

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILLESBOROUGH INFANT SCHOOL**

Ashford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118370

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Paul

Lead inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 265362

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	424
School address:	Church Road Willesborough Ashford Kent
Postcode:	TN24 0JZ
Telephone number:	01233 624165
Fax number:	01233 612580
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Keith McNicol
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Willesborough is a very large infant school situated on the outskirts of Ashford in Kent. Pupils come from a range of homes and backgrounds and their attainment on entry is in line with expectations overall. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. About 3 per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and fewer than 2 per cent of them are at an early stage of learning English. The school is designated to make special provision for a small number of pupils who have physical disabilities, who fully integrate into the day-to-day life of the school. Just under 25 per cent of pupils have been identified with special educational needs, and this is higher than most schools nationally. Nine have Statements of Special Educational Need, including those with physical disabilities, and this is also higher than average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21234	Douglas Hayward	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector	
26945	Sylvia Gatehouse	Team inspector	Foundation stage Physical education Citizenship
30028	Katherine Spencer	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
32182	Carol Gibbard	Team inspector	English Music Religious education
15606	Christine Hill	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with physical disabilities

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall, although it is **underachieving**. Consequently, it **does not provide satisfactory** value for money. Infant pupils of differing abilities do not consistently achieve as well as they could. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall, but there is not enough good and very good teaching and the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough. The school has gained a well-earned reputation for providing a **caring environment** and **very good** support for pupils with physical disabilities. Pupils **behave well** in lessons and around the school. They make a **good** start in the reception classes.

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

- The leadership and management of the school have not identified or implemented effective strategies to raise pupils' achievement.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough.
- There is not enough good and very good teaching in the infant classes.
- Children in the reception classes get a good start to their schooling.
- Pupils behave well and are very keen to learn.
- Pupils with physical disabilities are very well looked after and make good progress.
- The school makes very good links with parents.
- Assessments of what pupils know are not used well enough to set challenging work.

Improvement since the last inspection is **unsatisfactory** overall. The school is still strong in some aspects, for example pupils' behaviour and the care and support it provides, but standards in national tests have gradually fallen, and the trend of improvement in its results is now below that of most schools. Importantly, it has not successfully addressed two major issues from the last inspection that have an impact on achievement; namely, raising the quality of teaching, and monitoring teaching and learning in different subjects to ensure that they improve.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	B	C	C
writing	B	C	D	D
mathematics	B	C	C	C

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year because they are taught well and are keen to learn. Their achievement is satisfactory. Many infant pupils In Years 1 and 2 do not consistently achieve as well as they should, especially those of average and above average ability. This means that in some subjects they attain standards that are expected for their age, but sometimes they do not do as well as they could. In some classes pupils work consistently well, but there are variations in the standards of work between different classes in the same year group. The standard of pupils' writing is below average and is disappointing in other subjects. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are not used well enough in other subjects. Standards are satisfactory overall in reading, mathematics and science, but many pupils also underachieve in those subjects. Pupils with special educational needs **achieve well** in the reception classes and **satisfactorily** in the infants. Girls and boys throughout school achieve similar standards. The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve **satisfactorily** overall, but once again they do better in some classes than in others. Pupils with physical disabilities achieve well throughout the school.

The school makes **satisfactory** provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. Provision is **very good** for their social development and **good** for their moral development. Pupils work well together and have a well developed sense of fair play. They show great care and support for pupils with physical disabilities. There are, though, few opportunities for them to learn about the cultures of different groups in society. Their attitudes to school are **very good**. They like Willesborough and **behave well**. They are usually attentive in lessons, even when they are not being challenged to work as hard as they could. Attendance is **satisfactory** overall, although pupils' absences from school are not monitored thoroughly enough.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall in the infant classes. They are **good** in the reception classes and help children to settle quickly. In some infant classes, there is too little consistent challenge to pupils' work. There is not enough good and very good teaching throughout the infants to help pupils achieve higher standards. The weakest lessons are slow in pace and pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they are trying to improve. Teachers' use of assessments to plan the next stage of learning is **unsatisfactory** overall. Where teaching is good, lessons are interesting and fun. This is particularly the case when teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to carry out practical investigations in science or design and technology that help them to really understand what they learn. The school provides a **good** quality of education for pupils with physical disabilities. It offers them **very good** opportunities to reach their potential, but does not offer, consistently, the same opportunities and level of challenge to all pupils. The curriculum is **good** in the reception classes and **satisfactory** for infants. All adults provide a **good** level of care and safety. The school works **very well** with parents. It values and listens carefully to their ideas.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **unsatisfactory** overall, because a significant number of pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The headteacher and governors are aware that standards have been gradually falling. The strategies they have put in place to address this have not successfully ensured that all pupils achieve well. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject managers has not been carried out regularly enough or with enough expertise and focus to improve them. Nevertheless, the school has the capacity to improve. The headteacher gives good leadership for maintaining a happy, caring school where pupils are well behaved and where there are very good relationships. Governors are hard working and committed to the school's success. They plan the school's finances well and have brought about significant improvements in accommodation.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school and think that it does a very good job. They believe that the school cares for their children and that it is well led. Pupils like school and the adults who look after them.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by raising teachers' expectations of the amount and speed at which pupils can learn;
- ensure the monitoring of lessons and pupils' work are rigorous and that the information gathered is used to analyse and improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- use assessment information to plan suitably challenging work for pupils of different abilities and to track their progress more effectively.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement for children in the reception classes is **satisfactory** and most are on course to reach the expected standards by the end of their reception year. Standards in the most recent national tests are similar to those found in the majority of schools at age seven, but not all infant pupils are achieving as well as they could. Although achievement is good in some classes, it is **unsatisfactory** overall and this is, therefore, an **underachieving** school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing, mathematics and science are below average by the age of seven.
- Pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are not used well enough in other subjects.
- Pupils with physical disabilities achieve well because of the very good support they get for their learning and for their physical and personal development.
- Standards of pupils' work in art and design are much higher than those found in most schools.

#### Commentary

1. Children start school with a wide spread of ability, which is recognised by teachers as being in line overall with that expected. The school's own data show that attainment on entry has declined very slightly in the past four years. The most significant change, perhaps, has been the increase in numbers of children identified as having special educational needs in one or more areas, such as speaking and listening skills. Indeed, the school has put into place a programme to try to improve these important areas. Children make satisfactory progress in all areas and are on track to attain the standards expected of them.<sup>1</sup> This is in line with judgements made in the previous inspection. Because the school has improved the outdoor environment, children now make better progress than they did in their physical development.
2. Infant pupils do not consistently build on the progress they make in the Foundation Stage. In one or two Year 1 classes they achieve well in a range of subjects because they are consistently taught well. National test and assessment results for pupils in Year 2 (**see Summary and table below**) show a gradual decline, although they were in line with national expectations in reading, mathematics and science in 2003 compared with all schools and similar schools. Additionally, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3<sup>2</sup> was above average in reading, and average in the other subjects. Nevertheless, the trend of improvement in Willesborough's results in recent years is below most other schools nationally. During the inspection, standards were judged to be average in reading, but below average in writing, mathematics and science. This is the result of expectations that are too low and of inadequate challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals – these are expectations for children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning. For example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and begin to write simple sentences.

