

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Leonard's Primary School
Stafford

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124199

Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Nash-Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr John H Good
1411

Dates of inspection: 20 - 23 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707784

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Leonard's Avenue Stafford Staffordshire ST17 4LT
Telephone number:	01785 356890
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Powell
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

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Trevor Hall Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resource
David Vincent	Equal opportunities English Design and technology Information technology	Curriculum and assessment
Morag Thorpe	Special educational needs Mathematics Music Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Donald Hughes	Provision for under fives Geography History Art	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils' levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above national averages.
- Pupils are making good progress in developing numeracy and literacy skills.
- Approximately nineteen per cent of teaching is very good or better.
- The provision for pupils under five years of age is good and this enables them to make good progress in all areas of their education.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and this is reflected in their very good behaviour and willingness to do their best.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school and she is well supported by the senior management team and the governing body.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The consistent implementation of the school's aims, policies and values result in there being a calm, caring and supportive ethos.
- There is a clear vision for the future development of the school which is shared and supported by the whole school community. Financial planning, control and monitoring are very good.
- Day-to-day administrative procedures are very good and they ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- All staff, teaching and non-teaching, and governors show a commitment to the school and the pupils.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The deployment of some part-time teachers does not enable them to teach to their strengths.
- II. Monitoring the delivery of the agreed curriculum programmes for science, information technology and religious education.

This is a good school which provides a good quality educational experience for its pupils. The headteacher provides strong, firm but sympathetic leadership and she is well supported by a conscientious and hardworking staff and a committed governing body. The pupils respond positively to the ethos and values promoted by the school and they have very good attitudes towards their studies and to life in the school community. The identified weaknesses are far out weighed by the many strengths, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to parents or guardians of all pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the revised management systems for planning for the delivery of the curriculum and monitoring classroom practice have resulted in significant improvements in pupils' involvement in their learning. They are frequently given opportunities to question, develop speaking and listening skills and use reference books and materials. Short-term curriculum planning is now more sharply focused upon meeting the educational needs of all pupils. This enables an increasing percentage of higher attaining pupils to achieve Level 5 in the mathematics and science tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The setting arrangements for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 give teachers increased opportunities to match tasks more closely to the needs of pupils and provide them with a challenging educational experience. Classroom observation during the inspection indicates that these new arrangements are beneficial to pupils and are enabling them to make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The procedures for assessment, recording and reporting have been improved since the last inspection and there is now an established system which is manageable and common to all classes and teachers, but not all subjects. The school analyses test results well and uses them to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This evidence is used to set challenging, but realistic, targets and assessment is now having a greater influence upon future planning. Satisfactory improvements have been made in the range and quantity of resources available for the teaching of information technology, but further extension is required. There has been additional in-service training for teachers which has led to increased confidence and competence in teaching of the subject. A new curriculum programme has been introduced but it still needs some refinements.

Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and because of the very good leadership of the school the potential for further development is very good.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
English	C	D	<i>well above average</i>	A
Mathematics	B	B	<i>above average</i>	B
Science	A	A	<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E

The results of baseline tests indicate that on entry to the Reception class pupils represent the whole ability range with the majority in the average band. By the time they leave the school pupils' levels of attainment in terms of reaching Level 4 are well above national averages in science, above average in mathematics and in line in English. Over the three year period since 1996 there has been an improvement each year in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and in reaching the higher grade of Level 5. Inspection evidence indicates that, throughout the school, pupils' levels of attainment in Years 2 and 6 are above those expected nationally at this stage of the academic year.

Pupils' levels of attainment in other subjects is at least in line with age related expectations. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in art, design technology, information technology and music have improved.

Children under five years of age in the reception class, are making good progress and by the time they are five the majority will achieve the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes in all areas of study. Some children have already achieved these levels in some aspects of their work.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	good	good	good
Mathematics	good	good	good
Science	n/a	good	good
Information Technology	n/a	satisfactory	satisfactory
Religious education	n/a	satisfactory	satisfactory
Other subjects	good	satisfactory	good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and it has improved since the last inspection. Of the 69 lessons, or part lessons observed during the inspection, 68 were satisfactory or better, of which 30 were good, 12 very good and one excellent. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. Although teaching across the whole curriculum is best in Key Stage 2, good teaching occurs in all year groups and in almost all subjects. This good quality teaching is enabling all pupils to enjoy school life and make good progress in developing educational and personal skills.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour is very good in class, around the school and in the playground. They are courteous and polite. Their behaviour makes a positive contribution to the high quality of the learning environment.
Attendance	Attendance is good. The school successfully monitors and promotes good attendance. The established systems are very good when compared with other schools.
Ethos*	Staff establish a caring, calm and supportive environment in which pupils are valued. All pupils are keen to learn. Relationships are very good and all staff show a real commitment to the school and pupils.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. She is well supported by the deputy head and the senior management team. The governors are appropriately involved in all aspects of school management and they carryout their responsibilities fully.
Curriculum	The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and fully satisfies the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning for the delivery of the curriculum is methodical and focuses upon the skills to be developed and knowledge to be gained. The improved systems for planning are having a positive effect upon the educational programme on offer to the pupils.
Pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are very well supported in the classrooms, tasks are matched to their individual needs and this allows them to make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and personal development is a reflection of the well considered aims and philosophy of the school. In particular, pupils are being well prepared for life in multi-cultural Britain.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school has sufficient well qualified staff to deliver the curriculum. Accommodation is adequate but there is no special provision for under fives' outside play. Resources are at least satisfactory in all subjects and have been considerably improved in information technology since the last inspection.
Value for money	Overall, the school gives good value for money

