of the same age. Many have high expectations of pupils and present activities in a stimulating way which motivates them. Pupils learn particularly well when ICT is used to support the teaching. Teaching in the Years 1/2 classes is satisfactory but too variable, especially for the Year 1 pupils, and consequently some of these pupils do not learn as much as they could. All four team leaders provide very good role-models. When present, learning assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, but in many lessons they are not available. Teachers assess their pupils well in lessons but procedures for recording these assessments are not in place for some subjects.

Curricular provision is good. It is enriched very well by a wide range of activities in the performing arts and sport, particularly in the junior years. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The accommodation is satisfactory; the school has worked very hard and successfully since the last inspection to improve the appearance and use of the buildings and overcome shortcomings. The school has good procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils. There are very good arrangements for pupils joining the school and pupils' views are valued and acted upon. Links with parents and with other schools are good; links with the community are satisfactory. Most parents appreciate the good quality of the information received, and the good range of opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. A minority does not feel consulted, despite a number of formal consultation exercises, and is uneasy about approaching the school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and the management of the school are very good. The governance is sound.** The headteacher provides very good leadership with a very clear vision and high expectations of all. The deputy headteacher and team leaders all provide very good leadership. Management is very effective and efficient. Governors fulfil their statutory roles, are supportive and committed, but are not fully involved in key decision-making or informed enough about the work of the school. They need to strengthen their balanced role of providing both support and challenge.

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

Pupils are very committed to and proud of their school. They feel valued and listened to. Parents are pleased with the standards achieved by their children and most are positive about the school. The school does not work effectively to address concerns of the minority who feel uncomfortable about the perceived style of communication, about raising concerns and how these are dealt with.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things this good school should do to improve further are to:**

- ensure there is consistently good provision in the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 classes, particularly in relation to the experiences provided and levels of support given to Year 1 pupils, building on the nature of the provision in the Foundation Stage;
- develop closer working practices between the headteacher and members of the governing body in order to enable governors to fulfil their roles of support and challenge in key decision making, in monitoring the work of the school and in helping to ensure good relationships with all parents; and
- establish effective procedures for assessment and recording in art and design, history, geography, music, physical education and religious education.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The children's standards of attainment are in line with national expectations on entry to the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are above those expected nationally in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and by the end of Year 6, standards are well above those expected nationally in speaking and listening, mathematics and art and design, and above in most other subjects. Achievement by pupils of all abilities is good overall during their time in school.

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

- Standards in speaking and listening, mathematics and art and design are well above those expected by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in English, science, ICT, geography, history and music are above those expected nationally for this age group.
- Pupils achieve well during their time in school with standards of attainment in line with those expected nationally on entry to the school and above the nationally expected levels by the time they leave in most subjects.
- Pupils' achievement in Year 1 is satisfactory but less pronounced than in other years, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well; they are supported effectively in most classes and when they are withdrawn for individual attention.

#### **Commentary**

1. Results from the most recent national tests in the summer of 2004 show that standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in writing were well above the national average and above those of schools in similar neighbourhoods. Standards in reading and mathematics were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Whilst a significant proportion of pupils exceeded the nationally expected standards of attainment, there was also a significant group, larger than might be expected given the pupils' starting points, who did not achieve the basic standard expected of seven-year-olds in reading and writing. Standards in science were in line with the national average, with a significant proportion of pupils reaching higher levels.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (28.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.3 (27.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Standards attained in national tests by Year 6 pupils in the summer of 2004 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science, and above the average for similar schools in mathematics, given their starting point at the end of Year 2 four years earlier in 2000. In mathematics, a high proportion of pupils exceeded the expected standard. In English and science, the proportion exceeding the expected standard was broadly in line with that of other schools with pupils having similar starting points in the year 2000. Those Year 6 pupils with special educational needs and who received additional support achieved well, with almost all of them attaining the nationally expected level in the national tests in English and mathematics.

3. Standards by the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over recent years. Whilst standards have generally been above those expected, the upward trend has been below the national trend. At the end of Year 6, the trend has been strongly upwards in recent years, particularly in science, with standards consistently above the national average. Inspection evidence and the school's own performance data indicate that these above average standards are being maintained.
4. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations in all six areas of learning. During their time in the Foundation Stage, children make sound achievement so that, by the end of the reception year, almost all are in line to achieve the goals expected, and some to exceed them, particularly in the areas of personal and social development and physical development where they achieve well.
5. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and ICT are above those expected for this age group. In reading and science, they are in line with those expected and, in religious education, they are in line with the standards set out in the locally agreed syllabus. These standards reflect the generally good achievement by most pupils in Years 1 and 2. However, some pupils, particularly the less able and the younger ones, do not achieve as well as they could in some of the mixed-age classes with only minimal support during lessons from learning assistants.
6. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening, mathematics and art and design are well above those expected for eleven-year-olds, with pupils of all abilities having achieved very well in these subjects in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English, science, ICT, geography, history, music and dance are above those normally seen from this age group. In religious education, they are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The above average standards are an indication of the good achievement by pupils of all abilities across all four junior year groups. There is no formal register of gifted and talented pupils, but the school has consulted all pupils about their special interests and areas of expertise. More able pupils are challenged and extended appropriately through routine planning for most lessons and many are further extended through the opportunities provided in the performing arts and sporting events. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils whose first language is not English achieve well. However, some of this achievement is difficult to verify because of the lack of formal written evaluations. Assessment data are not fully used to support the tracking of individual pupils against the targets in their individual education plans. Those with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers in class and when they are withdrawn for specific support. The school works most effectively to enable individual pupils with complex and profound needs to be included successfully in the full curriculum and make appropriate academic progress.
7. The higher than nationally expected standards and good achievement are supported by the pupils' own positive attitudes to their work and to their competencies in the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, numeracy and the use of ICT. The good achievement is also a direct consequence of the good, and frequently very good, teaching and learning that takes place in these years.

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

Pupils' attitudes to their lessons and relationships with their teachers are **very good**. Pupils' behaviour, their personal development and their moral, social and cultural development are also all **very good**. Their spiritual development is **satisfactory**. Attendance is **good** and pupils arrive punctually.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and throughout the school day.
- There are very good relationships in the school amongst pupils and between pupils and their teachers.
- Children are very enthusiastic about school and arrive punctually.
- Good systems are in place to monitor absence.
- Pupils arrive in school punctually and settle quickly to their work.
- In Years 5/6 there are good opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- There are limited planned opportunities for developing the pupils' spiritual awareness.

## **Commentary**

8. There is very good provision for developing the pupils' personal qualities. From the beginning of their time in school, pupils arrive punctually and good routines are in place to ensure that they settle quickly to their work. This makes a significant contribution to their learning and achievement.
9. The good attitudes and behaviour reported at the time of the last inspection have been improved and are now very good. The school has a purposeful air and the very good relationships mean that all the pupils are able to learn in a secure and happy environment. Pupils come into school and settle quickly to their work, most of them before the official start of the school day. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and the pupils work well in groups, pairs or on their own. There is a pleasant buzz about lessons as they work hard on the tasks set. The pupils are clear about what is expected of them and understand the systems of rewards and sanctions. They enjoy school and appreciate what the school offers. They show a very keen interest in the life of the school and the broad range of activities provided for them. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
10. The school council has been established and provides a useful forum for pupils' views. Council members take their responsibilities seriously and the school provides time for pupils to express their views. In addition, the school has undertaken questionnaires to canvass the views of pupils, which have been analysed and acted upon. For example, water fountains have been provided in the older pupils' toilets and will be installed in the infant toilets when they are refurbished. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are encouraged to take responsibility in a number of ways. For example a group has established a 'shop' selling fruit and healthy snacks set up by a group of Years 5 and 6 pupils for other junior pupils who do not benefit from the free items provided for younger pupils. Other pupils in Years 5 and 6 join the children in the reception classes each lunch time to provide them with additional support. In Years 1 to 4, opportunities to take responsibility are more limited.
11. The pupils are courteous, confident and articulate. They listen well to each other and almost all show great respect at all times to their peers and adults. They move around the school sensibly. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. Their peers respect their views, and their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. Pupils are keen to attend and work hard once there. They are proud of the progress they make and value their involvement in the wider community of the school.
12. The playground is small for a school of this size but the school has taken steps to mitigate any problems this could cause by splitting the times that different classes use it. In addition, the mid-day lunchtime supervisors have had training in behaviour management and in running playground games. The pupils are very positive about their school and appreciate the range of out-of-school activities provided. Parents and pupils report that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

