

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117275

Headteacher: Mrs Carole Thorpe

Lead inspector: Dee Wheatley

Dates of inspection: 17 - 19 January 2005

Inspection number: 268137

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	179.5
School address:	Tower Road Ware Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG12 7LP
Telephone number:	01920 411000
Fax number:	01920 486613
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Bonnie West
Date of previous inspection:	14.06.1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

**Tower Primary School** is situated in the town of Ware in Hertfordshire. It caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. With 190 boys and girls on the roll, it is smaller than average in size and the number of pupils has fallen considerably since the previous inspection. The number of pupils leaving the school other than at the usual time of transfer is above average. There is a part-time nursery class. A pre-school group was set up in September 2003 to meet community needs. It operates independently of the school although the board is chaired by the headteacher. It has proved popular and now opens every day in response to demand. All years groups in the school have less than 30 pupils with the exception of Year 4 which has 45. Two classes are taught in mixed age groups. Most pupils are of white UK origin with eleven pupils from other backgrounds, including Bangladeshi and African. Two pupils receive support because they are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The social and economic circumstances of the pupils are wide ranging but they are below average overall. There are 30 pupils on the register of special educational needs which is broadly average. Nine receive additional support from outside agencies and two of these have statements of special educational need. Three pupils have dyslexia, three have moderate learning difficulties and a further three have, respectively, severe learning difficulty, emotional and behaviour problems and speech/communication impairment. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average with a considerable proportion well below. There have been considerable changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection. In 2003, the school won a national award as one of the 100 most improved schools.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3538	Dee Wheatley	Lead inspector	English Special educational needs
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector	
20009	David Cann	Team inspector	Mathematics Design technology French History Geography Information and communication technology
21372	Kenneth Hobday	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education Religious education Foundation stage

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Ltd  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>30</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Tower Primary is an effective school** which has maintained improvements in standards despite the challenges of high staff turnover and a falling roll. It received national recognition as one of the '100 most improved schools' in 2003 and improved its results further in 2004. The teaching is good with new staff being inducted well. The ethos is strong and caring. The school is led and managed well and governors provide effective support. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science by age 11. However, in Years 3 to 6, their standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are not high enough.
- The provision in the nursery is very good, having significantly improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of good planning for their needs.
- The relationships are very good throughout; the pupils behave very well, enjoy school and work hard.
- Teaching is effective and the national guidance for literacy and numeracy is used well to promote learning.
- The limited time given to the teaching and monitoring of some subjects in Years 3 to 6 is having a negative effect on achievement.
- Financial management is strong with very good strategic management of a falling roll.

There has been satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection. Since then, there has been an almost complete changeover of staff, including the headteacher. Whilst the results have dipped in the interim, effective strategies have brought significant improvements in the last two years. Successful action has also been taken to improve the nursery and a play group has been set up to meet parents' needs. The teaching is stronger overall. Weaknesses in subject provision have been addressed but more needs to be done to raise standards in some areas.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**Overall achievement is good.** Pupils' standards are below average on entry to the school and a considerable proportion are well below. In 2004, the Year 6 results were in line with the national average in English and above it in mathematics and science. This was a further improvement on the previous year when the school received national recognition for its results. When compared with schools with similar prior attainment in Year 2, standards are above average in mathematics and science and average in English. In the current Year 6, standards in English and science are average overall and achievement is good. However, fewer pupils are reaching the higher levels in science than last year. In mathematics, standards are slightly above average and pupils are achieving very well. The 2004 national assessments in Year 2 show the school as well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, care must be taken in interpreting the data because of the small number of pupils involved. Currently, standards in Year 2 are below average in English and mathematics and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In science, the standards are average; achievement is generally good. Achievement in ICT and religious education is unsatisfactory in

Years 3 to 6 although the picture for both subjects is better in Years 1 and 2. Achievement in the nursery and reception is good overall with most children on track to reach the Foundation Stage goals in social and emotional development, and creative and physical development by the end of reception but below average in communication skills and the other areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, as do the few pupils who are at an early stage in learning English. A focus on the attainment of boys, who lagged behind the girls in English, has borne fruit in improved standards in both reading and writing although more needs to be done to achieve the higher levels in writing.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** They have very positive attitudes, work hard and enjoy school. Behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good overall.**

**Teaching quality is good.** It is very good in the nursery. Effective teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is promoting good progress. Teachers plan work well, using the national guidance for literacy and numeracy. They track pupils' progress thoroughly, targeting weaknesses in the learning of individuals and groups. Lesson objectives are regularly shared with pupils and a range of activities build well on their previous learning. Very good relationships are evident throughout with pupils very keen to reach teachers' expectations. The pupils concentrate very well but in some speaking and listening sessions they could be encouraged to speak at greater length in response to questions. In the nursery and reception classes the children enjoy a good variety of experiences which provide for their all-round development. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum is broad and balanced in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. However, not enough time is spent on some subjects in Years 3 to 6 which impacts on the learning, in ICT and religious education particularly. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well cared for and supported and receive satisfactory guidance on how to improve their work. Links with parents and the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.**

The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. In a time of considerable staff turnover, she has sustained the focus on improving standards in the core subjects and the provision for the youngest children. Effective monitoring has led to improvements in English, mathematics and science but the monitoring of other subjects has been reduced, because of staff changes, with negative effects in some cases. Financial management is strong. The headteacher, with the good support of the governors, has produced a very good strategic plan to manage a declining roll. The governors are very committed to the school and are effective in influencing its development. They ensure that statutory requirements are fulfilled and visit the school regularly, to meet staff and participate in activities.

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

The parents have positive views of most aspects of the school. They feel that their children are expected to work hard, are happy and making progress at school. Parents also feel they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. A few parents feel they are not always listened to by the school. Inspectors found the school has gone further than many in providing opportunities for parents to air their views, in particular by the provision of a parents' focus group which enables the parents to have input to school decision-making. The pupils value the school highly, they find other pupils friendly and feel that they work hard.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in ICT and religious education in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure there is adequate teaching time for all subjects in Years 3 to 6 to enable them to be taught in depth, and monitor the impact on standards.

In addition:

- Continue the focus on improving the standards in writing, in particular at the higher levels.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is good overall. Children enter the nursery with below average levels of attainment; some are well below in their communication and social and emotional development, and the majority make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, standards are below average overall and pupils make satisfactory progress. In Years 3 to 6, standards improve to broadly average and achievement is good.