<sup>2</sup> Levels Key Stage 1 – By the end of Year 2, when pupils are seven, they are expected to reach Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is achieving standards above those expected for a child of his or her age.

## Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (16.7)	15.9 (15.7)
writing	14.3 (14.8)	14.8 (14.3)
mathematics	16.4 (16.5)	15.7 (16.2)

There were 139 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in the foundation subjects are generally in line with those expected at age seven. The notable exception is in art and design, where standards are well above expectations. The range of work, the use of a wide choice of media and the high-quality finished work show what can be achieved when expectations of quality are high. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are not fully developed and, consequently, are not fully used in other subjects. What can be achieved is evident in an excellent account by one pupil of a lesson spent looking for worms as part of the class science work. There is hardly any evidence of information and communication technology being used to support and extend their work in other areas.
- Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress because of the quality of help they receive from learning support assistants. These staff are adept and successful at encouraging the pupils in their groups to stay on task and to work hard. Pupils with physical disabilities make good progress throughout the school in their personal and physical development. Once again this is due to skilled and focused adult support in the classroom and in small withdrawal groups. The level of underachievement for the very few pupils from ethnic minority groups is in line with their peers, although they are fully included in all activities. Achievement for the very few pupils at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory overall. The weekly support from specialist teachers is skilled and well focused and is continued in their classes with carefully and appropriately planned work, and support from other pupils.
- The nature, extent and impact of underachievement are as follows.
  - There is underachievement by the age of seven, particularly for average and above average ability pupils. This happens because too little is expected of them and they could do better.
  - There is underachievement in writing. This is because writing opportunities lack range and balance and too many teachers expect too little in terms of quality, quantity and presentation. These low expectations limit the development of truly independent writing skills, particularly for pupils in Year 2.
  - There is underachievement in mathematics and science. There are too few opportunities to carry out investigations and to solve problems in many classes. The range of work is narrow and there are too few links with other subjects to make learning interesting and to consistently capture pupils' imagination.

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

Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and school life. They behave well and come to school in good time. Attendance is satisfactory. The school cultivates the pupils' personal development satisfactorily.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils love coming to school and are very positive about activities and lessons.
- The staff are particularly good at encouraging the pupils to be responsible members of the school community.

- Pupils' behaviour is good
- The monitoring of attendance is not rigorous enough to spot trends and changes over time.
- Punctuality is good.

### **Commentary**

6. The pupils have maintained their very good attitudes from the last inspection. When lessons are stimulating and expectations are high they are very positive in their learning and so make good progress. Even when lessons introductions are too long, pupils are not usually distracted because they are very respectful. Sometimes if lessons are too lengthy achievement suffers, because the pupils resort to fidgeting, chatting and asking how long it is to playtime.
7. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the support and opportunities the school gives them to mature as learners, to behave well and to attend school regularly. Doing well in lessons increases their confidence and self-esteem. The very good relationships they have with staff make a very big contribution to their personal development. This is especially so for pupils with physical disabilities and in the Foundation Stage.
8. Relationships in the school are still particularly good. Boys and girls work and play very well together. Pupils say that there is no bullying and the school is very quick to nip it in the bud should it occur. Those with physical difficulties are very well included by their peers and accepted as full members of the school without question. Pupils are polite and courteous with staff in the school and with visiting adults. They look up to their teachers, feel safe and secure with them and so grow in personal development. There has been one fixed term exclusion in the past year.
9. The school is very good at instilling in the pupils a sense of community and responsibility for others. The pupil council is well involved in planning an outside activity area. In classes, pupils who are chosen to be the Special Helpers for the day are proud of their responsibilities and the Buddies are being trained to look out for others who need a helping hand or friendly playmate at break times.
10. Pupils are carefully and sensitively taught what is right and what is wrong. School rules are in simple language and clearly understood and followed. Pupils behave well in lessons and moving around the school. The school has an increasing number of pupils with behavioural difficulties linked to their special needs. For the most part these pupils are supported well and helped to behave appropriately.
11. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, but is not as good as it was at the last inspection. Assemblies give pupils a chance to sing enthusiastically and enjoy their voices. However in uninspiring lessons pupils miss the joy and excitement of finding out more. The school provides a satisfactory amount of opportunities for the mostly white pupils to experience other cultures and ways of life through history, geography and music, but not enough is done to increase the pupils' awareness of the wealth of religion and culture closer to home in the United Kingdom.
12. Pupils' attendance remains in line with the average for primary schools but the number of parents who take their children out of school for holidays in term time is a cause for concern. So far this year there have been up to twenty incidences per class of holidays taken. This means the pupils on holiday do not achieve as much as they could do because they miss substantial amounts of learning. The school does not have a good enough overview of attendance data to be able to analyse and act on any emerging absence issues. Pupils arrive on time for the start of school, because the head teacher has established clear routines for the beginning of the day.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.1
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.2
National data:	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
282	1	
1		
7		
1		
1		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education overall, but there is some **underachievement** in many infant classes. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, but improvement is needed. The curriculum is **satisfactory**, the care and support that pupils receive are **good** and the school's partnership with parents is **very good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in the reception classes. They are **satisfactory** overall in the infant classes

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teachers have low expectations and offer pupils too little challenge. This leads to underachievement.
- There is not enough good or better teaching in the infant classes to raise achievement.
- Good teaching in the reception classes helps children to settle quickly.
- Teachers' use of assessment is unsatisfactory.
- Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
	3 (6%)	15 (31%)	26 (53%)	5 (10%)		

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.