13. The spiritual, moral, cultural and social education provided is good. The school has been very successful in improving cultural education since the last inspection and this is now very good. The school has arranged for a number of special events relating to cultural development, such as Indian Dance and Italian weeks. Social and moral education is also very good. The pupils have many opportunities to consider right and wrong and the feelings of others. The planned opportunities for spiritual education, whilst satisfactory, are more limited.
14. Attendance is good. The school has good systems in place for monitoring absence and following up non-attendance. A significant number of pupils take holidays in school term-time interrupting their learning in school lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**, as is the curriculum in which there are **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is **good**. Partnership with parents is **good** and there are **good** links with other schools and colleges. There are **sound** links with the community.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, it is **satisfactory**. In the junior years, it is **good** and frequently **very good**; consequently, pupils learn well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good in ICT and good in English, mathematics and science; it is very good in mathematics in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are taught well and learn effectively.
- Teachers make good use of assessment during lessons and mark their pupils' work well; whole-school assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics, science and ICT but unsatisfactory in a number of other subjects.
- All four phase team leaders provide very good models of teaching.
- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is too variable, especially for the Year 1 and less able pupils.
- Teachers throughout the school have very high expectations of their pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers make very good use of ICT to support teaching and learning in lessons in the ICT suite and in those classrooms which contain an interactive whiteboard.
- Teachers, particularly in the junior years, have very good knowledge of their subjects and carefully plan their work in parallel teams sharing expertise.
- When present, learning assistants contribute well to pupils' learning but in many lessons they are not available.
- The pupils' positive attitudes and interest in their work contribute significantly to their learning and support the learning ethos.

### **Commentary**

15. The overall quality of teaching is good and, as a consequence, pupils learn well during their time in the school. This builds on the good quality reported at the time of the previous inspection. Improvements include the good use of assessment procedures in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also in ICT, which was previously reported as a weakness. More very good teaching and fewer unsatisfactory lessons were seen than at the time of the previous inspection. During the inspection, teaching and learning were good or better in three quarters of the lessons observed, and very good or excellent in a third. The best teaching is in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, where it is frequently very good and on occasion excellent. The least consistent teaching is in Years 1 and 2 where, despite some good and very good teaching, the overall quality is too variable, and pupils, particularly in Year 1 in

some classes, are not learning as well as they should. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed, although there were weaknesses in teaching and learning in a few other broadly satisfactory lessons. The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are consistently good and sometimes very good.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	14 (30%)	20 (43%)	11 (23%)	1 (2%)	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.*

16. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers, nursery nurses and learning assistants work well together to provide a rich range of experiences for the children. They focus on the children becoming independent learners and effectively support their personal and social development across all activities. They make good use of the outside as an integral part of their planning and the children move freely in and outside as appropriate. All the practitioners carefully observe the children and record their responses, enabling accurate assessment to be built up of each child across all six areas of learning. The learning environment is stimulating and there are good resources made accessible for the children to support their learning. The children demonstrate very sensible attitudes to their work, handling resources well and working alongside their peers in harmony.
17. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The team leader provides a very good role-model for her colleagues but the quality of teaching in the parallel classes, though satisfactory overall, does not fully reflect the joint planning. The lessons lack the pace, appropriately high expectations of different ability groups within the class, clear expositions and good visual stimulus deployed by the team leader. There is insufficient structured support for the younger pupils in these mixed-age classes, for example in the teaching of reading, and the teaching strategies deployed are very different from those used at the end of the Foundation Stage, slowing the learning of some pupils. Learning support assistants are available in too few lessons to work with groups of pupils and support the teacher. There were no interactive whiteboards installed in Years 1/2 classrooms at the time of the inspection.
18. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good and is frequently very good, particularly in mathematics and ICT lessons. In an art and design lesson, it was excellent where the pupils were engaged in producing animated films using ICT most effectively to produce work of a high standard. In almost half the lessons observed the quality of teaching was very good or excellent resulting in pupils making rapid gains in their learning. The two team leaders within the junior years provide very good role-models in the classroom and support teaching and learning across the parallel classes, ensuring good quality lesson planning which is used effectively by all members of their respective teams. Strengths in the teaching include:
  - teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects;
  - they have high expectations of the pupils;
  - there is generally a brisk start to lessons;
  - lessons are broken into small sections to maintain the pupils' interest;
  - varied teaching and learning styles with well prepared resources help to capture the imagination and interest of all pupils;
  - carefully matched work within the mixed-age classes ensures all are challenged; and
  - teachers regularly check what the pupils know and understand and provide lots of celebrations of achievement.

19. The good ongoing assessment in lessons is not always carried through to whole-school assessment and recording procedures, which in a number of subjects, including geography, history, music, physical education and religious education, are not yet firmly established.
20. The teachers ensure their pupils know what it is they are going to learn and frequently make effective links between subjects. For example, data collected in a science lesson was used to support work on constructing databases in an ICT lesson. From time to time, special arts weeks enrich the curriculum with pupils being taught by specialists. An excellent example of this was the Indian Dance week in the term before the inspection when all pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were fully involved in work of high quality. All the classrooms are well organised and cared for with displays supporting current learning. Most pupils are clear about their short-term targets and what they need to do to improve. Very good use is made of the interactive whiteboards in the four classrooms where they have been installed, significantly improving the quality of learning. For example, the relevant software was used to look at the continent of Asia in a Years 5/6 lesson, and to demonstrate the concept of perimeter in a Years 3/4 mathematics lesson. ICT is also used effectively to support pupils with profound learning difficulties, enabling them to work with individual support from a designated learning support assistant, on concepts similar to those being explored by the rest of the class.
21. The pupils enjoy their lessons and take a pride in their work and this contributes strongly to their learning. They enjoy talking to visitors about what they have achieved and most take care in how it is presented. Many are able to work independently during lessons and to sustain concentration and focus when working unsupervised in the library. They frequently work most effectively when collaborating in pairs. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Years ½, pupils worked in mixed-age pairs to identify patterns in two-digit numbers, recording their answers jointly on mini whiteboards. In a Years 3/4 gymnastics lesson, pairs of pupils produced symmetrical and asymmetrical balances, and, in a Years 5/6 ICT lesson, Year 6 pupils were charged with tutoring their Year 5 colleagues on preparing a database. Teachers' knowledge of their less able pupils is good and is used well when considering the next stages of development. Whilst pupils with special educational needs are learning well, their individual education plans are rarely referred to in planning. The targets set are not always specific or concise, making evaluation of progress difficult. These pupils do not have a copy of the targets they are working towards and, consequently, are unable to assess their own progress towards achieving them. Pupils of all abilities are effectively developing study and research skills and gaining experience in reviewing and evaluating their work and that of their peers.

## The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good** overall. The school provides a **very good** range of enriched learning opportunities for all pupils. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs is **good**. Accommodation is **satisfactory**. Resources are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of curricular opportunities is good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- The curriculum is significantly enriched by the provision of a wide range of very good activities during and outside the school day.
- The school's strong commitment to developing provision for ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school is fully committed to ensuring all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full equality of access and opportunity.
- Curriculum planning is good in the Foundation Stage and for Years 3 to 6 it is very good; it is satisfactory for Years 1 and 2. Good links are made between different subjects in all years.
- In Years 1 and 2, sound curriculum planning is not always implemented as intended.
- The number of teaching assistants is very low, with support staff not always available to support learning.