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

- In Year 6, achievement is good in English and science; in mathematics it is very good.
- Effective use is made of national guidance to improve standards in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils are not achieving as well as they could in ICT and religious education in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

#### **Commentary**

1. The school's standards show an improving trend. In 2004, the results in the Year 6 national tests were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. When compared to schools with similar prior attainment in Year 2, the pupils' achievement was in line with the expectation in English and well above it in mathematics and science where there was a significant proportion of higher levels (5 and above). The results in all three subjects improved on those for 2003 which itself had shown significant improvement on the previous year. The school received recognition from the Minister for School Standards as one of the '100 most improved schools' nationally in 2003. The school had ambitious targets for 2004; it exceeded significantly that for the higher levels in mathematics but not that for the nationally expected level (4) and did not reach either target in English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (25.8)	26.8 (26.8)
mathematics	28.4 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In a time of significant change to the teaching staff, the school has concentrated on maintaining the improvements in the core subjects and the provision for the youngest children. This it has largely succeeded in doing. The inspection found overall standards in Year 6 to be average or better with good achievement by most pupils. Standards in English and science are broadly average and achievement is good, whilst in mathematics the standards are above average and achievement is very good. Good use of national subject guidance has improved pupils' grasp of number and their literacy skills. There has been significant improvement in boys' results in English over the last two years as a result of concerted action, although more remains to be done to achieve the higher levels in writing. Achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT, religious education and art and design where standards are below the expectation. Although provision in ICT has improved since the last inspection, pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply their learning and their skills are underdeveloped as a result. In religious education, there are weaknesses in the coverage of the agreed syllabus which affect standards. Although the inspection did not focus on art and design, scrutiny of pupils' work indicated below average

standards and unsatisfactory achievement. The monitoring of these subjects by co-ordinators has been rather 'broad brush' and has not addressed the weaknesses. However, the provision is better in Years 1 and 2 (see below).

3. In 2004, the school took part in a national pilot, with other schools in the LEA, to carry out teacher assessments (rather than tests) in Year 2. The published results were well below average. However, care must be taken in interpreting the data because of the small number of pupils involved and the fact that five average (and higher) attaining pupils left the school during Year 2 had significant impact on the figures. The school exceeded its targets for the nationally expected level (2) in reading and writing in 2004. It did not reach its target for the higher level in English nor either target in mathematics.
4. The inspection found standards in Year 2 to be below average in English and mathematics and the achievement of pupils to be satisfactory. In science, the standards are average and achievement is generally good. Strategies to improve boys' reading and writing are bearing fruit in improved standards although more needs to be done to achieve the higher levels (3 and above) in writing. In mathematics, pupils are acquiring good number skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve the standards expected nationally in ICT and achieve well although there are sufficient opportunities to apply their skills in subjects across the curriculum. In other subjects, including religious education, standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (14.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.1 (13.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.6 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Very effective teamwork by teachers and teaching assistants ensures good attention to pupils with special educational needs. They make good progress throughout the school as a result. Effective use is made of literacy programmes to target and address weaknesses in basic skills. The few minority ethnic pupils who are at an early stage in learning English have additional support which is very effective in developing their confidence and skill. One boy who arrived at school not speaking at all is now settled well into his class, gaining rapid confidence in speaking and interacting with children and adults.
6. Thorough tracking of progress in English and mathematics, which is done on a class by class basis, is making a considerable difference to progress. This is because pupils' individual targets are regularly reviewed, with weaknesses in learning being addressed by the teachers in their planning. However, the pupils are not as confident in speaking of their levels and targets in Years 3 to 6 as they should be and need more guidance on how to improve their work.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Punctuality and attendance are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils are keen to learn and take a pride in their school.
- Pupils understand and respect the standards of behaviour expected of them.
- There are very good relationships and pupils respect each other.

- The pupils' personal development is good.

### **Commentary**

7. The high standards noted at the last inspection have been successfully maintained. The pupils like school and they speak positively about their teachers and friends. Relationships between pupils and pupils and staff are very good and many pupils consider this a strength of the school. Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities. At the Foundation Stage, children enter the nursery with below average social and emotional development. They achieve well and reach average standards by the end of reception. In the rest of the school, pupils behave very well both in class and at break times. The majority concentrate for sustained periods and are happy to work co-operatively and effectively in shared activities.
8. The school is very good at promoting pupils' mutual respect and concern for others. Assemblies and class discussions successfully develop the pupils' awareness of spiritual, social and moral issues. The pupils readily accept differences and help each other to be involved in the community. Where minor incidents of friction occur between pupils these are quickly and effectively addressed and pupils and parents consider that the school has a happy and harmonious environment. Pupils can distinguish clearly between right and wrong, and they are encouraged to think through the consequences of their actions. Very good weekly celebrations of pupils' achievements are conducted in an informal and encouraging manner to which pupils respond well.
9. The school is effective in helping the pupils understand their role in the community. A well planned personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme develops the pupils' awareness of themselves as growing and developing young people and helps them see the importance of caring for others and the community. The pupils are keen to take on responsibilities as house captains or in other ways and the class councils are having a positive impact on developing their awareness of how they can contribute to school life. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language develop confident attitudes to school. There are a significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties who are well supported and as a result improve their attitudes and self-esteem. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger pupils when they have the chance and introduce them to playground games as well as helping them with reading on occasions. Pupils take great pleasure in entertaining elderly visitors and show initiative in raising funds for charity.
10. There are many good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultural traditions through class work, assemblies, visits and visitors and the good range of extra-curricular activities.
11. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory apart from a few families who have more frequent absences. Overall attendance has improved since the previous inspection and in most years is around the national average. The school uses a sound range of strategies for monitoring attendance though not all are consistently applied.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

### **Exclusions**

There were no exclusions in the last year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good overall. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and very good in the nursery. The curriculum is broad and well balanced in the Foundations Stage and Years 1 and 2. However, in Years 3 to 6, insufficient time is spent on some subjects so that they are not taught in enough depth. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the provision. Pupils are well cared for and satisfactory account is taken of their views. Partnerships with parents and the community are good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is used effectively to promote learning in most subjects.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are good. In the nursery, the teaching is very good.
- Very good quality individual education plans (IEPs) and effective support of teaching assistants contribute significantly to the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- Strong class management and well planned lessons engage interest and develop pupils' understanding throughout the school.
- The pupils concentrate very well and are keen to learn.
- Features of the few unsatisfactory lessons observed were weaker class management and under-resourced learning activities.

### Commentary

12. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good throughout the school. The three unsatisfactory lessons seen were in Years 3 to 6.
13. Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to structure lessons well to sustain interest and pace. Lesson objectives are regularly shared with pupils and a good range of activities enables them to build well on their previous. Very good relationships are evident throughout the school, with pupils very keen to reach their teachers' high expectations. The pupils are taught from an early age to listen and concentrate and they enjoy reading and speaking and listening sessions. However, they could be encouraged more systematically to extend their responses to questions, explaining their thinking at greater length in order to develop their verbal skills. At present, whilst the pupils are keen to respond, in some lessons they tend to give short, underdeveloped answers to questions. Reading has a high profile in the school with pupils enjoying a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including books that appeal to particular groups, such as boys, and books with a multi-cultural viewpoint. Teachers have strong class management skills, by and large, and behaviour is very good. Only occasionally, where a teacher is new to the school and has yet to establish class routines and expectations, does pupils' application slip. The teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) work very effectively together. The skills and understanding of TAs have been developed well and they make a significant contribution to learning in partnership with the teachers. They provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage in learning English. Regular appropriate homework is provided from a young age where the emphasis is on reading with parents and spelling games.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------

1 (2%)	7 (18%)	18 (46%)	10 (26%)	3 (8%)	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.*

14. The teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Effective use has been made of the national guidance to improve literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school. In mathematics, pupils respond energetically to lively mental arithmetic sessions. In science, the demanding tasks and skilled questioning stimulate interest and enquiry. In ICT, and religious education, the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good but there are shortcomings in the teaching in Years 3 to 6. The development of pupils' skills and understanding is not monitored sufficiently in either case with the result that learning is limited. Since the teaching in other subjects was sampled, it is not possible to make a judgement of overall quality in all cases. However, the evidence indicates that in design and technology the teaching is well planned and effective and in geography, the teaching has improved since the last inspection.
  