## Commentary

13. Teaching is not as good now as it was when the last inspection took place. In that inspection fewer lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory, and just over half of all lessons were good or very good, compared with just over a third in the current inspection. Teachers' use of assessment, which was good in the previous inspection, is now unsatisfactory. One of the key issues in the previous inspection was, 'to make teaching in Year 2 sufficiently rigorous and challenging to enable pupils to make progress'. This has not been successfully accomplished and is one reason why pupils underachieve.
14. In the reception classes teaching is good overall and helps children to make progress. In one or two infant classes, teaching is always good or better. Typical features of these lessons are interesting and exciting subject content where pupils are actively involved in learning by carrying out investigations and problem solving. Teachers' planning is very good and identifies clearly what pupils are expected to learn. Sessions of an hour or more simply fly by, with pupils totally absorbed in what they are doing and achieving well. This type of lesson leads to pupils remembering what they have learned in future lessons. Teachers are well aware of what pupils have learned and whether they found it easy or too difficult. This information helps them to plan suitably challenging work in subsequent lessons.
15. In the five unsatisfactory lessons, the pace of the lesson was very slow, pupils did not learn anything new and in one physical education lesson health and safety arrangements were unsatisfactory. In lessons that were satisfactory or better, there are several positive elements:
  - most pupils' learning and progress are at least satisfactory.
  - relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and teachers use praise well to encourage them.
  - teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave.
  - teachers trust pupils to work collaboratively.
16. Learning support assistants play an important part in working with groups during lessons and they have a positive impact on learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs. They establish warm and trusting relationships with them and this helps to build pupils' confidence and self esteem. During many lesson introductions their contribution is less effective because teachers do not plan a specific role for them where their talents and knowledge of pupils can be used effectively. As a significant number of lesson introductions were over-long, this is a waste of valuable human resources.
17. While the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, there are weaknesses in key aspects that lead to underachievement in a number of classrooms. The weaknesses vary from class to class, and from subject to subject, but all relate in some way to expectations that are too low or to a level of challenge that is insufficient. In some classes:
  - some teachers accept the quantity of work that pupils produce, rather than stipulating what they expect. The outcome is that a twenty-minute session can result in hardly any work being done. In addition, there is rarely a clearly stated expectation about the quality and presentation of written work. Teachers are too ready to accept what pupils offer.
  - there is too much variation between classes in the same year regarding the quality and quantity of work that is produced and the use of resources. For example, in some classes pupils have access to good quality teacher-prepared worksheets that promote their investigation skills well. In others, the same topic is taught mainly by using commercially produced worksheets that require little more than colouring in.
  - too many writing activities are over directed and, as a result, writing skills do not develop as well as they should.
  - during the main body of the lesson many teachers do not plan a clear teaching role for themselves. They frequently move around the class supporting individual pupils on an ad hoc basis. This means that frequently they do not stop activities to intervene to correct

the same sort of mistake made by several pupils, and they often do not use direct teaching in this part of the lesson to address specific targets for improvement in pupils' books.

- all teachers, quite rightly, set work that is easier for less able pupils and harder for those who are more capable. Too often, however, it fails to challenge sufficiently because it is still not hard enough for average and above average pupils to push their learning forward at a rate they could cope with. The school's attempts to solve this by establishing ability groups for literacy and numeracy once a week are not successful.
18. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Individual education plans are not used effectively by all teachers and frequently contain too many targets. When teaching is good and better the learning is well targeted for the different abilities and the pupils make good progress against their targets. For pupils with physical disabilities the learning is good because the target setting is good with frequent recording of short-term gains and the setting of new targets. Support staff working with the physically disabled pupils make a very good contribution to their learning and development.
  19. Although the school has started to analyse pupils' work, including tests, every term, much of this information is not yet used effectively by teachers to plan what pupils need to learn next. As a result of this, teaching does not always build on learning and pupils do not progress as fast as they can. Whilst these tests are helping the school to try to improve weak areas, such as problem solving in mathematics and the development of reading comprehension skills, the same good practice is not happening in the case of writing.
  20. The school has established a system of personalised learning programmes in order to provide pupils with individual goals for English and maths every term. Many of these goals are vague in nature, however, and are of little value to either pupils or teachers. The school uses learning objectives to help create a focus for learning in lessons and to guide teachers' feedback to pupils. Whereas this system is used well in some classes, practice across the school is inconsistent and there are too many instances where individual pupils receive no direct guidance or where the comments they receive do not relate to the focus of their learning. This year the deputy headteacher has started to track how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics to monitor and evaluate the progress of individual and groups of pupils in these subjects as they move through the school.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum. Opportunities to enrich the curriculum through visits to places of interest and visitors to the school are **satisfactory**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good improvements in the quality of outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- The support given to pupils with physical difficulties in accessing the curriculum is very good.
- Good links are often made between subjects taught in Year 1.
- The contribution that literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology make to other subjects is not good enough.
- Good use is made of the accommodation.
- There is inconsistency between what is planned and what is taught in some classes.

## Commentary

21. The school has successfully improved the quality of outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage. Children have easy access to a range of good quality equipment that is used on a regular basis and promotes all areas of learning well. The curriculum for children in

the reception classes is stimulating and interesting and helps them to become independent and enjoy their learning.

22. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory for infants and good for reception children. All pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, have full access to the curriculum. All statutory requirements are in place and reviews are up to date. The provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory overall, and specialised support from the local education authority is very effective. Pupils who are at an early stage of English are helped to develop their knowledge of the language through colourful signs and charts displayed in some classrooms, although this is not always consistent in every class. The planned programme for developing pupils' personal, social and health education is in its early stages. It is linked well to work that is currently being studied but it is not always given sufficient time during the week for issues to be discussed thoroughly.
23. The school has been successful in the way it has introduced new curriculum planning for pupils in Year 1 based on a thematic approach. Good links are made between areas of learning, but at the same time the individuality of different subjects has been maintained. For example, the topic on materials allowed pupils to explore the properties of different materials in science, to compare the different materials used when looking at the history of toys and to experiment with different materials in art using fabric and paper. In addition to this, several literacy lessons have a topic-related theme running through them which makes learning more exciting and stimulating. There are, however, inconsistencies between what is planned and what is taught in some classes in both Years 1 and 2. Not all pupils have equal access to the same resources.
24. The contribution that writing, mathematics and information and communication technology make across the curriculum is not good enough. Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently well to use different styles of writing when studying subjects like history or religious education to recount stories or points of view. Whilst pupils' skills in information and communication technology are developed satisfactorily, the impact that the use of technology has in other subjects is very limited, although it is good in art. There is very little evidence to suggest that pupils can transfer their skills from mathematics to science or geography for example, to draw graphs to show plant growth or collect data related to their local study.
25. Good use is made of the accommodation even though it is spread out over three separate buildings. Careful thought has gone into securing the site to allow free access between the buildings. The second hall allows greater flexibility for timetabling activities such as physical education, drama and music. There is a satisfactory range of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest to enhance the curriculum.

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

The school looks after the welfare, health and safety of the pupils well. It provides satisfactory support, advice and guidance. Pupils have good opportunities to have their voice heard.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is particularly good at providing individual medical care for pupils with physical disabilities.
- The lack of effective assessment systems means some pupils are not given sufficiently accurate academic support and challenge.
- The pupils have very good trusting relationships with adults in the school and they feel they are listened to properly.
- Pupils new to the school are settled in well.