## Commentary

22. The school provides a lively and stimulating environment in which pupils work and learn. The curriculum is broad and enriched by a wide range of exciting activities. Through the vision and philosophy of the headteacher, the school places the creation of opportunities for all pupils to engage and succeed at the heart of its ethos.
23. The curriculum is well planned. It fully meets the statutory requirements; this is an improvement on the last inspection and the school has introduced new planning strategies to help ensure continuity and progression. Schemes of work and policies follow national guidance. The teachers make every effort to ensure the curriculum is interesting, presenting pupils with an imaginative range of experiences through which they can apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects in meaningful ways. The teachers plan for the mixed age classes very effectively in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, sound curriculum planning is not always implemented as intended. For example, different activities to match the needs of different ability groups in a lesson are used in one class but not in the same lesson in a parallel class. The school needs to ensure activities in lessons include more differentiated work for the wide ranges of ability and maturity in the mixed age classes in the infant years.
24. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. There are stimulating areas set out in the classrooms and outdoors for the six areas of learning and planning takes account of the nationally recognised learning goals for pupils aged five. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. The curriculum is further enriched by the school's well-planned and creative cross-curricular activities which have a strong focus on developing cultural awareness. For example, the school takes part in a wide range of international links, including links with schools in Canada and India. Pupils clearly enjoy these experiences.
25. There is very good provision of additional activities. The pupils can take part in a wide range of sporting activities, including football, gymnastics, running and dance. Other opportunities include learning to play musical instruments and attending arts, drama and language clubs. The school successfully takes part in local competitions. For example, the swimming team recently won the local swimming gala. The younger pupils also have an opportunity to attend clubs, including choir. Participation in the arts is developed very well during the school day, the pupils taking part in a range of projects with local artists. All the pupils have an opportunity to take part in dramatic and musical productions. Visits and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum and extend pupils' learning in a variety of ways. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 dramatised the role of the Romans when they visited a Roman Fort in Wales. The annual Year 4 and Year 6 residential visits provide the pupils with opportunities to experience outdoor adventure activities.
26. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. The school has introduced opportunities within the school day to develop these areas, including 'circle time' and philosophy when pupils are encouraged to talk around issues of personal development and concern. The school has recognised the need to establish a clear overall programme of work for personal, social and health education to further strengthen the systematic and progressive building of pupils' skills as they mature. Sex and drugs education are established for the older pupils. The teaching of independence is a high priority in the school and pupils are developing an increasing awareness of their personal development and responsibilities. The Year 6 pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as supporting the younger children in the playground. The school council provides the pupils with an opportunity to accept responsibility for changes in the school. Health education is good and the school is working hard to achieve the 'Healthy School Award'. Strategies to encourage healthy eating include opportunities for Year 6 pupils to sell fruit at playtime.
27. Provision for special educational needs is good. All pupils who have special educational needs have individual education plans, which support progressive and carefully targeted provision. The quality of targets set out in these plans is variable but generally satisfactory.

However, the targets require matching more closely to what pupils need to do to improve and the teachers' review comments need to refer more specifically to what has been achieved. Some targets are repeated without obvious reason and some targets are inaccessible to pupils because of the vocabulary used. However, the school is committed to meeting the needs of all pupils. There is an expectation that all pupils should have full access to all activities whilst any disabilities are treated sensitively and with respect by both staff and pupils. Specialist equipment is provided to enable specific pupils to operate alongside their peers and there is effective support for the few pupils for whom English is an additional language.

28. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good throughout the school, with a good spread of expertise, experience and subject knowledge, and all teachers are very clear about their respective roles. The allocation of support staff for the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The special support assistants, employed to support those pupils with special educational needs, make a positive contribution to pupils' learning by developing their self-confidence and social skills. However, the number of teaching assistants to support learning in Years 1 to 6 is very low and this sometimes hinders the progress of the younger pupils.
29. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in accommodation with new administration facilities, library and ICT suite. The accommodation is now satisfactory with most of it being very well organised and cared for and in good order. The quality of displays is good overall and enhances the learning environment. The school makes good use of all its available space, including a separate building which is used as a dining hall and resources store. However, this annex is in poor condition and does not have toilet facilities. Facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage are limited by the aging and separate temporary accommodation. Although the teachers make every effort to create a stimulating learning environment, the buildings lack the flexibility needed for the early years' curriculum. There are good administrative facilities and a separate staff workroom in addition to the staffroom. Toilets for adults are inadequate, with poor access. Those for the pupils are in the process of being upgraded, with further major refurbishment planned for the week after the inspection. Learning resources are good. The library is thoughtfully and carefully organised. Provision for the teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection, the school creating a new ICT suite which is used very well. Facilities to use ICT in the classrooms are limited and the school does not yet have the number of computers needed for its size. The ICT suite and hall act as thoroughfares which can disturb lessons.

### Care, guidance and support

The school has maintained the good provision reported at the time of the last inspection and in many areas improved upon it. The school is **effective** in promoting the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils. It provides **good** support, advice and guidance for pupils, which has a positive effect on their learning. The school involves pupils **well**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well supervised in school and in the playground.
- The staff team is alert to issues within the Health and Safety at Work legislation.
- There are good systems for recording pupils' progress and development.
- Pupils are very confident about receiving help from teachers.
- There are very good induction procedures for children entering the school.
- The school has canvassed the views of pupils and values and acts upon their ideas.

### Commentary

30. The staff team knows the pupils well and all members of the team are concerned to ensure that all pupils learn to the best of their ability. The great majority of pupils feel there is someone to go to for help and support; pupils say they feel secure and happy at school and

almost all report having very good and trusting relationships with adults in school. They also report that they 'get a lot of help from the teachers'. Support staff and midday supervisors work effectively alongside teachers.

31. The school is alert to the need for good health and safety procedures and now has an effective health and safety policy, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The buildings and grounds are checked regularly and appropriate records are kept. The office staff team has very good records of pupils' personal information and emergency numbers. Accidents, which happen rarely, are recorded appropriately and are analysed to identify and remedy their cause and frequency. All staff members are conversant with child protection procedures and the school has good relationships with the local education welfare and social services.
32. The school has very good induction procedures which enable children to come into school gradually and settle well without anxiety.
33. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Identification of needs is effective and prompt action in providing good provision means that many pupils require additional help for shorter periods. Identification of needs, individual tuition for dyslexia during school time and provision of extra-curricular support for pupils with physical difficulties, for example the 'physio club', are all examples of where care has been focused very effectively on specific needs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs meets all statutory requirements.
34. The achievements of all pupils are carefully tracked in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This enables challenging yet realistic targets to be set for pupils by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Shorter-term targets are also set and pupils are helped to understand their own targets. The staff team's detailed knowledge of the pupils helps to ensure that the informal means of monitoring their personal and social development are effective. Recently, the school commendably consulted all the pupils about their particular interests, skills and hobbies. This information was then used to help steer pupils towards opportunities within school and also within the wider community.

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

Overall links with the large majority of parents are **good**. There are **good** links with other schools and links with the community are **sound**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good information is provided to parents via newsletters, parents' noticeboards and letters from class teachers.
- Weekly targets in homework books help parents' involvement.
- Parents' views are sought through occasional questionnaires.
- The annual reports to parents are detailed and of good quality.
- Curriculum evenings are arranged to help parents support their children.
- A good range of charities is supported.
- There are effective links with other schools involving pupils and staff.
- Procedures to deal with complaints cause some parents concern.
- The introduction of the 'Healthy Eating' programme has caused problems to some parents, with some communications open to misunderstanding.

## Commentary

35. The school sends out regular newsletters and provides noticeboards for parents and there are good communications between parents and their children's class teachers. The pupils have a clear understanding of what homework they need to do. The school has provided workshops for parents to help them understand how they might best help their children at home. The school has canvassed parents' views through questionnaires, and these have been analysed and acted upon. Two consultation evenings are held each year to discuss pupils' progress and good annual reports provide parents with detailed information on progress made by their children. Curriculum evenings have also been held. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are informed and consulted in annual reviews and when the targets on individual education plans change. There are good links with local authority support services and these are used appropriately by the school when pupils' individual needs cannot be fully supported. There is currently good support for the few pupils whose first language is not English.
36. Despite all of this, a substantial minority of the parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire and of those attending the parents' meeting were unhappy about how the school responds to concerns expressed by parents. The inspection team cannot agree with all the concerns raised but note the strength of perceptions. For example, misunderstandings about the introduction of the 'Healthy Eating' project have created some tensions. These are making partnership between some parents, governors and senior staff difficult to maintain. However, the overwhelming majority of the parents are supportive of the school, full of praise for the work of the staff, and very happy with progress made by their children. The school has a 'Parent Support Group' which works hard to support the school through fund-raising activities.
37. The school is well thought of in the local community. There are limited opportunities for the school to be used outside the school day. The children have the opportunity to visit a range of places and a variety of visitors come into school to enrich the curriculum and give the children a wide view of life beyond the school and their immediate environment. The pupils are involved in raising money for a number of local charities, such as the local hospice and a homeless project, together with national and international organisations. All of these make a positive impact on the pupils' learning.
38. Most children enter the Foundation Stage from a variety of pre-school provision, but most are from the on-site nursery. The induction arrangements for entry into school are very good. Most of the pupils in Year 6 transfer to one of the three secondary schools in the area and the school has well-established links with these schools and with neighbouring primary schools.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership by the headteacher and senior managers is **very good**. Management of the school is **very effective**. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a very good leader. She has a clear vision for school development and high expectations of all.
- The deputy headteacher and team leaders are very effective in supporting colleagues and ensuring the aims of the strategic plan are achieved.
- Subject leaders are effective but some of their plans need to focus more on raising standards.
- Performance management and continuing professional development of staff are excellent and are having a beneficial effect on standards.
- There are good systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Communications within school are very good but they are less effective with the governing body.