15. The teaching of the youngest children is very good. The nursery provision is much improved on that found at the last inspection and meets the children's needs in all the areas of learning. Throughout the nursery and reception classes, the children settle quickly and enjoy the variety of activities and experiences provided. They are effectively taught the daily routines, how to collaborate with other children and adults and to begin to take responsibility for their actions. There is good use of role-play to develop language skills and the children's understanding of the world. Imaginative practical activities are used to develop number skills and there is good daily teaching of phonics and early reading skills. The effective teaching is leading to good progress, although slightly slower in the reception class where a new young teacher is still establishing routines and expectations. The addition of the nursery nurse, who spends time in the reception class in the afternoons, adds considerably to the quality of learning in both classes.
  
16. Good assessment and regular tracking of progress improve the learning, particularly in English and mathematics because teachers use the information well to target the needs of individuals and groups. However, the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not as aware of their targets or what they need to do to improve their work as they should be. By contrast, the younger pupils in Year 2 are clear about their targets and what they are working to improve. The marking of work in English is careful and thorough, providing good personal response to pupils as well as advice on how to improve. Assessment processes are in place for ICT and religious education but are not used effectively to monitor standards. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. A very good process, involving class teachers, has been developed for the writing and regular review of individual education plans. The plans are set out in such a way that they are accessible and easy to read. Both parents and pupils contribute to them and they are reviewed on a regular basis. The targets are well linked to the teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy, and show where teaching assistant support will be provided. Overall, they make a considerable contribution to the learning of pupils with special needs.
  
17. Where the teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory, it is because of weak class management (where the teacher is new to the school and still establishing expectations with pupils) and activities which are not well planned or resourced to meet pupils' needs. For example, in a religious education lesson, new terminology related to the Sikh religion confused pupils, who were required to produce work on it without adequate resources. However, even in this situation, most pupils worked hard to try to achieve the challenging task.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good overall although there are some shortcomings in that for Years 3 to 6. It is enriched by a good range of additional activities. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good provision for English, mathematics and science.

- Insufficient time is spent on some subjects in Years 3 to 6, so that they are not taught in enough depth.
- A well-planned programme in the nursery and reception classes gives children a very good start to their education.
- There is a good programme of personal, social and health education.
- Extra activities supplement the curriculum well.
- The accommodation provides a good environment for learning.

### **Commentary**

18. Provision in the Foundation Stage has significantly improved since the previous inspection. The nursery provides a very good start to children's education. The programme is well planned to provide a good balance between all six areas of learning and between activities initiated by adults and those chosen by children. There is very good planning for the use of the very good outdoor facilities as well as the bright and attractive purpose-built classroom. In the reception class, children benefit from a similarly well-constructed programme, although accommodation constraints make it difficult for children to choose from a wide enough range of activities. In particular, the school is aware that the reception outside area requires further development to enable it to be used to develop skills in all areas of learning.
19. In Years 1 to 6, national guidance has been used to provide good programmes of study in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in classes based on their ability in each subject, enabling teachers to tailor work more precisely to their needs. The lengthy daily literacy lessons are sub-divided well to ensure that pupils remain interested and focused on each task. The programme in reading is very good. The school has taken effective action to improve the teaching of writing, but there is insufficient attention to developing more sustained speaking skills. A balanced programme is provided in mathematics and pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate work and good support. In science there is a good emphasis on practical and investigative work. As a result, pupils gain good skills in using and applying the knowledge they acquire and this contributes to their good results in national tests in Year 6.
20. In Years 1 and 2, the overall curriculum is well balanced. However, the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, although broad, is not well balanced. Insufficient time is available for other subjects because so much time is spent on literacy and numeracy. In Year 6, there is effective teaching of French by a teacher from a local secondary school, but this further limits the time for other subjects. The effect is that in some subjects, pupils do not develop skills, knowledge and understanding in sufficient depth. For example, in religious education the programme is superficial and fails to link new learning to the previous experiences of pupils, so that facts are seldom retained. In ICT, although the whole range of skills is taught, there is little time to practise them across a broad range of subjects to enable pupils to use them confidently. Whilst, in art, pupils do not have the opportunity to revisit techniques to build effectively on their existing skills.
21. The school is aware that its curriculum requires improvement and has acted to give pupils additional experiences in those subjects for which there is less time. It has ensured that the wide range of good quality out-of-school clubs, noted in the previous inspection, has continued for all pupils in the school. Notable amongst these are the successful choir, attracting up to 60 pupils from Year 2 upwards irrespective of ability. There is a good range of sports clubs. Occasional 'theme weeks' are organised on areas of the curriculum such as science and religious education. Good use is made of visitors and visits to places of interest. Pupils are taken on extended visits in Years 4 and 6 and these make a good contribution to social development as well as to a range of subject areas.
22. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language, are fully involved in all activities. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education, including thoughtfully planned

contributions to sex education. Most personal, social and health education is taught through weekly discussion sessions. The programme is well planned to provide a progression in pupils' skills but also to react to specific events in school or in the wider world, such as the recent tsunami disaster.

23. The school makes good use of its well-maintained and spacious accommodation. It plans further improvements to the library and ICT facilities to enable them to be used more efficiently. The attractive displays and pleasant environment contribute well to pupils' learning. There are good resources in most subjects to enable teachers to provide interesting lessons and equipment to meet the varying needs of pupils. However, the range and quantity of musical instruments require some improvement.

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

Arrangements for the pupils' care, health and welfare are good overall though there are some very good features and areas that need attention. Pupils' personal development is very well monitored and they receive good support and guidance. Satisfactory account is taken of the pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very well supported on a personal level by all staff.
- Induction arrangements for pupils entering the nursery are very good.
- There is no dedicated medical/first aid room.
- Formal methods for seeking pupils' opinions are not fully exploited.
- Crossing the road outside the school is hazardous.