## **Commentary**

26. The school looks after the individual physical requirements of its pupils very well. Even though it is a very large school, the background of every pupil is well known to at least one adult. Pupils with physical difficulties are very well served and their support has improved even further since the last inspection. Adults familiarise themselves with these pupils very early on so that support is well arranged and put in place before they arrive. The staff working with them on externally provided support programmes carefully monitor their progress. There are very good relationships between the school and the specialist services. Personal hygiene and individual feeding programmes are carried out sensitively and with dignity. First aid systems are well established.
27. Although the school supports the pupils' pastoral and physical needs very well, some teaching staff do not give all pupils the demanding academic challenge that they merit. Assessment is not fully effective because a few teachers are not clear about the levels at which the pupils are working, some targets are not challenging enough and teachers do not consistently feed the information gained from assessments into their daily teaching plans. The good monitoring of academic progress has not been maintained since the last inspection.
28. Pupils feel happy and secure at Willesborough Infants. They all have an adult to whom they can turn if they have worries. Staff are very receptive to ideas and concerns from the pupils. Personal, social and health education lessons provide a regular weekly slot for pupil discussion. Teachers have received training so they feel confident to tackle topical and sensitive issues with the pupils. However in some classes these lessons are planned at the end of the long morning sessions, and are too short to give serious consideration to personal development.
29. Pupils new to the school settle in well. The school works very closely with parents to ensure it has all the necessary information to make the welcoming of the new pupil as effective as possible. Pupils starting in the reception class gradually build up from half to full days over half a term. The well organised settling in procedures mean the pupils are soon able to cope with the new routines away from their parents.
30. The school is a safe and secure place for the pupils. All child protection procedures are up to date. Governors' regularly assess the site for risks and swiftly remove any potential hazards. The school is particularly conscientious about the movement of traffic on the site, especially as several pupils are physically disabled. At the beginning and end of the day access is only allowed to cars issued with permits, dramatically reducing the chances of traffic accidents.

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

The school has a very strong partnership with parents. Community links are good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. The extended services for pupils with physical difficulties are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very appreciative of the school and support school life very well.
- The school involves parents very well in their children's learning.
- The use of outside agencies to support pupils with physical difficulties is very good.
- Parents are given a very good voice in the running of the school.
- Links with the local community make a good contribution to the curriculum.
- Targets for improvement in pupils' annual reports are often too vague to enable parents to help their children effectively

## **Commentary**

31. Parents play a very important part in the life of the school and are happy to do as much as they can to help their children learn. The partnership with parents has improved since the last inspection. Many parents regularly hear their children read at home and some come into school as part of the parent reading helper scheme to support the reading of other children. The Willesborough Infant School Supporters raises large amounts of funds towards school resources. The only negative factor is the high incidence of parents taking their children out of school in term time for holidays.
32. The school provides parents with good information to keep them up to date with school events and educational news. Annual reports give a useful overview of how their children are progressing and pointers as to how their children can improve, but the targets are often too vague to be of use. The teachers regularly organise evenings to introduce parents to new initiatives so they can share in supporting their children. Good communication keeps parents of physically disabled pupils well informed about their child's progress. The school is very well provided for and supported by specialist agencies that work very well with the school staff and make a very good contribution to pupils' personal and physical development and learning.
33. The school values the views of the parents. A few parents in the questionnaire believed the school does not consult them enough. Inspectors disagree and find that consultation is regular and informative and includes the parents of pupils with physical disabilities. Concerns are followed up and the results are fed back. In last year's questionnaire it transpired that many parents did not know the parent governors, so the school arranged a special meeting so they could meet them.
34. Links with the local area play an important part in the pupils' education and help them to appreciate the importance of living in a supportive community. In particular the children in the reception classes take part in a wealth of outings to help their development. The school continues to have strong links with St Mary's church for religious education and end of term services. The school still has effective relationships with the adjacent junior school to smooth the transition to Year 3.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory**.  
The governance of the school is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is insufficiently rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators to raise standards.
- The governors support the school very well, but do not have sufficient expertise to hold it to account
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work closely together, and the day-to-day management of the school runs smoothly.
- The school budget has been used well to improve accommodation.

### **Commentary**

35. Under the headteacher's leadership, the school has continued to maintain its warm and caring ethos, and in this respect it has achieved success. Day-to-day routines run smoothly. The headteacher and staff have taken a strong stance on the inclusion and full integration of pupils with special needs, and those with physical disabilities. These are strengths of the school.
36. The school has taken effective steps to maintain its ethos, pastoral work and the social development of the pupils, but it has been less successful in tackling the gradual decline in pupils' results in national tests in recent years. The monitoring of teaching and learning has

not been evaluative enough, and records show that clear development points to improve the quality of teaching are omitted. In addition, not all the monitoring that was planned has taken place. The majority of co-ordinators have not had time to fulfil their roles as subject leaders effectively. For example, the Foundation Stage is well led by an experienced and committed co-ordinator, but she has not yet been allocated regular time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in her department. The weaknesses are now evident in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and are having an adverse effect on pupils' achievement. Where monitoring has taken place by the senior management team, the weaknesses in some teaching in some classes have not been clearly identified and addressed frankly enough. Consequently, management has failed to identify specific deficiencies in teaching, and pupils' achievement is not as good as it could be. The need to clarify and establish the roles of the subject leaders in the monitoring of their subjects was a key issue identified at the last inspection.

37. The school benefits from a large team of very well qualified and trained support staff who are well led and deployed by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She has a good understanding of needs of the children and has created effective teams who work with a sense of purpose. However, teaching is not sufficiently well evaluated and target setting and the monitoring of achievement are not well established for individual pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but for pupils with physically disabilities they are good.
38. The governing body has not been sufficiently alert in holding the school accountable for the decline in standards. Although they have a close working relationship with the headteacher, they have not fully drawn on her expertise to establish and secure their own understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their school. They have certainly been aware of a number of possible reasons for the fall in standards, but not been analytical enough in their appraisal of the school and, in particular, the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work. A number of governors have taken a special interest in different subjects and have started observing lessons, but this is embryonic and has not yet improved the standards of teaching and learning.
39. The school's improvement plan has contributions from teaching staff and governors and identifies a reasonable number of areas to address. Action to be taken is identified, together with personnel responsible, costs and a time frame. Success criteria, however, are often vague and refer to general improvement, rather than to specific criteria that can be measured or identified to be confident about pupils' achievement and progress. The school is currently carrying forward a significant budget surplus. In view of recent budget restrictions governors wisely decided to protect the current staffing levels in case the school suffered further budget cuts. Some of this money also forms part of the governors' plans to continue to develop and improve accommodation, which they have successfully achieved in recent years.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,054,140	Balance from previous year	170,061
Total expenditure	1,061,514	Balance carried forward to the next year	162,687
Expenditure per pupil	2,497		

40. The main aids to raising achievement are the school's good provision in the Foundation Stage, good support for pupils with special educational needs, and for those who are physically impaired. They also include the good behaviour of the pupils and their very good attitudes, relationships between adults and pupils, and the high quality of the support staff. There is, additionally, a strong commitment on the part of the management team and the governors to make improvements that will raise achievement. The main barriers to raising

achievement are weaknesses in the quality of teaching, a lack of challenge in a significant number of lessons, under-achievement especially in Year 2, and a lack of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by senior management, co-ordinators and governors.

41. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall, although many pupils underachieve. The standard of teaching, although satisfactory overall, is not good enough. The percentage of good and very good teaching at Willesborough in the infants is much lower than in other schools nationally. The amount of money spent on each pupil's education is slightly lower than average, although it has not been effectively used to raise standards. Leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory because the decline in national results has not been effectively addressed and not all key issues from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

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

Provision for children in the reception classes is **good**.

42. Children begin school at the beginning of the year in which they become five years old, joining one of five parallel reception classes. Attainment on entry is broadly average. Children settle quickly into school routines and get off to a smooth start. Those with special educational needs make good progress due to the high quality of support they receive. Those with physical disabilities make very good progress because they are very well cared for and fully integrated in all areas of learning including physical education.
43. Good assessment systems record children's progress and in some classes there is particularly good liaison between teachers and their support staff, sharing frequent, focused written information about children's achievement. The school has not yet established a procedure to forecast whether children are likely to reach or exceed goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. There have not yet been opportunities for Year 1 staff to work alongside reception staff to ensure that children's progress is continuous. These are weaknesses in the school's provision.

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

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

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

- The school's very good induction procedures ensure that children begin school confidently.
- All staff conscientiously encourage children's development in this area of learning by providing a warm, supportive and genuinely caring ethos.
- Teachers plan a wide range of very good, exciting activities for children to develop their confidence, initiative and independence

#### **Commentary**

44. Children make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills because of very good teaching and good support from teaching assistants. Consequently they achieve well. They settle swiftly into school routines and good induction arrangements ensure they have a happy start. They behave very well and have positive attitudes as they work and play together. They share resources such as computer keyboards well and handle all resources carefully, including newly-hatched chicks. They enjoy assuming responsibilities, being 'helping hands' to serve the needs of their classes, such as holding doors for others. A particular strength is the way teachers provide many interesting opportunities for children to assume responsibility for their own learning. For example, children choose their activities for themselves. When this happens, sessions are exciting. Children are motivated and interested in their tasks across many areas of learning, including writing, using computers, role-play and studying features of the natural world outdoors. Children are well on course to exceed the early learning goal by the time they transfer to Year 1.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good** overall. Provision for speaking and listening skills is **very good**. Provision for writing and reading is **good**.

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

- Teachers take every opportunity to promote children's speaking and listening skills.

- Many links with other areas of learning enable children to expand their vocabulary.
- Children's progress in writing and reading is not as good as it is in speaking and listening.

### **Commentary**

45. Children make very good progress and achieve well in developing their speaking and listening skills because of good and very good teaching. There is also consistently good support from teaching assistants. Many good opportunities arise during the day for children to practise and reinforce their skills. They have acquired the ability to resist interrupting, and listen patiently to each other, even during introductions that are occasionally too long. Teachers help children master the skills of joined handwriting. Children enjoy writing and are eager to write their own sentences. Some make cards recording exciting events of the day, such as the hatching of a chick in the class incubator. The more able children know and use the conventions of capital letters and full stops. They write and read their own names and familiar words such as the days of the week, beginning to make firm links between letters and sounds. They make good progress and achieve well when receiving continuous support from adults, who intervene frequently and keep the momentum of the activity going. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. There are good home-school links such as book bags and reading diaries to encourage children's reading. Most children are well on course to exceed the early learning goal in speaking and listening, and are likely to reach the early learning goal in reading and writing by the end of the year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities to help children understand that mathematics is part of everyday life.
- Children are taught to use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary in their discussions.
- Good use is made of the environment to make mathematics interesting and fun.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed to make best use of their expertise.
- Lessons sometimes get off to a slow start.

### **Commentary**

46. Children make good progress and achieve well in mathematics because of good teaching that frequently includes practical activities to capture their interest, such as calculating how many children are present and absent and how many walk to school. Occasionally, introductions are too long and learning support assistants' time is not best used. However, in the main part of the lessons they make valuable observations on assessment sheets, recording children's attitudes and achievement. Good use is made of the outdoor play area. For instance, they compare the lengths of several garden canes and search for buried beans in the sand tray. They construct sequences of plastic elephants using colour and size and eagerly explain how they are organising their patterns, confidently using vocabulary such as 'longer than', 'shorter than', 'first' and 'last'. Children are on course to reach the early learning goal by the end of the year. The more able children are likely to exceed the early learning goal by Year 1.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide a broad range of vibrant activities that stimulate children's interest in the world around them.
- Very good use is made of the outdoor areas.
- Children's knowledge and understanding are enriched by outings and visitors.

- Children with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities.
- Records of assessment are not consistently used in all five classes.

### **Commentary**

47. Teachers' planning shows that they and their assistants are skilled in devising tasks to stimulate children's curiosity. For instance, children describe the way tadpoles will develop into frogs, and experience awe and wonder when a chick hatches before their eyes. They use computers proficiently, manipulating the mouse with increasing accuracy. Displays reflect children's past experience in studying the qualities of different materials, sorting them into sets such as shiny or smooth. Visitors raise children's awareness of people who help them. Nativity plays and special events such as the Ghanaian Week provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about their own and other cultures. Good on-going assessments are made recording children's achievement but the quality and use of these vary between classes. Children make good progress and achieve well because the quality of teaching is good. They are well on course to reach the early learning goal by the end of the year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make good use of the outdoor areas and the school hall.
- Teachers do not always maximise hall time efficiently.
- Children do not always control small movements easily or precisely.
- Children with special educational needs including those with physical impairment are fully included in physical education lessons.