- Governors have not yet fully developed their balanced role in providing both support and challenge.
- There is good monitoring of performance data but insufficient use made of it in tracking future progress of some pupils with special educational needs.
- Financial management and administration are very good.

## Commentary

39. Leadership by the headteacher is very good and this has improved the school significantly since the last inspection. She has a clear vision for the school, high expectations of pupils and staff and a very professional approach to her complex role. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and together they form a highly effective team. There is a shared commitment amongst all staff to value all pupils equally and to raise standards. The creation of four team leaders has had a major impact across the school. All four are very good role-models in their classrooms. In addition, they provide a lead for their colleagues working in parallel classes, helping to ensure that pupils receive the most appropriate opportunities to achieve better. They support colleagues effectively, plan specifically for their areas of responsibility and monitor the work within their teams. As a team, they lead the monitoring and evaluation work across the school well, using performance data and other information well.
40. Since the last inspection, development planning has improved. There is now a comprehensive strategic plan which is the focus for evaluation, monitoring and improvement. Team leaders' plans are very good and successfully adapt the main goals and strategies from the strategic plan to match the needs of the pupils in their respective teams. Subject leadership is mainly good, but some subject leaders' plans are insufficiently focused on raising standards. This is fully realised by senior managers and reflected in development priorities.
41. Performance management systems for staff are excellent. The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly monitor teaching and provide developmental feedback. All line managers are well trained and the effectiveness of the system was recently praised in the re-assessment report from the 'Investors in People' award. Monitoring systems are very good. When combined with the very clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations displayed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, they form a mechanism to ensure continuing improvement. The professional development needs of all staff are an integral part of this process and are linked to whole-school as well as personal targets. For example, the record of staff training contains an impressive range of activities that have been linked, either to the school's targets or to the personal development of staff. The clear line management structure has contributed well to the very good levels of communication and support enjoyed by staff.
42. Governors are supportive of the school, and committed to its success. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, strengthening this aspect of their work since the time of the last inspection. However, communications between the governing body and senior managers rely heavily on information presented by the headteacher during meetings of committees or of the full governing body. Governors are not sufficiently involved at the drafting stage in deciding key policies. The headteacher's reports are useful and contain general information about the successes of the school but do not provide sufficiently focused information on a structured basis to help governors increase and develop their working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some governors have not felt able to hold the school sufficiently to account whilst supporting and recognising its many strengths, and their balanced role of providing support and challenge is underdeveloped. Few governors visit systematically for a specific purpose so that the work of the school can be appraised during meetings of the full governing body or during committees.
43. Performance data generated through assessment systems is used well by the school to set rigorous and accurate performance targets and predict future achievement by the pupils. This represents another improvement since the last inspection and has helped raise standards. The data is also used well to target specific help to pupils who have additional educational needs and this support is having a good impact on helping those with special educational

needs to improve. However, evaluations of progress by some of these pupils are often not recorded and specific data to assist in tracking progress is not readily available.

44. Financial management was an area of concern reported in the last two inspections. Significant progress has been made and this is now very good. The recent audit from the local authority confirms the highly efficient systems that are now operating in terms of administration and financial control. Monitoring is very thorough and the significant overspend which was apparent when the headteacher took over the school is now firmly resolved. With the support of the governors, the headteacher has made considerable improvements through careful and prudent planning which have had a considerable impact on raising standards across the school.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	865,746	Balance from previous year	66,241
Total expenditure	859,298	Balance carried forward to next year	72,689
Expenditure per pupil	2,604		

45. More than half of the relatively large carry forward figure at the end of the last financial year was money set aside to refurbish the pupils' toilets. Work on these toilets was due to begin during the week following the inspection.
46. There are a number of significant aids to raising achievement further in this successful school. They include the leadership and high expectations of the headteacher and senior colleagues, the good and very good teaching and learning and the pupils' very positive attitudes to their work. The main barrier relates to shortcomings within the provision for some pupils during Years 1 and 2.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

47. The nursery and reception classes effectively provide stimulating activities for all areas of learning. Good use is made of available accommodation which, in itself, is no more than adequate. Consistently good teaching and very good team work amongst all the practitioners mean that children of all ages are well supported in their learning. As a result, from starting points broadly in line with national expectations, children make sound progress towards the levels expected for their age and almost all are in line to attain the levels expected of them by the age of five, with some exceeding them. The children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development, with many reaching levels above those expected nationally at the age of five. In other areas, their achievement is sound. The good quality and breadth of their experiences helps to ensure firm foundations are laid for the next stages of education. Nearly all of the children who enter reception have attended the nursery class. There are very good arrangements for children starting in the nursery and the reception classes; arrangements for those moving to Year 1 are satisfactory. Systems for recording progress are good. Foundation Stage practitioners are keen to develop a consistency of approach which can be built upon by Year 1 teachers. The team of practitioners is very well led and there is a clear team approach, successfully overcoming the potential difficulties imposed by having separate widely spaced buildings. Good use is made of the outside area, making it integral to each of the six areas of learning. Planning is detailed and thorough, and all practitioners are involved in careful observation, assessment and recording of individual children's responses to their wide range of experiences. There has been good overall improvement in the Foundation Stage since that reported in the last inspection, particularly in relation to the leadership, teamwork and the use of the outside areas. There has been no structural improvement in the quality of the accommodation.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well and attain standards above those expected by the end of their time in the Foundation Stage.
- There are very good relationships between the children and with the practitioners.
- Practitioners provide a good balance between independent choice and structured activities.
- Daily routines are firmly established through easily followed systems.

#### **Commentary**

48. Children are eager to become involved in the range of exciting activities on offer. They settle well into class routines and their behaviour is very good. In the nursery, children's confidence and self-esteem grows because there is a clear structure to the session each day and learning areas are well organised. Good teaching means that children quickly learn what is expected. They are encouraged to clear up and act as helpers. They are reminded to be polite to each other. Children listen and follow instructions well, often helping each other. High expectation of behaviour continues in the reception classes where children's social skills grow. During free activities, they organise themselves and become enthusiastically involved. They share and cooperate with others, working quietly and independently or together as a group. They plan what they will do. For example, during the inspection, a group of children was busy with large building blocks. The children decided which blocks to use and how they would place them, talking together as they built an 'igloo'. Children's choice of activities is carefully monitored to

ensure a good range of experiences. Because of the very good start they receive, most children achieve well and are likely to exceed the goals expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have positive attitudes towards books, stories and drama.
- There are good opportunities for children to describe work and talk to each other.
- There is a systematically planned introduction of skills in preparation for Year 1.
- Some opportunities to further develop language through role play are lost.

### **Commentary**

49. Children make sound progress and most are in line to attain the goals expected for their age. In the nursery, good teaching links stories children hear to other areas of their learning. For example, on a windy day during the inspection, children listened to a story about a kite to link with their learning about toys. They listen attentively and join in when prompted, sometimes commenting on what they see in the pictures. In the reception classes, children look at books quietly in book corners. They like to talk about what they see and handle books with care. Good teaching ensures access to a wide range of reading material which is selected for children to take home regularly and this helps to promote effective learning. As the year progresses, children learn key words and basic sounds to help with their reading. Sometimes, they are involved in re-enacting a popular story, such as 'The Gingerbread Man', which they enjoy. Teaching and learning of writing skills is good. Writing skills develop so that, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most children produce letters that are recognisable and well formed in line with what is expected for their age, and some write at length. Adults talk to children about what they are doing and often, at the end of sessions, children explain their work to others. When they play in 'The Cinema' or 'The Museum Shop', they happily and imaginatively adopt roles although, during the inspection, there was little evidence of practitioners' involvement in these areas. As a result, opportunities to extend language through imaginary play are limited.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Activities in the nursery and reception classes are varied and interesting.
- Systematic development of skills is carefully planned.
- Good use is made of outdoor areas to extend learning.