### **Commentary**

24. Inspection evidence supports parents' view that the level of personal support is very good and that there is a real family feeling at the school. Staff know all the children well and take careful account of their individual needs. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. This promotes an atmosphere in which pupils feel happy and secure, and is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and their positive attitudes towards school. On a recent questionnaire, several pupils said that teachers were what they liked best about the school and most agreed that adults will always help when they are in difficulty. The quality of the environment is further evidence that the school cares about the pupils' well-being, and values them. Great care is taken to ensure the school is attractively and safely maintained and that the standard of cleanliness is high.
25. Child protection procedures are appropriately applied and a governor has recently assumed responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with new legislation. There is a system to ensure that pupils have access only to approved Internet sites. Arrangements for first aid are generally satisfactory though there is nowhere a sick or injured child can lie quietly.
26. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views about the school's procedures for helping new pupils settle into the nursery. Parents are fully consulted and each child's needs carefully considered in planning their induction programme. This enables them to settle quickly and make early progress.
27. Good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science allow attainment to be carefully monitored and enable effective academic advice to be given. Analyses of pupils' work are made regularly and the results used to inform lesson planning and to determine those individuals who need extra support. This contributes strongly to all pupils' achievement in these subjects. Assessment is less developed in other subjects. Careful records of the pupils' personal development are kept and teachers work closely together as children pass through the school. This good exchange of information means that pupil's individual needs are very

- effectively met. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through effective planning for their needs and the good support of the teachers and teaching assistants.
28. Lesson observations confirm the pupils' opinion that teachers listen to their ideas. However pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not consistently involved in setting their own targets. Class councils in Years 5 and 6 are very effective but there is no school council and responses to a recent questionnaire have not been fully analysed. This means that opportunities for giving all pupils a sense of 'ownership' of the school and their learning are missed.
  29. The governors and many parents are extremely concerned about the difficulty of safely crossing the road outside school. Governors have been unable to find a crossing patrol and, despite frequent requests, some parents persist in parking in a way that endangers others' lives.

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

Links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views about most aspects of the school.
- An innovative range of strategies is used to forge constructive links with parents.
- A few required details are missing from the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.
- The prospectus is not fully 'reader friendly'.
- Good links with the local and wider community have a beneficial impact on the pupils' attainment and personal development.

### **Commentary**

30. Most parents are satisfied with the school. They like the fact that their children are expected to work hard and feel they are making good progress in an orderly and inclusive environment. They think the teaching is good and are content with the homework their children have to do. They say their children are happy at the school because they are made to feel welcome and are treated fairly. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive opinions.
31. The parents feel they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on and inspection evidence largely supports this view. Parents have extensive opportunities to look at their children's work and to discuss their progress with staff. The pupils' annual reports have improved since the previous inspection as they now give clear details of the child's attainment in all areas of the curriculum. However targets are sometimes too general to be of value.
32. A few parents said they do not always feel listened to when they share concerns or make suggestions about the school. The inspection found that the school goes further than many to enable parents to share their views. For example, there is a focus group to enable parents' to contribute to school decision-making. Inspectors also found that the governor's are taking appropriate action to address concerns about road safety, although more needs to be done.
33. Whilst the governor's annual report to parents and newsletters are accessible and easy to read, too much technical language is used in the prospectus and its tone does not always encourage collaboration. Neither does it sufficiently emphasise the school's special features and achievements. That aside, the school promotes itself quite regularly through press releases and articles in a local newsletter.
34. The school is very committed to the principle of 'partnership' and actively encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning. Very good home-school links are established in the nursery by encouraging parents to sit in on sessions and to share books with their children. This is continued in the reception class and Years 1 and 2. As a result many parents listen effectively to their children reading at home. A good range of curriculum information sessions

is held that give parents the opportunity to learn about what and how their children learn, and thus to support them better. These are timed to fit in with parents' other commitments. For instance, many parents attended a literacy meeting held first thing in the morning. Class teachers provide topic information sheets each term, as well as the details in the prospectus. Parents find these very useful.

35. In addition, parents contribute by helping in classrooms, assisting on trips, and participating in special events. An active parents' association, 'The Friends of Tower', also provides valuable support. The association raises funds for such things as improvements to the grounds and the purchase of equipment and books for the benefit of all the pupils. Parents also help by working on projects such as the development of the fiction library.
36. The school has good links with many local businesses and other organisations. These are used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning, having a particularly positive impact on their personal and social development. The school's commitment to the local community is illustrated by the recent provision of its own pre-school class. This is very well regarded by parents and has rapidly expanded from two to five sessions per week. In addition the school runs a parents' and toddlers' group, and several local clubs and societies use the premises.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management are good overall. The focus on improvement has been maintained despite a high staff turnover. The governors are effective; they are well informed and actively support the school. The skills and awareness of new subject co-ordinators are being developed well to ensure effective leadership. However, there are weaknesses in some subjects which are not tackled quickly enough because of insufficient monitoring.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership by the headteacher has maintained improvement in a time of staffing turbulence.
- The governors are well informed and effective.
- The leadership and management of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are sustaining the drive for improvement.
- The provision for the youngest children has been significantly improved since the last inspection.
- There is insufficient monitoring of provision and standards in ICT and religious education.
- Financial management is strong.

### **Commentary**

37. The school has had an almost complete change of teaching staff, including the headteacher, since the last inspection. This has been brought about in part through personal circumstances but in at least two recent cases, staff have been promoted to senior posts in other schools. That the school successfully develops its staff is evident in the recognition of the previous literacy co-ordinator as a leading teacher in the local education authority and the numeracy co-ordinator as an Advanced Skills Teacher. Nonetheless, this has left the school with the challenge of maintaining standards and quality whilst inducting and developing new staff. Energies have been deliberately focused on sustaining improvements in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and this strategy has paid off in improved standards. The leadership and management of these subjects are good with effective monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. Regular tracking of the progress of individual pupils and rapid action to address needs is making a difference to progress in literacy and numeracy across the board and of particular groups, such as boys and pupils with special educational needs. Class progress targets are also reviewed as part of the teachers' performance management process. Very good partnerships are established between teachers and teaching assistants. The latter are highly valued and make a significant contribution to the school's success.