### **Commentary**

48. The outdoor area is well planned and includes a good range of equipment for children to gain confidence in climbing, crawling, swinging and jumping and to use large wheeled toys safely. There are good facilities for role-play as well as quiet shaded areas for children to socialise as they sit, rest and talk. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. All but one of the classes has very easy access to the outdoor area on a free-flow basis. In the hall, they work barefoot on a range of climbing and balancing apparatus such as benches, trying hard to land with control at the end of their turn. Children sometimes spend too much time waiting for their turn on the apparatus, but they continue to behave well. Children with physical impairment and those with special needs are fully integrated. They make good progress because they are encouraged and guided by good support assistants. The majority of children make good progress and achieve well because of good teaching. They are on course to reach the early learning goal by the beginning of Year 1.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is illuminated by expert subject knowledge.
- Stimulating displays of children's achievements provide an exciting learning environment.
- Teachers introduce children to a wide range of materials, media and techniques.
- Good opportunities for drama and music are carefully planned.

### **Commentary**

49. Children make very good progress and achieve very well in this area of learning because of very good enthusiastic teaching. Imaginative activities capture children's interest and stimulate their curiosity. For instance, children enjoy making caterpillars by stuffing old

stockings with compost and grass seed that they then water and put in the sun to sprout. Children are taught skills such as colour mixing and techniques such as collage using a selection of seeds and pulses. They demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding confidently while painting thin lines such as a cat's whiskers. Teachers make good use of drama to develop children's speaking and listening skills, as well as their social and moral understanding. For example, teachers show genuine concern when a child in the role of a bride is upset because her 'husband-to-be' has left her, going off to play with someone else. Children enjoy singing and making suitable sounds to illustrate a ghost story such as Boo! and have opportunities to explore sounds made by xylophones and bells. The majority of children achieve very well and are well on course to exceed the early learning goal by the beginning of Year 1 because of very good teaching and a rich curriculum.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Standards in writing are below those expected for seven-year-olds and pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough in too many lessons.
- Pupils do not apply their developing reading and writing skills in subjects other than English.
- The co-ordinator has introduced systems for monitoring the subject. However, they do not provide reliable information about standards in the subject.

#### **Commentary**

50. Most pupils reach the expected standards in reading and in speaking and listening, but not in writing. Low expectations of what pupils are able to do in lessons, mean that too many seven-year-olds underachieve, and do not develop new writing skills as quickly as they should. This is particularly the case with pupils of average ability and those who are more able. Teachers spend a lot of time teaching narrative, especially in Year 2, so pupils develop a sound understanding of how to create their own stories. They know how to write a beginning, a middle and an end, and that their characters speak to one another through dialogue. Nevertheless, many pupils do not yet know how make their stories more interesting, especially their endings, by developing detail in their ideas over a number of sentences. The school places too little emphasis on the teaching of information writing. Consequently pupils do not know enough about how to write in other forms, for example instructions and simple reports. This prevents many of the oldest pupils from meeting national expectations. Standards of presentation generally, and those of handwriting in particular, are unsatisfactory. By the age of seven, too many pupils still form their letters incorrectly and too few have developed consistency in the size of their letters or are beginning to develop an accurate joined script. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve well in lessons because they receive good help from the teaching assistants who support them as they work.
51. Because the quality of teaching is not good enough many pupils do not do as well as they should, especially in writing, by the time they leave the school. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils in lessons, nor challenge them to do their best. For example, in one lesson in Year 2, pupils of average ability wrote only five or six simple sentences by the time they had finished working. Because the teacher missed an important opportunity to demonstrate how their sentences could be expanded and made more complex, the work that was produced did not take pupils to the limits of their abilities. Teachers do not always understand how best to help children to write confidently. In one unsatisfactory lesson in Year 2, pupils were expected to write a story, but were not shown how to improve their initial ideas for writing, how to use planning to organise their ideas into a sequence of events nor to

consider effective word choices. Consequently, many pupils produced too little and the quality of their work was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, in some Year 1 classes for example, expectations are high and pupils make good progress as a result. This was the case when one teacher used the final part of her lesson to show pupils how to write more complicated sentences using the word 'because'. The teaching of reading is satisfactory. Pupils are grouped by ability and are taught a range of strategies to help them read words accurately. The school is focussing on developing pupils' abilities to understand hidden meanings in texts, and teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to practise and rehearse these important reading skills through questioning and discussion.

52. Teachers do not always take into account what their pupils can already do in order to help them build on their existing skills. Pupils know broadly which aspects of their writing they should focus on to improve next and have individual goals to aim for. However, in many cases the goals are too vague to be of real value to the children or of help to the teachers. Some teachers provide pupils with constructive feedback to help improve their work, both during and after lessons, but this practice is not consistent across classes.
53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The English co-ordinator has started to monitor how effective the teaching is, how well pupils are learning and the progress they are making across the school, although this is not sufficiently well established. Monitoring is not effective enough to help teachers to focus on the weak areas of writing that their pupils need to improve. In some cases, such as writing, the analysis of the information has been inaccurate and resulted in an unreliable view of standards. Because of the weaknesses in writing, the unsatisfactory teaching and the limited opportunities for the oldest pupils to apply their developing writing skills, the overall progress made by the school since the time of the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

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

54. During their time in school pupils are encouraged to make use of their speaking and listening skills to help them learn in other subjects. For example, in one religious education lesson they worked in small groups to negotiate rules for the school, and they formulated their own questions to ask Jesus and his disciples, as part of a drama activity. In a mathematics lesson they worked in pairs and, whilst counting in steps of different sizes, applied their knowledge of important vocabulary relating to addition as they talked. However, there are too few opportunities for the oldest pupils to extend their writing skills and develop real writing through other subjects. This factor not only contributes to unsatisfactory standards in writing but also limits pupils' understanding of the value and potential of written communication.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons and work well together when required.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour during lessons and encourage pupils to have positive attitudes towards their work.
- There is insufficient challenge for pupils to achieve their best.
- Teaching is not good enough.

### **Commentary**

55. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach the standards expected of seven year olds nationally but a significant number of children are not achieving as well as they should due to lack of challenge. Standards have been steadily declining over the last three years. Standards are currently in line with those expected for pupils of the same age, but there is a lack of direct, good quality teaching in some classes and this has an adverse impact on pupils' achievement. Provision for pupils for whom

English is an additional language and for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory, because they are supported well in small groups by an adult who helps them if they are stuck.