### **Commentary**

50. Achievement by the children is sound and by the time they leave reception, most children attain the levels expected for their age. The good teaching carefully builds upon skills enabling the children to learn well. In the nursery, children become familiar with colours, days of the week and numbers. They sort, match, compare and select number games from the 'mathematics corner'. In the reception class, good teaching offers children a range of practical number activities. As a result, understanding is consolidated well and early skills extended effectively. Displays and play areas stimulate interest and introduce mathematical words. Children become familiar with prices on menus and 'sell' tickets for entry to the 'Museum' or 'Cinema'. They sort and identify birthday groups, make graphs of favourite foods and learn times of the day. Many count reliably to ten and know numbers beyond. Learning is well

supported by outdoor activities and by use of the computer, when children apply their number skills. As ability increases, children record their work in preparation for learning in Year 1.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of practical activities prepares children well for later learning.

### **Commentary**

51. Through good teaching and a range of resources, children become familiar with the immediate school surroundings and learn well about the world around them. Nursery children use the outdoor areas to discover how vehicles move down ramps or to 'go shopping'. Indoor play areas introduce them to the 'Doctor's' when they use telephones and stethoscopes in imaginary play. With sand and water, they explore and satisfy their curiosity about how things feel. During the inspection, they investigated coloured ice cubes and described them as "cold", "wet", "slippery". In the reception classes, further discoveries are made through investigating and sorting materials and colours or deciding how toys move. Children make gingerbread men and become familiar with recipes. Computers are regularly used for children to perform simple functions. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when children's early technological understanding was not so well supported. Through the travels of Paddington Bear, children learn about far-away places and handle items from other cultures. There is opportunity to begin to learn French. Play areas introduce real-life places where they buy tickets, make their own "films" and sell items from the Museum Shop. Achievement by the children is sound and by the time they leave reception, children are well prepared for the next stage of learning, attaining the levels expected for their age.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and many attain levels higher than expected for their age.
- Good use is made of outdoor areas, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Nursery and reception classes benefit from the use of the school hall for movement lessons.
- Provision in this area strongly supports the children's personal and social development.
- Good hand and eye co-ordination is encouraged through a variety of activities.

### **Commentary**

52. The good use of the various facilities indoors and out enables the children to achieve well and by the end of the reception year, many are attaining levels higher than expected for their age. Improved access to outdoor areas for all ages has had a positive impact on children's learning and it is now good as a result of imaginative and good teaching. They share equipment with others and learn how to use space effectively. They pedal and push vehicles and prams with increasing control and sustained effort. At the end of sessions, children neatly park within clearly marked bays. Indoors, in both Nursery and Reception, a good range of activities helps children to develop their skills with small cutting tools, scissors, brushes, pencils and crayons. They thread beads, fit together jigsaws and make models. Very good teaching in the hall means that children have the chance to explore space safely and confidently. Good support and encouragement mean that children change for lessons with increasing ability. They move across the playground with control and behave very well. Once in the hall, they follow instructions and use the space with growing awareness so that, by the time they leave

reception, most move with a good level of control and co-ordination, with many likely to exceed levels expected for their age.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for imaginary play in the reception classes have improved since those previously reported.
- There is a good focus on art and music.
- Children's work is valued and attractively displayed.

### **Commentary**

53. Children make sound progress so that most attain the levels expected for their age by the time they are five; some exceed them. In the nursery, during the inspection, small groups of children eagerly took it in turns to choose musical instruments. Teaching and learning are good overall and develop children's creativity well in the nursery and reception classes. Very good teaching in one lesson set high expectation for what children could achieve. As a result, they made very good attempts to play in time to a simple beat and stop and start on cue. Frequently, children paint colourful pictures and make junk models. They move to music and sing songs. In the reception classes, older children hear music from other cultures and dress up in clothes from India. They identify colours in a large patchwork quilt and express their preferences for materials and textures before making their own patterns. Effective teaching means that children learn specific skills, especially when painting or cutting. Through role-play areas, teachers stimulate imagination by creating real-life places where children can develop storylines and play together. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the focus on imaginary play areas in reception was not so well developed.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The development of speaking and listening skills is a strength of the school; the pupils achieve standards well above those expected for their age group by the end of Year 6.
- Writing skills are very well developed with good use made of opportunities in other subjects, especially in information and communication technology (ICT) and history.
- Marking is very good, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment of the pupils' written work is good.
- Strategies to develop and monitor reading skills in Years 1 and 2 need to be developed further to enable the pupils to achieve a higher standard.

## Commentary

54. The good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained with further improvement in writing, and very good improvement in speaking and listening. In the national tests in the summer of 2004, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 attained standards well above the national average and above those of schools in similar neighbourhoods in writing. Standards attained in reading were above the national average and in line with similar schools. Within reading, a significant proportion of pupils attained standards lower than those expected for their age, but a larger than expected proportion exceeded the nationally expected standards. Standards rise in relation to those expected for their age, as pupils get older and gain more confidence. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards attained in English were well above those expected for this age group and in line with those in similar schools. Standards in English have improved in recent years in line with the national trend in Year 2 tests and above the national trend in the Year 6 tests.
55. Achievement is sound in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, making good progress towards the specific targets in their individual education plans. These pupils are supported well throughout the school, as are the few pupils for whom English is an additional language who also achieve well. However, a lack of general teaching assistant support, especially in the Years 1 and 2 classes, limits the help that can be given to the younger or less able pupils who need extra guidance. This is having an impact on achievement and standards, as is demonstrated in the most recent test results when a small, but significant, number of pupils achieved standards below those expected for this age group.
56. Standards of speaking and listening are high and pupils achieve very well overall during their time in the school. In Year 2, they are above national expectations and by Year 6, pupils are articulate and use language very effectively, well above levels expected nationally. They are confident in speaking before an audience and are encouraged by all adults to express themselves and to talk about what they have learned. Pupils are frequently required to talk with a partner about an aspect of their learning and this experience enhances their skills. Another reason for the very good standards is because teachers throughout the school maximise opportunities for pupils to use good vocabulary, often involving the pupils in lively discussions and debates. For example, when developing news report writing, pupils in a Years 5 and 6 class were able to debate with maturity the advantages and disadvantages of having a class pet. All the pupils throughout the school demonstrate good listening skills, when adults and other pupils are talking. They follow instructions very well. The quality of their listening adds much to pupils' ability to learn and achieve their full potential.
57. Standards in reading are in line with those expected for their age in Years 1 and 2 and above national expectations in Years 3 to 6. The teachers provide a range of opportunities in lessons for pupils to engage in group, paired and silent reading.
58. The school has worked hard to develop a library which is used to very good effect. The range and quality of books are good and the library is well organised. Pupils can borrow books each week using a computerised system and the older pupils confidently use the library for research. The pupils regularly use their class libraries for silent and shared reading. However, many of the books in the class libraries need replacing, especially in Years 1 and 2 where the books are of poor quality.
59. The teachers are working very hard to improve the quality of writing and this is having a positive impact on standards. Achievement is good and pupils attain standards above expectations for their age throughout the school. There has been an improvement in attainment for all pupils, including boys, who are responding to the stimulating, interesting and exciting activities provided to develop their skills. Pupils' vocabulary and good use of descriptive language are exploited to very good effect. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress. For example, when writing stories about 'The Selfish Crocodile', the Year 2

pupils used good descriptive vocabulary, spelt words accurately and used the correct punctuation.