38. This year the school has concentrated on inducting new staff in key policies such as behaviour, using meetings to ensure consistency across all staff. This has been effective, for example, in securing very good standards of behaviour throughout the school. However, there has been a cost in the reduced time given to the monitoring of other subjects which has resulted in some cases in a weakening of expectations and standards, for example, ICT and religious education. Effective leadership and management of the Foundation Stage give the youngest children a good start to their education. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection.
39. The number of pupils on the roll has been falling for several years. This is caused by a number of factors, including demographic elements outside the school's control, such as an ageing population on one of the main housing estates served by the school and increasing house prices in the area. There are a number of troubled families on the estate whose children attend the school. Some of the parents themselves have social and emotional problems which occasionally break out in verbal aggression on the playground. Whilst the school has been diligent in working to prevent this recurring, such incidents have influenced the reputation of the school in the neighbourhood, in the view of some parents and governors. The headteacher and governors have gone beyond many schools in taking steps to engage the community, for instance, setting up a Parents' Focus group which is regularly consulted and has input to the school improvement plan. It has also provided the pre-school class to meet community needs and better prepare the children for nursery. Opportunities to advertise the school's successes are taken in the local press. Nonetheless, the fall in numbers remains a problem; five pupils in Year 2 left the school last year, with significant impact on the results.
40. Financial management is strong. When the headteacher joined the school three years ago, the declining roll was having a significant impact on the budget which was then in deficit. Drawing on the good support of the governors and the local education authority, she produced a three year financial plan to manage the reduced funding and take the school out of deficit. Effective strategic thinking which involved restructuring class organisation and staffing, including revising the roles of teaching assistants, has led to a healthy financial position. The school now has a budget surplus which is earmarked to sustain the staffing. Despite the stringencies in the budget, head and governors have significantly improved the outside play areas and the library, involving parents in the process. The accommodation overall is bright, well cared for and welcoming, indicating 'pride in our school'. Financial controls are very effective and best value principles are applied appropriately. The auditor notes that day-to-day financial administration is of excellent standard.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	657,896	Balance from previous year	56,912
Total expenditure	663,971	Balance carried forward to the next	50,837
Expenditure per pupil	2,755		

41. The governing body incorporates a good range of expertise and experience which is well utilised for the benefit of the school. The governors are well informed about the school's effectiveness through both detailed evaluative reports provided by the headteacher and their own good range of visits which take place regularly. For example, governors carried out a pupil survey and produced the School Travel Plan; they have joined staff at meetings and staff development sessions and visited regarding numeracy, special educational needs, the nursery and reception classes and joined the staff and pupils on a Year 6 residential visit. The governors ensure statutory requirements are fulfilled. They monitor the budget closely.

Recently, they have been planning with the headteacher and key staff for the provision of ten per cent preparation, planning and assessment time which is a statutory requirement for all teachers from September 2005.

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

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

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

There are currently 16 children attending the nursery for the morning session only and 21 children full-time in the reception class. Most children enter the nursery with below average levels of attainment, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach average standards in personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development but to remain slightly below average in the other areas of learning. Children are well prepared to enter the next stage of their education.

The quality of provision is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has successfully eliminated all the weak areas that were identified. It has shown its determination to raise the low levels of attainment of children starting school by opening its own pre-school class in a spare classroom. There are very good arrangements to ensure that new children experience a smooth start in the nursery, including a programme of home visiting. Children achieve well because teaching is very good and the accommodation, including the outdoor area, is used effectively to meet children's needs in all the areas of learning. Progress is slower in the reception class, although remaining satisfactory. This is because teaching is not quite as strong as in the nursery and the accommodation is not as good. Children with special educational needs are supported well but their programme needs to be structured more precisely to ensure they make good progress in all areas of learning.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well, most entering Year 1 having reached the goals set in this area of learning, despite entering the school with below average attainment.
- In both classes, all members of staff have very good relationships with the children.
- In the nursery, children are strongly encouraged to exercise responsibility and independence.

#### **Commentary**

42. Social and emotional skills tend to be below average when children enter the nursery. Many find it difficult to relate to other children and are easily upset by unfamiliar surroundings. By the time they leave the reception class, most children have formed good relationships with adults and other children and approach new tasks and situations confidently.
43. Much of this progress stems from the very good teaching in the nursery. This enables children to settle quickly to familiar routines. The teacher and nursery nurse interact constantly with the children, building trust and making expectations clear. They act as excellent role models. The teacher is particularly adept at including children who would otherwise not take part in an activity. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend or develop learning because children move on to a new activity too soon. Children learn to take responsibility for their actions. They are encouraged to plan in advance at least their first activity and to take turns in tasks such as tidying up. They choose some activities independently and learn not to interrupt

the teacher if she is working with a small group. In the reception class, where the teaching is generally good, the teacher directs rather more of children's time but allows them good opportunities to initiate their own activities and social interactions.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff use opportunities well to develop children's vocabulary, but not always to encourage more extended speaking.
- The processes of reading and writing are taught well.
- Children's individual skills are carefully assessed and recorded.

### **Commentary**

44. Children are unlikely to reach all the goals they are expected to reach in this area because they enter the school with low levels of skill. Facilities for role-play are very good in both classrooms and in the outside nursery area. Nursery staff put a high priority on interacting with the children during their periods of play, so developing their confident speaking skills. Many activities are planned that lend themselves to questioning and to developing new vocabulary, such as a cooking activity for a small group in which the teacher carefully emphasised specialist vocabulary. As a result, many children speak in complete sentences. In a game to guess which object was missing, a nursery child was able to provide the clue that 'It's pink and has a lid on it'. However, particularly in the reception class, questions requiring only a single word answer predominate and this fails to extend children's speaking skills.
45. Teachers ensure that reading and writing form an important part of the daily programme. In the nursery, stories are frequently read to groups of children and they recall their favourite parts. There are good facilities for mark making and the teacher scribes letters composed by the children, modelling the writing process effectively. The daily teaching of reading and writing in the reception class is good. Children's interest is maintained by the lively approach and there is good, daily teaching of phonic skills.
46. The assessment of literacy skills is good. The results enable teachers to have a clear picture of each child's progress and to plan suitable activities to reflect their individual needs. However children's levels of attainment, in this as in other areas of learning, are not recorded in terms of the stepping stones leading to early learning goals. This makes it more difficult to complete the Foundation Stage profile for each child.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities to develop mathematical skills are incorporated into a wide range of activities.
- There is good teaching in this area in both classes.

### **Commentary**

47. Good teaching and well-chosen practical activities help children to achieve well in this area of learning. Because of their below average level on entry, however, many children fail to reach average levels by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, there are attractive resources to encourage children to count, learn shapes and compare sizes. The teacher uses opportunities well to further these skills, for example in counting the number of objects beginning with '1' and asking how many there would be if one was added, or in weighing out

ingredients for cooking. As a result, most children count at least to six and recognise squares and triangles. Reception children have a short numeracy lesson each day. Teaching is imaginative and uses a good variety of approaches. This motivates children well no matter how they prefer to learn. Those with special educational needs are well supported by the teaching assistant. Occasionally, the level of work is insufficiently advanced to provide enough challenge for more able children.

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

There is **good** provision for this area of learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Extensive use is made of first-hand and practical experiences.
- Planning from national guidance ensures all aspects of this area are covered.
- Children have too few opportunities to use computers.

### **Commentary**

48. This is an area of learning in which children's experiences on entry to the nursery are very limited, so their attainment is well below average. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well, but remain below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Good planning ensures that children work towards all the goals set in this area. Good practical activities are planned to interest children in the world around them. An example was a cooking activity in the nursery that led children to think about how materials change when mixed or heated. Role-play areas are regularly changed and well equipped with real artefacts whenever possible. In the reception class, a journey on a train provided the starting point for questions to add to children's scientific, historical and geographical understanding. The role-play area was set up as a station, complete with a café and ticket office. Unfortunately the computer in the latter was not switched on. In both classes, there is scope to give children more frequent experience of the diversity of tasks for which computers can be used.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **very good** in the nursery and **satisfactory** in the reception class.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor area in the nursery provides very good facilities and is well used.