56. The quality of teaching is having a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve. Teaching is only better than satisfactory in a quarter of lessons observed. Very often pupils are inactive for too long during the first part of the lesson. In the more successful lessons resources such as white boards and number fans are used well, making sure that all pupils are actively involved in carrying out oral and mental work.
57. Teachers carry out very little focused work with groups of children. Once pupils are set activities at different levels following the main introduction, teachers then deal on a random basis with pupils' individual difficulties instead of working with groups of pupils to extend their learning and set them more challenging tasks. With this lack of additional teacher input several higher attaining and more able pupils are not being taught the skills they require to solve problems. In some lessons pupils waste time by copying questions from the board or from work sheets.
58. The good relationships between pupils and adults help pupils to enjoy their learning and have positive attitudes. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well during independent or group tasks by well qualified learning support assistants. However, assistants are often unclear of their role during whole class teaching and are not used effectively.
59. The school has organised setting arrangements in Year 2 once a week to try to raise standards. It has correctly identified problem solving as a particular weakness but there is little evidence to suggest that these groupings are helping to address this issue, as the focus for teaching is no different from the usual numeracy lessons. In fact it complicates matters for a small number of pupils who have three different teachers each week to teach them mathematics.
60. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has recently monitored teaching, but prior to this no monitoring has been carried out for three years, during which time standards have declined. The information gathered from pupils' assessments is not being used effectively or consistently to target improvement. Improvement is unsatisfactory since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be good or very good in over half of lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Insufficient use is made of mathematics in other subjects, for example in science, to extend and develop pupils' mathematical skills. Information and communication technology makes a very limited contribution to the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are significant differences in work between classes in the same year.
- More able pupils are often not challenged enough to achieve higher standards.

### **Commentary**

62. Pupils' achievement in science is unsatisfactory. Standards are expected by the age of seven, but many above average ability pupils do not achieve the standards they are capable of. Underachievement is not consistent across all pupils, but tends to depend on which class they are in and the range of work they have experienced. Inconsistency and teachers' low

expectations of their quality of recording, are the main reasons for low achievement amongst more able pupils. Pupils generally have a good understanding of why objects can move more easily on a tiled floor than one that is carpeted. They use words like bumpy and uneven accurately to explain how the surface slows them down. They have a good knowledge of parts of the body because they have all covered that work, but their knowledge of different parts of plants is not as secure and hardly any know how circuits work.

63. The number and nature of investigations they have carried out depends to a large extent on the class they are in. One or two teachers use specially made work sheets designed to make the pupils predict what will happen when they carry out a test. For example, pupils have to predict the noise made by shaking pots containing different objects. For the same enquiry, pupils in another class had little more to do than colour in pictures of different objects that make different noises. This means that not all pupils get the same quality of resources and activities to develop their scientific understanding.
64. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, based on the work that pupils have covered, inconsistencies between classes and low expectations of presentation. It was good in the few lessons observed during inspection. The best teaching makes pupils use correct scientific vocabulary and offers good opportunities for them to work together. Learning support assistants in both lessons make a valuable contribution to the work of pupils with special educational needs, working very well with small groups. The teachers' subject knowledge was good, the lesson pace was good and pupils learned new skills and knowledge. One of the most disappointing aspects of science teaching is the failure to develop older pupils' enthusiasm and natural curiosity by challenging them to extend their work further into the realms of fair testing. For example, pupils are not required to suggest their own investigations or different ways of recording. There are few links made between literacy, numeracy and ICT and science, although in one good lesson the teacher used a computer program very effectively to demonstrate pushes and pulls.
65. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has been absent from school for some time, which has not helped the monitoring process. However, even a cursory scrutiny of pupils' work quickly reveals the difference in quality and depth between classes in the same year group. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator was judged to be in need of improvement in the previous inspection. Standards then were similar to those found in this inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The computer suite provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

66. Pupils in Year 2 achieve the expected standards. The computer suite is carefully timetabled to provide access for all classes. It is used regularly and is a very useful addition to the school's accommodation. Pupils' home experience of computers varies widely. By the time they are in Year 2 most pupils load and save programs confidently, and they enjoy printing the results of their work. Some use the Internet at home to obtain information for projects and are aware of the potential dangers of the world-wide-web.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and in the two lessons observed it was good. Although ICT is not generally used widely enough in other subjects, in both lessons observed good links were indeed made with literacy and numeracy. They show how technology can be used effectively to capture pupils' interest and to develop their ICT skills and knowledge in other subjects. In one lesson, a popular book provided the stimulus for pupils to write their

own letters, using the space bar, shift and return keys effectively. In another, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard effectively to speed up pupils' ability to carry out calculations in their heads. The visual impact of the program had a significant impact on the interest level of all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs, who benefit from this visual and interactive approach where they are directly involved.

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has not long had responsibility for the subject and has already carried out audits of hardware and suitable programs. She is well aware of the different levels of confidence of staff and has training programs planned to develop the use of ICT still further. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. Pupils are currently achieving standards similar to those found in the previous inspection, but the strong links between ICT and subjects noted then, particularly literacy and numeracy, are no longer evident.

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

69. The co-ordinator is well aware that pupils' skills are not being developed well in other subjects. There was very little evidence, apart from some word processing and in art, that ICT is used to support other subjects across the curriculum, although some teachers are beginning to explore the potential of computers to make learning exciting and fun. Where this is already happening, it has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to their work and also on their achievements in lessons. For example, in one good lesson for six-year-olds the teacher had devised her own PowerPoint presentation to show her pupils how to spell words accurately using their knowledge of sounds and letters. The visual qualities of the presentation appealed to pupils and kept them engrossed as they volunteered to spell the words represented by the pictures. The pupils enjoyed what they were doing and this helped them to make good progress in their skills

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory** and standards reflect the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan activities thoughtfully, so that pupils can begin to understand difficult ideas.
- The school does not yet make the best use of trips out and visitors in to enhance pupils' understanding of aspects other world religions.
- The co-ordinator has not yet used the monitoring information to identify the areas of strength and weakness in the subject.

### **Commentary**

70. The school covers the study of Christianity in some depth, and a productive visit to the local church is included as part of this. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop a similar understanding of important aspects of the other religions they learn about through the use of trips out and visitors into the school. This makes it hard for pupils to begin to appreciate some of the significant similarities and differences across world faiths. The co-ordinator has already identified the development of pupils' understanding of other faiths as a priority for development within the subject. The school is aware of how religious education can heighten pupils' awareness of other cultures, and is beginning to exploit this potential for learning. For example, pupils learn about the festivals of Divali and the Chinese New Year. Good use is made of both the Ghanaian week and a visit by Maori dancers to help pupils learn about other cultures. This is a slight improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

71. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers give careful thought as to which resources and activities will best help pupils to understand complex ideas. For example, in one lesson for the youngest pupils the teacher had selected a text with moving parts to help her explain the story of the creation of the world. The children were intrigued by the way the flaps revealed the book's message and enjoyed their learning because of this. Teachers of the oldest pupils used drama well to convey an appreciation of the miracle of the calming of the storm and of the impact it must have had on Jesus' disciples.
72. The school allows some time for pupils to reflect on the meaning of religion, but opportunities for this to take place are sometimes overlooked. In one lesson on miracles the teacher invited pupils to consider what made them frightened and how they might deal with their fears. However, pupils in a similar lesson in a different class were not encouraged to make the same important links.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post for eighteen months and in that time has reworked the school's plans for religious education to improve the breadth they offer. Whereas she has observed all the teachers giving lessons, she has not yet used this information to plan how she might improve standards or shape future developments in the subject across the school.