60. From Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress in writing. By Year 6, they confidently mix dialogue, description and action in their stories. Varied vocabulary and appropriate use of alliteration are used very well to create different effects. Punctuation and spellings are usually accurate and handwriting is generally neat and legible. Pupils clearly take a pride in their work. This is especially the case in Year 6, where extended writing of a very high quality is produced. A very good example was seen in Year 6 when, writing about 'Zoe's Bad Day', the writer sustained the reader's interest through excellent characterisation, good-humoured dialogue and the use of surprise.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Almost all teachers demonstrate good skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. Where the teaching is good, particularly in the junior years, the teachers manage the teaching of different abilities and age groups very well with all the elements of the National Literacy Strategy covered effectively. They also provide a range of challenging activities, with an emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through purposeful and interesting activities and this enables the pupils to achieve very well. Teachers use ICT to very good effect to support learning. Pupils have a positive attitude towards English. They concentrate well, join in the activities with enthusiasm and work hard. The pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in class by learning support assistants when available. The depth and range of provision would be enhanced with extra in-class support from teaching assistants, especially for the younger pupils. However, the teaching of reading skills and monitoring of pupils' progress needs developing further, particularly in Years 1 and 2 when pupils are first developing their reading skills. In these classes, there are insufficient learning support assistants to help support groups of pupils. The school has worked hard to develop a home reading scheme. This is very well resourced with a wide range of books to stimulate interest. The parents provide valuable support by hearing their children read at home but some teachers do not systematically monitor the pupils' ability to read the books. Teachers make limited use of the home-reading diaries to establish a regular dialogue between home and school on reading progress.
62. Marking of written work is very good, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The teachers provide the pupils with a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Assessment of written work is in place and is used effectively for future planning. However, the assessment of reading skills needs developing further, particularly in Years 1 and 2. New tracking procedures have been introduced by the senior management team to monitor progress in reading and writing throughout the school. These have yet to make an impact on individual target setting and standards.
63. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The new English leadership team has made a good start in monitoring standards, including sampling pupils' written work. They are developing an understanding of what needs to be done to improve provision and have worked well with staff to make improvements such as the development of assessment procedures for writing. The subject leaders are hardworking and enthusiastic. Their leadership of the subject is helped by the contribution of the very effective team leaders. Relationships are good and all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities. However, the subject leaders need to develop the same clear understanding of standards across the curriculum as the team leaders have.

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

64. Pupils use language and literacy skills very well in other subjects. They make good use of their speaking skills across the curriculum because they are frequently engaged in discussion and debates about a range of topics. Some of the best work was seen in a Years 1/2 class assembly when the 'talking partners' confidently discussed 'team work'. Writing skills are also used well in many areas of the curriculum, including ICT, geography and science. In history,

pupils used their skills very well to write poetry, stories and information text. Opportunities for pupils to use library books to develop reference skills in other subjects are good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is a strength of the school, being **good** overall and **very good** in Years 3 to 6.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above those expected nationally for this age group.
- Pupils of all abilities in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and respond well to new challenges.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall being too variable between parallel classes.
- The subject is very well led.
- ICT is used very well to support teaching and learning in mathematics.

### **Commentary**

65. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years but are now above those expected for this age group. These standards represent a significant improvement from those at the time of the last inspection when they were below average in Year 2. In last year's national tests for Year 2, all pupils attained the standards expected nationally, which is a higher proportion than normal for all schools; the proportion exceeding the nationally expected standard was broadly in line with that of similar schools. Pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards well above the national expectations for their age. In last year's national tests for Year 6, standards were also well above the national average and higher than those achieved by pupils in schools with pupils at similar starting points in Year 3 in 2001. This has maintained the well above average standards reported last time.
66. The pupils' mathematical understanding is broadly in line with national expectations on arrival in school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well overall during their time in the school, especially in Years 3 to 6, making more progress than pupils with similar starting points in other schools. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the classroom and when they are withdrawn for additional support. Higher-attaining pupils also achieve well in lessons and this is further encouraged by attendance at 'Master Classes' in the school and at the local secondary school. The achievement of many pupils in Year 1, whilst satisfactory, is not as pronounced as achievement in other year groups. The school's challenging targets for the end of Year 6 were achieved in the summer of 2004. The targets for this year, whilst slightly below those of last year, remain challenging for the year group concerned. These pupils are reasonably clear about what is needed to achieve their expected levels.
67. At the time of the inspection, most classes were focusing on the number system and methods of calculation. However, evidence from pupils' mathematics workbooks and from teachers' plans shows that the full range of mathematical concepts set out for each year in the National Numeracy Strategy is covered during the course of the year; the workbooks contain a substantial amount of recorded work, especially in Years 3 to 6.
68. Almost all pupils enjoy mathematics. They are positive about the subject and respond well to new challenges. They participate fully in various number rhymes and tables, using newly taught strategies, and they talk about their work with enthusiasm and pride. Most of them show pride in their recorded work which is presented well.

69. Teaching and learning are good overall; in Years 3 to 6 they are very good. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching which enable the pupils to make good progress in each lesson. The teachers' very good knowledge of the subject and their enthusiasm enable them to explain concepts clearly. This is greatly helped by their good use of visual material. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and nearly always carefully match the work to meet the needs of different groups within the same set or class. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with a range of activities within the course of one lesson. In some lessons there is very good use of ICT, especially in those classes where there is an interactive whiteboard. In addition, pupils are encouraged to think and talk about their mathematics and to consider the most effective method or strategy to use in the circumstances. Examples of these successful strategies included able Year 2 pupils working together in pairs, sorting and recording sets of three digit numbers, and pupils in a Years 5/6 lesson explaining the strategies they had used to solve a complex number problem, and then to evaluate their success. In Years 1 and 2, there is some good teaching but the quality is too variable between the classes. Some work, especially for the younger pupils, is not well matched to the pupils' levels of understanding, and there are not enough learning support assistants to help teach these relatively young pupils. The teaching and learning strategies used in Year 1 are significantly different from those in the reception year and during the inspection week, class timetables in Years 1 and 2 showed only three mathematics lessons for the week. If continued throughout the year, this would be insufficient to cover all the mathematics to be taught within the National Curriculum.
70. Throughout the school, the pupils' learning is helped by the good range of assessment strategies used by teachers to establish pupils' levels of understanding at the beginning of lessons and again at the end of lessons. Pupils' recorded work is carefully marked with explanations of how they could improve. There are good systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress at the end of units of work and at the end of each year. The annual reports to parents provide clear and detailed information about their children's mathematical attainment, progress and possible next steps.
71. The subject is very well led by a teacher who provides a very good role model as a classroom practitioner. This has been recognised by the local education authority and she provides demonstration lessons for teachers in the school and across the local area. She monitors the subject very effectively, and so has a very good knowledge of standards and the quality of teaching and learning in the subject across the school. She has also supported colleagues to develop their own practice by providing high quality materials and guidance. The leadership is further strengthened by the very good practice of the other two team leaders in Key Stages 1 and 2.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

72. The principles of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) have been adopted and are fully embedded in the practice across the school, There are good numeracy displays in all classes, supporting pupils' activities in other subjects. The pupils' good understanding of mathematics, including data, mental calculations and the use of measures, all effectively support their learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in a Year 2 class were able to use their understanding of rotation and 90 degree turns when controlling a programmable robot.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils' attitudes are very good and this makes a significant contribution to the good achievement they make.
- Standards of attainment are above those expected of their age group by the time pupils are in Year 6.

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Leadership of science is very good.

### **Commentary**

73. Standards have been rising steadily in national tests at Year 6 over the past four years since the last inspection. Standards attained by Year 2 pupils in the summer of 2004 were high overall, with many pupils exceeding the nationally expected levels for their age; however, a significant number of pupils did not achieve the minimum standard expected for their age. Standards attained by the Year 6 pupils in the national tests in the summer of 2004 were well above the national average and in line with those by pupils in schools with similar starting points. Standards being attained by the current Year 2 pupils are in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. At Year 6, standards are above average for their age and pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English also achieve well. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests is increasing. The difference in attainment and achievement between different age groups is associated with the quality of teaching they receive. The quality of teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' recorded work in their notebooks in these classes demonstrates that the teachers' expectations are high, presentation is better and there is a wider variety of work than in the Years 1/2 classes, where teaching and learning are satisfactory.
74. During lessons and in discussions pupils display an impressive enthusiasm for science and this contributes to their good learning. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. They enjoy the practical activities which teachers present well and older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of investigative strategies, and good knowledge of the specialist vocabulary associated with science. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils appeared very comfortable in using complex words associated with the properties of materials. They understood, for example, the difference between opaque and transparent, building on a good homework activity set previously. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are independent learners and are encouraged in this. During one lesson, they were asked to take their pulse rates. The teacher was confident that everyone would do this and the pupils responded extremely well, completing the task without a need for any reminders concerning techniques required.
75. There is no specific subject leader at present but the systems and planning established by the previous person are of such good quality that standards have continued to rise and are predicted to continue to do so. Leadership is now shared effectively by the team leaders of each phase who successfully maintain an overview of planning, teaching and standards. Teachers feel very well supported by the planning materials and the simple but effective assessment strategies enable accurate and relevant data to be passed on, ensuring continuous development, particularly across Years 3 to 6.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

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

- Standards in Years 2 and 6 are above national expectations in most aspects of the subject.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- There are good assessment and recording arrangements in place across the school.
- There is a very clear and helpful scheme of work.
- Very good use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- The ICT suite is well presented and used.
- There are insufficient computers despite a significant increase since the last inspection.
- The subject is very well led.