### **Commentary**

49. Children develop well physically and most are on course to reach the expected level at the end of the reception year. The teaching is good overall. There is a strong focus on this area of learning in the nursery. The teacher or nursery nurse teaches the children each day in the outdoor area, where there are good facilities for climbing and riding vehicles. Indoors, children are encouraged to use scissors and other tools. Most children are developing good control when using pencils or brushes, although some grip them incorrectly. The reception outdoor area is less well adapted to developing children's physical skills. There is no provision for climbing and, as most of the surface is grassed, there is insufficient space for children to use wheeled vehicles. However, the class uses the school hall for a weekly lesson in physical education. This provides children with opportunities to move with increasing confidence and to acquire early ball skills.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good facilities for role-play in both classes.
- There is good teaching of specific art techniques, particularly in the reception class.

### Commentary

50. The good provision for this area of learning enables most pupils to achieve well from below average levels on entry to the school. Most are likely to meet the goals set in this area. In the nursery, staff participate in role-play in the indoor and outdoor areas, extending children's imagination as well as their understanding. Specific art techniques are taught but there is also opportunity for children to paint or draw, sometimes choosing their own media. Musical instruments are always available for children to play, perhaps to accompany a tape. The nursery nurse worked effectively with a small group as they sang and played instruments, helping them to explore different ways of playing the instruments and to develop good rhythm. Unfortunately the session came to an abrupt halt as a child arrived and took her friend off to play.
51. Role-play facilities are also good in the reception class. There is also good teaching of the whole class, notably in the use of new materials. For example, the teacher created a good sense of enquiry and mystery as she passed round a stick of charcoal and asked children to describe what they saw and felt, then gave an effective demonstration of drawing and smudging techniques.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2 <sup>1</sup>

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils listen and concentrate very well.
- By Year 6, the pupils' standards are average and achievement is good.
- Concerted action to improve boys' results is proving successful.
- By Year 2, achievement is satisfactory as a result of focused teaching.
- The teaching of literacy skills is leading to good levels of accuracy in spelling.
- In some classes in Years 3 to 6, pupils' writing is unfinished and there is not enough attention to presentation.
- Good tracking of progress enables the teaching to be targeted to the needs of individuals and groups although the pupils could be more involved in self-assessment.

### Commentary

52. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in literacy; a significant proportion are well below average. The rate of progress increases as they move through the school so that by the time they leave in Year 6 standards are broadly average.

---

<sup>1</sup> Key Stage 1 is Years 1 and 2; Key Stage 2 is Years 3 to 6.

53. The results in national tests in Year 6 improved significantly in 2003 from a low point in 2002. In 2004, the improvement was sustained by and large with an increase in the proportion of higher levels achieved. Overall, the Year 6 results were below the national average for all schools but achievement was in line with schools with similar prior attainment in Year 2. Standards in reading are higher than those in writing but concerted efforts to address boys' writing contributed to the improvement in results. Nonetheless, more remains to be done to enable boys to achieve the higher levels in writing. Whilst standards in the current Year 2 are below average overall, a number of pupils are on target to achieve the national expectation. Focused and pacy teaching is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress.
54. Effective attention to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is enabling them to make good progress. There are only a few pupils from minority ethnic groups who are at an early stage in learning English. The support for these pupils is of high quality, enabling them to make clear strides in their skill and confidence in speaking English and interacting with other pupils and adults. One boy who would not speak voluntarily when he joined the school in reception is now speaking confidently and joining readily in activities.
55. Most children speak confidently and listen very well indeed. They are trained to pay attention and concentrate from a young age. Good opportunities are provided for taking turns in listening and responding carefully both to other pupils and the teacher; for example, through circle time, in small groups and whole class discussion. Nonetheless, in a number of classes, the pupils' responses in formal question and answer sessions are sometimes short and underdeveloped, indicating that they would benefit from more opportunities to extend their responses to questions by explaining their thinking or justifying their point of view at greater length.
56. The enjoyment of books has a high profile and pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school. Effective use has been made of national guidance to develop reading skills. Boys' results in reading showed improvement in 2004. There is a structured reading programme, with pupils reading through published schemes. They are often heard to read by adults at school and take books home to read with parents. More advanced reading skills are developed effectively through group guided reading. A system of 'Fast Phonics' is taught with a pacy approach which the children enjoy and which provides confidence in word building from a young age. Book stocks have been replenished to target the needs of particular groups, for example, boys' interests and books with a multi-cultural viewpoint. During the inspection, Year 3 and 4 pupils greatly enjoyed reading a range of poetry, and some were able to recite lively rhyming verses from memory.
57. The school has made it a priority to improve standards in writing and particularly that of boys which lagged behind the standards reached by girls. There has been significant improvement in writing standards throughout the school. The Year 6 results in 2004 showed clear improvement in boys' standards although they are still below average. Focused attention to spelling is evident in the good standards of accuracy. Effective planning ensures that pupils have opportunities to write in a range of styles, following up on class discussion. However, in some classes in Years 3 to 6, work in pupils' books is underdeveloped or unfinished and opportunities to practise writing extended pieces are occasionally missed.
58. The teaching is good overall. Despite a high changeover of staff, the school has managed to sustain the focus on standards and quality. The children are very well behaved, they trust their teachers and the teaching assistants (TAs) and are keen to reach their expectations. Ability groupings enable teachers to target work appropriately to pupils' needs, by and large. Lessons are very well structured with clear learning objectives and teachers and TAs work very effectively together to promote learning. During the inspection, for example, a TA taught a small group basic literacy skills very effectively. Marking and assessment are thorough but the pupils are not as confident in speaking of their standards and targets as they might be and, in Years 3 to 6, need practice in assessing their own and others' work. Local education authority support has been drawn on to improve the planning and develop teachers' skills in providing speaking and listening activities. Very occasionally the teaching has shortcomings because

the teacher is relatively inexperienced and/or is new to the school and has yet fully to establish classroom routines and expectations. Whilst ICT is used regularly to support literacy development, expectations could be increased in Years 3 to 6.

59. The leadership and management are good overall. Since the last inspection the standards have dropped and risen again but, in the light of the challenges provided by the almost complete turnover of staff since then, have recovered well as a result of focused and effective action. The staff turnover has resulted in a number of changes to the subject leadership in the last two years. The current co-ordinator has only just taken up her role although she has previous experience in a similar post. Given this, the school has done well to maintain its improvements. Whilst the teachers' planning and assessments are checked effectively, the monitoring of teaching could be developed further to ensure expectations are met consistently throughout the school.