## History and Geography

Provision for history and geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for geography and history successfully links with learning planned for other subjects in Year 1
- Literacy skills are not sufficiently developed through the teaching of history and geography.
- There are inconsistencies in coverage between classes.

### Commentary

74. Boys and girls achieve expected standards. They enjoy their history and geography lessons and talk excitedly about some of the work they have done. The subject planning in Year 1 is successful in helping pupils to see links between different areas of learning. For example, pupils studying the story of Pocahontas and the Native Americans in history, design and construct their own tepee in design and technology lessons. There are also some useful links between history and geography in Year 2 where pupils studying the history of seaside holidays develop their geographical skills in locating seaside resorts on a map and comparing physical and human features of such places. Colourful displays around the school support the work that pupils do in history and geography.
75. Teaching for history and geography is satisfactory and helps to capture pupils' imagination and interest. Resources are used well to help pupils develop their understanding about life in the past and increase their knowledge of places. This practical approach helps to involve pupils with special educational needs. But there are inconsistencies between what is planned and what is taught in a number of classes and not all pupils in the same year group are offered the same experiences. The development of literacy skills is unsatisfactory in both subjects with pupils being given too few opportunities to write at length. A number of pieces of work carried out during the term remain unfinished.
76. The co-ordinators for history and geography have monitored some teaching throughout the school but are not in a secure enough position to be able to judge standards and areas for improvement in the subjects. Standards in Year 2 are in line with judgements made in the first inspection.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' art and design work is of a very high quality.
- Art and design is linked to other areas very effectively.
- Display around the school is often of an outstanding quality.

#### Commentary

77. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, displays around the school and discussions with pupils confirm that provision in art and design is a strength of the school's work and much better than in the previous inspection.. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards which are much better than in many schools. Pupils cover a very wide range of work and are very critical of their own efforts. This means that they want to set high standards for themselves to achieve. They have been taught to be selective about the materials they use, and can give perfectly plausible reasons for using paint for one type of activity and pastels for another. They choose to use, and have access to, very thin brushes to paint a cat's whiskers.
78. They are very knowledgeable about famous artists and can paint very well in a particular style. They are justifiably very proud of the displays around the school and enjoy talking to visitors about the extensive range of work. The pupils use art well to complement other subjects, for example a science display. They also use computer programs well to draw pictures in the style of certain artists. Very good work resulted from a recent visit by Ghanaian visitors, which gave pupils an insight into art from another country. Pupils' achievement is much higher than in the previous inspection. This is because the subject is very well managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator, whose personal enthusiasm has been responsible for raising the profile of the subject throughout the school.

### Design and technology

79. Insufficient evidence means that it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the school's provision in design and technology. In the previous inspection standards were as expected for pupils in Year 2. Strengths in teaching and learning during the current inspection include very good opportunities for pairs of pupils to work closely together. The groups are specifically organised to include pupils of different abilities, so those with special educational needs benefit from the advice of others. Additionally, a higher ability pupil working with one at an early stage of learning English, constantly provided spoken advice and instructions, increasing his understanding of language. Evaluation of the finished item is a vital part of the lesson and the teacher's support and intervention throughout the lesson is an essential element of its success.
80. There are indications that the topic approach in Year 1 provides a purposeful approach to design and technology. Pupils enjoy the links between subjects and it makes their work more meaningful. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken on responsibility for the subject and, as yet, has carried out little subject monitoring.

### Music

81. Insufficient evidence in this area of the school's work during the week of the inspection means that it was not possible to reach an overall judgement. One music lesson was observed in Year 1. The quality of teaching in this lesson was satisfactory, as was the attainment of pupils. The focus of learning was on the contrast between rhythm and a steady

beat. Pupils tapped the different rhythms of their names before sustaining a steady beat in accompaniment to a range of recorded music. By the end of this activity many were able to distinguish the difference between the beat of the music and its rhythmical pattern. In this lesson pupils demonstrated that they were developing increasing control of a range of percussion instruments, and their attitudes were positive. The quality of singing in assemblies indicates that pupils are developing control over pitch and diction and that they enjoy using their voices to perform as part of a larger group.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning have not been monitored or evaluated.
- The inclusion and integration of pupils with special educational needs and those who are physically impaired is a strength.
- The care and support provided in lessons by teaching assistants is good.

### **Commentary**

82. During the inspection only one lesson was observed in Year 2, and three lessons were observed in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 achieve expected standards. Pupils work well, stay on task and they make satisfactory progress, consolidating past learning. In Year 1, pupils do not make sufficient progress and their achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because teaching is unsatisfactory, mainly due to weak organisational skills and teaching methods and low expectations. Pupils with special needs make good progress due to the good quality of the support from teaching assistants who work tirelessly with them on special programmes of exercises.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. No monitoring or evaluation of teaching and learning has taken place for a considerable time. Consequently, a number of factors affecting standards have become entrenched. For instance, there are flaws in the organisation and management of physical education lessons. Teaching assistants set up heavy apparatus before the lessons, but the apparatus is not checked by classteachers before pupils use it. The lack of monitoring and evaluation has also resulted in some poor teaching of basic skills, such as landing in a controlled manner from a height, and using ropes safely to prevent injury. Lessons are inefficiently organised, with too much time spent in discussion and too much time queuing for a turn on the apparatus. At these times, pupils' behaviour is not always as good as it should be and they do not always listen to instructions. In the previous inspection standards were also in line with expectations.

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

Provision is **very good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is successful in helping pupils to become mature, independent and responsible.
- The school makes a major contribution to the personal development of pupils with physical disabilities.
- Pupils have a significant say in the running of the school and are listened to.
- The inappropriate timetabling of personal, social, health and citizenship lessons limits their impact.

### **Commentary**

84. The school is, quite rightly, recognised as being very caring and supportive. Pastoral care and the ways in which the school provides opportunities for pupils to develop in maturity are

strengths of its work. The school is equally concerned with the personal development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and the very few from ethnic minorities and those speaking English as an additional language. School systems such as daily 'special helper' awards are very popular, sought after and successful in developing pupils' maturity and responsibility. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and boys and girls get on very well.

85. Individual classes timetable class sessions, which are designed to provide a forum for developing pupils' social awareness. During the course of the inspection these had limited impact. Several times they were set at the end of a long morning when insufficient time was allowed and when the pupils were perhaps more enthusiastic about the onset of lunch than discussing sensitive issues.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