## Commentary

76. Standards observed in lessons in Years 2 and 6 are above national expectations for these age groups and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Standards are particularly strong in exchanging and sharing information and in finding things out. In the infant years, pupils are good at developing ideas and making things happen for their age group; by Year 6, this aspect is sound but not as strong as the other areas. The pupils really enjoy ICT and approach all their work with interest and genuine curiosity. This contributes to their overall good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of good support, sometimes one-to-one with specialist equipment to meet their particular physical needs. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were learning to control a programmable robot with a series of instructions. They were developing effectively the skills to predict routes and destinations, and identify faults in sets of instructions. In all years, they are developing a good understanding and knowledge of ICT technical language. In Year 4, pupils were accessing specific websites to extract information to create posters within a multi-media package. In Years 5 and 6, pupils were practising skills on databases learnt previously and extending them by establishing the fields, how the data was to be sorted and presented, and then interrogating data to check its validity. In all these lessons, pupils were working effectively, collaborating in pairs or small groups demonstrating their very good attitudes towards each other and to the use of ICT. In one lesson, they began to evaluate each other's work by moving systematically around the suite identifying points from each of the finished posters displayed on the computer screens.
77. Teaching and learning in ICT are very good. Teachers plan well, making good use of the very clear and helpful scheme of work produced by the subject leader. They demonstrate good knowledge and confidence in the use of ICT and use the interactive whiteboard in the ICT suite most effectively to support their teaching. Almost all the pupils show great interest. Their learning benefits from the advantageous pupil-teacher ratio when they are in the suite because only half a class at a time work in there. Their learning is further enhanced by the skilful use of cross-curricular work to demonstrate the relevance of ICT. For example, in Year 4, pupils were gathering information related to their topic in geography on the weather, and in Years 5 and 6, they were using data from a science lesson to learn about sorting and interrogating databases. A good whole-school system for assessing and recording pupils' progress has recently been implemented.
78. The subject is very well led by an extremely competent practitioner. She has produced a very helpful scheme of work, and whole-school assessment and recording procedures; in addition she has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject across the school, and manages the well-organised ICT suite very well. This suite does not have enough computers to teach a whole class at a time, so each pupil tends to have just one session a week. However, in this session, being part of a small group, pupils make very rapid gains in their learning, contributing to the good overall achievement. There are no computers in some classrooms and, despite recent increases in the number of machines, there are insufficient across the school to meet the constantly rising national expectations. Despite this continuing limitation, the school has made very good progress in the subject since the time of the last inspection when it was a major weakness.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. ICT is used very well to support teaching and learning across the curriculum in all groups. Work in the ICT suite is often linked to other curriculum areas. In four junior classrooms, the interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers to support their teaching in a range of subjects, such as the understanding of perimeters in mathematics in a Year 3/4 class, or in geography the location of countries in Asia in a Years 5/6 class. Pupils also used a digital camera and multimedia package to produce a short animated film in an excellent Years 5/6 art and design lesson. There is a rolling programme for installing whiteboards in classrooms; at

the time of the inspection, there were four in junior classrooms but none in the infant classrooms.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils in all year groups achieve the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils' learning is supported well by other subjects.
- Overall planning does not clearly identify what to teach.

#### **Commentary**

80. No lessons were seen in the infant classes but scrutiny of work in books and displays indicates that pupils attain the standards expected for their age according to the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement is sound. Pupils learn about major Christian festivals as well as those of importance to other faiths. They identify items and places of worship special to other faiths. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils study Hinduism and Sikhism, whilst furthering their understanding of Christianity. They recognise that religious education teaches them about other faiths and they talk about their work with interest. Achievement in the junior years is also sound.
81. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in the infant classes but teaching and learning in the junior classes are satisfactory. Because links are often made between subjects, pupils make sense of their learning. For example, when studying the Nativity, pupils worked together to make models of the stable and to design books to describe the process. They applied their writing and ICT skills to express the Christmas story from the viewpoint of the main characters. There is a strong focus on developing thinking skills. For example, during the inspection, Years 5/6 pupils considered Bible stories as a starting point for discussion in their philosophy lesson. They framed questions they would like to ask and offered explanations. The lesson made a good contribution to pupils' personal, social and moral development. At other times, however, difficult religious concepts are introduced too rapidly and do not sufficiently take account of pupils' level of understanding.
82. The subject is adequately managed. The co-ordinator has identified appropriate resources for the subject. The school recognises the need to broaden pupils' experience by developing further links with other faiths and producing clear guidance for teachers on what to teach and how to assess and record pupils' progress.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- The pupils are achieving standards above those expected nationally by the end of Year 6.
- There is good teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.
- The teachers use the interactive whiteboards very well to support learning.
- There is good leadership and management of the subject.
- Very good interactive displays provide support for learning.
- Good international links support learning well.

- Assessment and recording procedures need developing further.

## Commentary

83. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to raise standards in geography and there has been very good improvement. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and there was insufficient work recorded to make a judgement on standards by the end of Year 2 or the quality of teaching and learning in these year groups. By the end of Year 6, however, standards are above those usually seen at this age and pupils are achieving well, including those with special educational needs. Pupils are well aware of the impact of humans on the environment and the physical changes which can cause natural disasters. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to give very good descriptions of how an earthquake could cause a tsunami. They know that climate affects how people live and they use geographical vocabulary in its correct form.
84. Good teaching and learning were seen in Years 3 to 6. The teachers plan well for the parallel classes, ensuring that the pupils have equality of access to a wide range of stimulating activities. Resources are used very well, including ICT. Interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to support learning. For example, one Years 5/6 teacher had produced her own video film to demonstrate the different geographical features in Asia. In good Years 5 and 6 lessons, the teachers' motivational approach and good presentation of the topic, and the close links with previous work, enabled pupils to make comparisons between India and the United Kingdom in a mature and rational way. The pupils show good global awareness, demonstrating very good knowledge of countries in Europe and around the world. They also demonstrate good mapping skills, and use an atlas and world maps with accuracy and confidence. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also showed good knowledge of the world and mapping skills when engaged in similar tasks. For example, they are able to find polar and desert regions. Good direction and questioning by the teachers encourages the pupils to make comparisons. The pupils use their literacy skills well to read and interpret information. They also use their ICT skills well for research.
85. Very good displays support the subject well. A number of classrooms display maps, photographs and information well. The subject has a high profile in the school. A good range of international links has been developed to support learning. The school uses links with a large Indian school very well to promote learning in all subjects. In the geography lessons seen in Years 5 and 6, the link was used to very good effect. The pupils were able to recall with confidence what they had learned from an Indian teacher who had visited the school. Visits, including visits to the locality for the younger pupils and residential visits for Years 4 and 6, provide valuable experiences for the pupils.
86. Geography is well led and managed by a subject leader who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has worked hard to raise standards since the last inspection developing resources and introducing a wide range of activities for the pupils to undertake, including local, national and international topics. She has monitored standards through scrutiny of work. However, there have been no opportunities for her to observe lessons to help gain a view of teaching and learning across the school. Informal concept mapping is used for assessment; however, formal assessment and recording procedures are currently unsatisfactory and need developing further.

## History

87. Not enough work was seen in **history** to allow a judgement to be made about provision throughout the school, as no lessons were seen. However, from a scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils there is every indication that standards are above those nationally expected for Year 6. The teachers plan a wide range of interesting and exciting activities to enhance learning, including visits to places of historical interest. In discussion, pupils from Year 6 demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the periods of history they had studied, including the Ancient Greeks. Visits complement history very well, such as that to a

Roman Fort where they had an opportunity to take part in role-play. Drama and role-play are also included in many lessons, sometimes the whole school taking part, including those pupils with physical and other disabilities such as dressing in Edwardian costumes during the school's centenary celebrations. Parents and friends of the school are invited to watch school productions, including a World War II concert televised by a local company. In Year 6, very good opportunities are made to help pupils develop very good writing and research skills, using the Internet. Pupils have written some very good examples of historical letters, diaries, poetry and newspaper articles relating to their history projects.