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

60. Overall, the pupils use their language and literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. In Years 1 and 2, good opportunities are provided throughout the curriculum for the pupils to apply their skills. For example, in science and history, the children are learning to describe, explain and narrate in speaking and writing. In Years 3 to 6, the opportunities to apply skills are more uneven. While some good provision is evident, for example in mathematics, science and design and technology, opportunities are missed, or underexploited, in other subjects; for example, in geography, and history where there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise writing extended pieces.

### **French**

61. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are effectively developed in Year 6 by a weekly French lesson concentrating on spoken language. They understand simple questions about their age and where they live and answer appropriately. Written activities reinforce learning well and pupils develop a basic understanding of how life in France is different to their own. The provision is made available through links with the local secondary school who supply a specialist teacher for the weekly session.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well by Year 6 and attain standards which often exceed national expectations
- By Year 2, most pupils achieve satisfactorily.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good and have improved standards since the last inspection.
- Teaching is particularly good at developing pupils' number skills.
- The setting of pupils in Years 3 to 6 has a positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their learning in Years 1 and 2.

### **Commentary**

62. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and standards have risen significantly. The Year 6 results in 2004 were above both the national average and those attained in similar schools and pupils achieved very well. Similar results are expected from the current Year 6 where the vast majority of pupils are attaining the nationally expected standards and many exceed them. The standards of the current Year 2 are below average overall.

Whilst many pupils are in line to attain the national expectation (level 2) the number of pupils exceeding it is below average. Achievement is satisfactory.

63. Throughout the school, pupils have good skills in number and satisfactory standards in shape and space and data handling. While pupils are good at using and applying their knowledge by Year 6, this is an area where attainment is below expectations by Year 2. There is no evidence of significant differences in achievement by gender or ethnic background.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and present concepts to pupils clearly and methodically. Mental arithmetic sessions were good in all classes and pupils responded energetically to stimulating and lively activities. The pace of lessons is good and in the best lessons teachers strike a very good balance between instruction and letting pupils apply themselves to their tasks. Occasionally, the teaching does not provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose home language is not English are supported well by teaching assistants. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are organised into ability sets which enables teachers to match the work and their expectations to the ability of pupils. Pupils respond well to lessons and are effectively encouraged to talk about and explain their methods or working and to collaborate with one another in solving problems.
65. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and use this information to modify their teaching and support pupils who need further assistance to achieve their goals. The results of annual tests are used well to identify the effectiveness of teaching and areas for development. Pupils' individual targets are well understood and helpful in Year 2 but many older pupils do not know what they are which indicates the procedure is not yet effective.
66. Leadership and management are good. The school has placed a strong emphasis on improving pupils' numeracy skills and the recently appointed subject leader has a clear grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in the school. The subject leader has insufficient time to monitor lessons under current arrangements but she has a clear programme for developing the subject which provides a good basis for continued improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. Cross-curricular links are satisfactory. Information and communication technology is used in well to support teaching and learning. Pupils respond well to a variety of learning programmes which help them with tables and problem solving. Pupils' skills in data handling are well developed through work which they carry out on spreadsheets and graphic displays. There is satisfactory evidence of pupils using number in science, design and technology and geography in a way which helps them apply their learning purposefully.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress in the subject throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is a good emphasis on practical and investigative activities, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

68. Standards by Year 6 are average, as they were at the previous inspection. This represents good achievement by these pupils, who entered the school with below average attainment. Standards are best in scientific enquiry, which is emphasised well, especially in Years 3 to 6.

69. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were above average. A well above average proportion of the group reached the higher level of attainment in the subject. Fewer pupils than nationally reached the expected level because a significant number had special educational needs. Inspection evidence indicates that 2005 test results will be slightly lower because the group is not quite as strong. Fewer pupils are expected to reach the higher level, although the proportion is still likely to remain above average.
70. Standards in the current Year 2 are average and achievement is generally good. In 2004, teacher assessments indicated fewer pupils than nationally were reaching the expected level for this age. Several higher ability pupils left the school during the year, depressing the overall results. Nevertheless, these Year 2 pupils achieved well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.
71. Pupils' achievement in science is good because teaching is of a consistently good quality and the programme of study is well balanced. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good or very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject that enables them to teach confidently and provide interesting lessons based on practical activity. Tasks, such as those set in a Year 2 lesson on electricity, are often demanding and extend pupils' learning well. Teachers use questions skilfully to further pupils' understanding and to challenge them to think more deeply. The result is that pupils are interested, remain focused on their tasks and most behave very well. In the best lessons, such as one observed in Year 5, excellent management of pupils, a rapid pace and very good organisation enable pupils to learn very well. Activities are carefully adjusted to enable pupils with special educational needs to work at their own level and humour is often used to make teaching points. Features requiring improvement, especially in Years 3 to 6, are the presentation of written work and the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
72. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. There is a very good emphasis on developing skills to use and apply science through practical and investigative activity. This brings to life the more theoretical parts of the programme and contributes very well to the progress pupils make. Science is co-ordinated by the headteacher, whose leadership and management are good. She is very aware of standards throughout the school through her classroom observations, ensures the subject maintains a strong profile and takes an important part in the teaching programme.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards by Year 6 are below expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Standards are satisfactory by Year 2 and progress is good
- The subject leader has insufficient time to monitor the standards and progress of all pupils.
- Teachers are not planning the use of ICT into all subjects to ensure that pupils regularly develop confidence in the skills learnt in the computer suite.

### **Commentary**

73. The standards attained by the current Year 6 are below expectations and their achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year 2, pupils attain the standards expected nationally and are achieving well. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and all elements of the subject are now being taught throughout the school. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have insufficient opportunities to use and apply their learning and their confidence and skills are underdeveloped.

74. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn well from their regular visits to the computer suite, where they use a good variety of programmes appropriate to their stage of learning. They have a good control of the keyboard and mouse, know how to save and print work and have a basic understanding of control technology, word processing and how to obtain information. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are familiar with computer conventions and have a satisfactory understanding of how to use computers for research. While pupils are acquiring a basic knowledge and understanding of communications, control technology and use of ICT in mathematics, they do not have a sufficient understanding of how ICT can be applied as a learning tool. They use computers for word processing and presentations but the amount of completed work is limited and the quality is below expectations. Pupils' understanding of the benefits and best applications of ICT is very limited.
75. While teaching and learning are effective in Years 1 and 2, they are unsatisfactory overall in Years 5 and 6. Teachers make good use of the clear scheme of work and plan lessons well to introduce pupils to all the expected skills. Although instruction in the computer suite is satisfactory, pupils do not have enough time to master all the skills presented to them in two sessions per week. There was little evidence of pupils using ICT in class work and teachers are not planning enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in subjects like science and the humanities. Teachers are developing assessment systems but are not yet implementing them to monitor pupils' progress with enough precision linked to National Curriculum levels.
76. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The subject leader has insufficient non-contact time to observe lessons and monitor pupils' standards. Although she has developed valuable policy and guidance such as the revised scheme of work, assessment systems and guidance on levelling the standards of pupils' work, these are not yet fully implemented. The school has ambitious plans to extend learning in ICT which should also include planning learning in all subjects.