88. The subject is well led and managed by a subject leader who is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and has an understanding of the priorities to raise standards further. She is well informed and has encouraged the staff to develop the teaching of historical skills through exciting activities. She has already completed an audit of provision and produced an action plan for future development. She has scrutinised work and collated a large bank of annotated evidence. From the work seen, there is every indication that standards and subject leadership have improved since the last inspection. However, monitoring of teaching and learning and assessment of pupils' progress need to be developed further.

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

### **Art and design**

89. No lessons were observed in the infant years so it is not possible to give an overall judgement about standards and achievement by the end of Year 2 or the quality of teaching. However, pupils' work on display throughout the school is of a high standard. Standards by the end of Year 6 have been maintained at a high level, well above those usually seen at this age, indicating a further improvement upon the good standards previously reported. The school has identified more able pupils within the subject and has arranged for them to attend specialist art sessions at weekends. Arts weeks are held, the most recent being based on work connected to Italy. Younger pupils have been involved in 'Creativity in Early Years' where they designed and made artefacts to improve their own external play area. There is a thriving art club for older pupils. These are all indicators of a wide, vibrant, challenging and exciting curriculum. Medium-term planning indicates that a wide and varied curriculum is on offer and overall provision for the subject is very good.
90. In an outstanding lesson in Year 6, pupils enthusiastically and confidently described the planning process involved in producing a short animated film, using a computer and digital camera. They had written the script, produced guidelines for others to duplicate their process, made three-dimensional models and were in the process of making and recording scenes to include in the film. When complete, this animated film is to be shown in a cinema connected to a local secondary school. The quality of teaching and learning in this lesson were both excellent.
91. Leadership of art and design is very good. The co-ordinator demonstrates commitment and expertise in the subject. At present, there is no consistent approach to assessing and recording in the subject and this needs strengthening. However, a new scheme of work is being introduced which is designed to develop pupils' skills in a more sensible order so that they are not expected to undertake activities which are beyond their current experience. This is a very good improvement and will offer additional support to staff and provide accurate assessment data to help track progress and plan future provision.

## Design and technology

92. Design and technology was sampled only, as it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to provide overall judgements about standards and provision. Evidence was gained from discussions with pupils, the subject leader, an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' curriculum plans.
93. Pupils are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques, developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. Year 6 pupils had designed and evaluated a nativity scene and models seen were of a good standard. It is clear that pupils evaluate their own work but little evidence was seen to show that they evaluate the work of their peers. Food technology has recently been introduced and planning indicates that this should further enrich the already broad curriculum on offer. Skills developed during design and technology have been successfully employed in other subjects. For example, in a history challenge, impressive meals had been designed, evaluated and constructed in three-dimensional models to show food suitable for a Roman emperor.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 6.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils of all ages make consistent use of notebooks for composition.
- Good use is made of staff expertise.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their musical talents.
- There are no systems in place for tracking pupils' progress.

### Commentary

94. Lessons seen and evidence from pupils' books indicate that standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils identify patterns and types of sounds. They hear music frequently and learn about various composers. They enjoy singing songs and playing simple instruments. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well, especially in performance, to attain standards above those expected nationally. They respond to various styles of music and identify their favourites. As performance improves, many pupils become familiar with musical theory and notation.
95. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils apply themselves well in music lessons and concentrate hard. Because teachers have high expectations, pupils strive to achieve the challenges set for them. However, in some cases, the progress of younger or less able pupils is not so good because too much is attempted in one lesson or the task is too difficult. In the best lessons seen, teachers:
  - praise pupils' efforts and encourage them to do their best;
  - use resources well so that all pupils are actively involved in tasks suited to their ability;
  - introduce pupils to a variety of musical styles and vocabulary; and
  - help pupils to see the relationship between played sounds and notation.
96. Good leadership by the co-ordinator and shared expertise amongst staff means that music has a higher profile than during the previous inspection when insufficient time was allocated to the subject. Pupils frequently hear a variety of musical styles in their classrooms and as they enter assembly, where they sing tunefully and in unison. There are two school choirs and pupils perform in public on numerous occasions. Tuition in a range of instruments further enriches provision.

97. Although the monitoring of teaching and learning has yet to evolve, the co-ordinator is keen to find out what happens in classrooms. The newly introduced books for recording composition in all classes are intended to provide an overview. However, there are no formal systems for judging how well pupils are doing.

### **Physical education**

98. No judgements could be made on the provision, standards or overall quality of teaching and learning in physical education as insufficient lessons were observed across the subject. None was seen in Years 1 and 2, and one each in Years 3, 4, and 6. However, standards in dance in the Year 6 lesson were well above national expectations, with pupils developing and refining skills to perform their dance sequences with imaginative and creative flair, demonstrating a good awareness of shape and form. In the gymnastics and games lessons observed, many pupils were operating above levels expected for their age group. This was particularly true of the Year 3 pupils who were working in pairs developing symmetrical and asymmetrical balances. Pupils dress appropriately for physical activities. They are aware of health and safety issues and handle apparatus sensibly.
99. Evidence was gained from teachers' curriculum plans, discussion with the subject leaders, observations of three lessons and a survey of apparatus and equipment. There is a clear curriculum plan and a new scheme of work, introduced at the beginning of this current school year. This addresses all the relevant sections of the National Curriculum. Swimming in the junior years has recently been transferred to Years 3 and 4 to strengthen the provision and increase water safety at an earlier age than before. Outdoor and adventurous activities are mainly covered during the two residential visits in Years 4 and 6. Whilst this is satisfactory, it does not enable good progression in the full range of skills in this strand of the subject throughout the junior years. Assessment procedures are currently unsatisfactory. There are plans later this academic year to introduce formalised assessment and recording at the end of each unit of physical education which are designed to strengthen the current arrangements. No records are currently kept for standards achieved in swimming.
100. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of good quality physical activities in the form of after-school clubs, inter-school tournaments and matches and local festivals, positively enriching the overall curricular provision. School teams have been finalists in a local football tournament, winners of the town and district swimming gala, and pupils participated in the local education authority's prestigious dance festival. During the inspection, almost 50 pupils were participating in after-school dance clubs, rehearsing for a dance festival later in the month. In the previous term, all pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 had taken part in an Indian Dance experience as part of a project led by an artist in residence.
101. The subject is well led by two enthusiastic members of staff. The leaders have considerable expertise and interest in the subject, and have significantly raised the profile of the subject. This has led to greater participation by all pupils, an improved dress code, an extended sports day and the 'Huff and Puff' playground project to improve physical fitness. They have clear priorities for the year and plans to support the professional development of colleagues. The subject is well resourced. Apparatus is stored carefully and is accessible. Accommodation for physical education is satisfactory. The hall is of a good size for teaching gymnastics and dance; its location, with six classrooms leading off, and being a main thoroughfare, disrupts lessons. There is nowhere to store large equipment, which has to be arranged around the edge of the hall. The playground areas are sloping and somewhat cramped, restricting the space for outdoor games. There is a good-sized field.

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

102. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of provision, standards attained or the quality of teaching and learning.
103. The school's very positive ethos and commitment to personal development means that pupils have good opportunities to develop individual talents through art, music and a range of out-of-school clubs. All classes are given specific times such as 'circle time' or philosophy lessons when they can discuss issues such as behaviour or topical affairs. There are programmes of sex education and drug awareness for the older pupils which meet requirements.
104. During the inspection, Years 3/4 classes considered the effects of the recent tsunami disaster and how they would feel in a similar situation. Pupils listened well to each other's opinions and were willing to contribute. However, although circle time allows teachers the flexibility of dealing with issues as they arise, the absence of a clear overall programme of work for personal, social and health education hinders consistency of approach and the systematic and progressive building of pupils' skills as they mature. There is no formal system for recording pupils' personal development. Achievement, academic or otherwise, is valued and recognised in class and assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for their learning. Collaborative work in lessons encourages communication and thinking skills. Many take an active role within the school community by belonging to the school council, or acting as monitors and playground friends. Learning in science aids pupils' understanding of the human body, healthy eating and life processes when growing up.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

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

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

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