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

77. Apart from in mathematics, pupils' learning is not systematically developed across other subjects, with the result that pupils' confidence and skills are insufficiently developed. Teachers use computers well to improve pupils' numeracy skills, data handling and presentation. They are also used to provide reinforcement of basic literacy skills. Pupils learn word processing skills, in English for example, but have only infrequent opportunities to apply them in Years 5 and 6. Research skills are used in history and geography but they are at a basic level for older pupils and Internet access is not available in all classrooms

#### **HUMANITIES**

78. One lesson of geography and one lesson of history were observed.
79. A scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning in **geography** indicates that teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. All the expected aspects of the subject are covered satisfactorily and there are good links with other subjects such as art and dance which successfully raise pupils' interest and understanding. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits, both local and residential, which help develop their mapping skills to a satisfactory standard. Pupils make limited use of both their literacy and ICT skills but their numeracy is satisfactorily promoted through data handling.
80. Pupils' completed work in **history** indicates that all elements of the subject are taught satisfactorily. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the difference between the past and life today in their study of Florence Nightingale. Year 6 pupils have satisfactory enquiry skills and use a variety of sources to understand the story of the Titanic. The use of literacy skills is satisfactory, although there are few examples of extended writing on historical topics. Visits and visitors stimulate pupils' interest but ICT is not widely used to extend pupils' knowledge. Teaching and learning are stimulated by good displays which celebrate pupils' work.

#### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below those expected at the age of 11.
- The programme for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is studied in insufficient depth.
- The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

81. Pupils in Year 2 reach standards in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. Their achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are below those expected and their achievement is unsatisfactory. This was also the case at the previous inspection, although some of the weaknesses then evident have been remedied.
82. The main reason for low standards is that the coverage of the programme of study is too superficial. Particularly for older pupils, the depth of study is well short of that envisaged in the scheme of work suggested as part of the agreed syllabus. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that insufficient time is spent covering the demanding requirement of the syllabus to cover all the major religions by the age of 11. Religions tend to be studied in isolation and there is insufficient attention to what pupils can learn from religion or how this affects their everyday lives. Discussion with pupils indicates that there is confusion between religions. This is because facts have been taught but have not been related to pupils' previous experiences. Consequently, pupils find it difficult to retain what they have learnt. Understanding of religious vocabulary is below that expected. Notably, the subject is timetabled to be taught at the end of Friday afternoons in most classes, when pupils are most tired. This may also contribute to pupils' unsatisfactory achievement.
83. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, but an examination of pupils' completed work indicates that teaching is generally good in Years 1 and 2. The lesson observed in Year 2 was of good quality, building on the experiences of the few pupils who attend church regularly and enabling pupils to learn about the reasons for visiting a church. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Very little written work has been completed in the Year 5, 6 and in one of the Year 3/4 classes. The lesson observed was unsatisfactory because a study of Sikh practice was not related to pupils' own experiences and there were no extra resources to help those struggling with unfamiliar language.
84. The leadership of religious education is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has good levels of experience and enthusiasm and teaches the subject well to her own class. However, she has had little opportunity to monitor or influence the teaching and learning of pupils in other classes. Consequently, she is insufficiently aware of detailed strengths and weaknesses throughout the school.

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

85. As the inspection did not focus on art and design, music or physical education, few lessons were seen in these subjects and it was not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of provision.
86. No lessons were seen in **art and design**. Pupils' work in portfolios, sketchbooks and displayed around the school indicates that pupils reach average standards by Year 2 but below average standards by the end of Year 6. Both the amount and quality of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory, suggesting that insufficient time is spent on the subject. Although illustrative work is often carried out in association with topics in other subjects, pupils do not spend enough time refining existing skills or learning about the work of famous artists. The use

of sketchbooks is unsatisfactory. They are not used enough to collect ideas for future work or to practise specific techniques.

87. The single lesson of satisfactory quality seen in **music** was insufficient to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching. Discussion with the co-ordinator indicates that singing is the strongest aspect and this was confirmed by enthusiastic singing in assemblies. The school's choir makes a significant contribution to the overall quality of singing. It performs in school, to senior citizens and at local music festivals. Up to 60 pupils are involved, boys as well as girls, from Year 2 upwards. It is open to all interested pupils, irrespective of ability. A new scheme of work in music has increased the confidence of all teachers to teach the subject.
88. Two lessons in **physical education**, both in dance, were also insufficient to judge the overall quality of teaching. Both were satisfactory. An examination of planning in the subject indicates that the programme of study is broad and balanced, covering all the statutory requirements. Good use is made of visiting coaches, including from a leading national rugby club, to teach games skills. Competitive games are played against neighbouring schools in a wide variety of sports and there are plenty of after-school clubs open to all pupils.
89. The teaching and learning in **design and technology** was sampled. Pupils work was sampled and one lesson observed so it was not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of provision.
90. Evidence indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils reach the standards expected by the end of Year 6 and Year 2 and achieve at a satisfactory level.
91. By Year 2, pupils construct puppets and models with axles according to a precise design brief. They define their ideas and list materials and process clearly. Pupils' constructions are of a good quality and well finished and they complete a written self-evaluation which reflects much thought and good discussion. No work has yet been undertaken by the current Year 6 but the projects completed in previous years indicate a satisfactory level in designing and making controllable vehicles.
92. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 2, and in this teaching and learning were good. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of work completed indicate that pupils are acquiring a good range of skills and are enthusiastic about the projects undertaken. They benefit from a close study of articles to be made, such as purses and slippers, and apply their observations to their own work. Throughout activities, there is much valuable discussion and pupils develop a satisfactory range of making skills and a broad vocabulary with which to express their ideas. Self-evaluation is satisfactory with mostly detailed written observations but a few which were too brief.
93. Leadership and management are effectively developing pupils' attainment. The subject has a clear scheme of work which provides good guidance and enables teachers to develop pupils' skills through increasingly complex and challenging projects. While there has been little lesson observation and assessment systems are not in place, pupils' standards are rising.

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

94. Only one lesson was seen in personal, social and health education (PSHE). The quality of the teaching was good. Taken together with a scrutiny of the pupils' work and the teachers' planning, the evidence suggests that the provision is effective. The programme incorporates development of citizenship throughout the school, including a focus on 'being a good citizen, at home, and in the community'. For the younger children there is good emphasis on 'keeping ourselves safe' and as they get older work on feelings, for example, in regard to bullying, 'how would you feel if..?' and conflict resolution. A residential visit in Year 6 and visiting speakers enrich the programme. Circle time is well used to enable the younger children to share experiences and develop their understanding. In Years 5 and 6, the class councils enable

pupils to take on leadership roles and exercise responsibility and it would be beneficial to extend these opportunities to younger pupils. Good use is made of pupil monitors for organisational matters and to take responsibility for supporting and helping others. The pupils undertake these opportunities with great enthusiasm and are diligent in carrying them out.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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