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>III. The school encourages parents to play an active part in its life.</p> <p>IV. The staff are approachable.</p> <p>V. The school gives clear information about children's progress.</p> <p>VI. The school enables children to achieve a good standard of work.</p> <p>VII. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect upon children</p> <p>VIII. The school achieves high standards of good behaviour.</p> <p>IX. Their children enjoy coming to school.</p>	<p>X. The variable, and in some cases limited, use</p> <p>XI. The formation of mixed aged classes in Key</p>

During the pre-inspection consultation period, the major concern of parents was the decision by the school to establish mixed age classes in Key Stage 1 and the affect this would have upon their children's education. Mixed age classes have been successfully established in Key Stage 2 since 1994 and the staff involved are sharing the experience they have gained from these arrangements with their colleagues. At the present time there is no evidence to support parents' fears with regard to their children's education in the Key Stage 1 classes, but there is considerable evidence to show that the arrangements in Key Stage 2 classes have resulted in levels of attainment being improved. Observation during the inspection indicates that throughout the school pupils are receiving a high quality educational experience, enjoying school life and successfully developing educational and personal skills.

The school has issued new details with regard to the use and frequency of homework since the parents' pre-inspection meeting. This positive step has given clearer guidelines to both teachers and parents with regard to homework in literacy and numeracy. In spite of these improvements the inspection team's view is that there is still inconsistent practice across the school with regard to the use of homework to extend pupils' learning.

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· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

XII. Extend the monitoring systems already introduced for literacy and numeracy to the other core curriculum subjects of science, information technology and religious education. (Paragraphs 69, 130, 139 and 146)

XIII. Re-organise the daily curriculum programmes for the Key Stage 2 classes so that all staff are able to teach in their areas of curriculum strength and expertise. (Paragraphs 27, 86 and 145)

In addition to the key issues, the school also has less important weaknesses in the inconsistent use of homework to extend pupils' learning; in the rigorous assessment of pupils' attainments in religious education and information technology and in the use of information technology to support learning in other subjects. These should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. They are indicated in paragraphs (35, 43, 60, 105, 120, 137, 138 and 146)

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· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1 St Leonard's Primary School is situated close to Stafford town centre and serves an area of mixed housing. The majority of pupils are drawn from the community adjacent to the school, but a significant minority come from a wider catchment area. Although the majority of families are well established, there is considerable disruption to the school roll during the year because of families moving in and out of the catchment area. Approximately eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average.

2 Pupils who become five years of age during the Autumn term are admitted to the reception class in September and those who will be five during the Spring and Summer terms join the school roll in January. In addition, the school offers part-time nursery education, mornings only, to children who are four years of age. There are at present 23 pupils who are under five years of age in the reception class and five in the early years unit.

- 3 There are 279 pupils on the school roll, 138 boys and 141 girls. The school roll has fallen to its lowest level for a number of years. The main factor affecting the number on roll is the reduced birth rate in the school's traditional catchment area. Research by the governing body indicates that there is likely to be further reductions in the number of pupils entering the school in each of the next four years. A direct result of the falling roll has been the need to reduce the size of the teaching staff and reorganise the class structure for the youngest pupils. Mixed age classes for Year 1 and 2 pupils were introduced from the start of the Autumn term 1999 and there are now mixed aged classes throughout the school, with an average class size of 28. Almost all parents are supportive of the school and have high expectations for their children's education.

- 4 The results of baseline assessment indicate that on entering the reception class pupils represent the whole ability range with the majority in the average band. Within this broad generalisation, individual pupils show wide variation in educational, personal and social skills. Four pupils on the school roll have statements of special educational needs and there are a further 42 pupils on the special needs register. Both of these figures are slightly below the national average for pupils in primary schools. Twenty-eight pupils are from ethnic minority communities and 18 from homes where English is not the first language.

- 5 Targets for the year 2000 are set as required nationally. They are based on the prior attainment of pupils in the cohort and reflect the emphasis the school is placing upon raising pupils' levels of attainment. The original targets for pupils at age seven have been revised upwards to take into account the numerous changes to the school roll in this age group. In spite of there being a higher than normal percentage of pupils in the cohort with special educational needs, the school has set a target of 80 per cent of pupils exceeding the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics. At age eleven the targets are for 76 per cent in English and 83 per cent in mathematics and science to reach the expected national levels of attainment. Targets have been set to increase the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 at age seven and Level 5 at age eleven.

- 6 The main school aim is encapsulated in the school's mission statement which is published in the school brochure. " Where everyone is valued and together we seek excellence". The school tries to meet this broad aim by ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity to develop their potential.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	22	27	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	21	22
	Girls	23	24	23
	Total	43	45	45
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	91(93)	96(95)	96(100)
	National	80(80)	81(80)	84(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	21	22	22
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	45	46	46
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(95)	98(100)	98(93)
	National	81(80)	85(83)	86(85)

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	34	18	52

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	20	23	28
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	34	36	43
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	67(82)	71(77)	84(85)
	National	65(63)	59(62)	69(68)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	24	22	27
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	38	35	42
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	75(79)	69(82)	82(85)
	National	65(63)	65(64)	72(69)

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

2 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

- **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.7
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	0.5

- **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

- **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	18.8
Satisfactory or better	98.5
Less than satisfactory	1.5

· **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

· **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

· **Attainment and progress**

- 7 The results of baseline assessment indicate that on entering the reception class, pupils represent the whole ability range with the majority in the average band. By the time they leave the school, pupils' levels of attainment in terms of reaching Level 4 are well above national averages in science, above in mathematics and in line in English. When the school's 1998 Key Stage 2 test results are compared with those of similar schools they are well above average in science, above average in mathematics and below average in English. The 1999 Key Stage 2 results show that percentage of pupils at the school reaching Level 4 or above has increased in each of English, mathematics and science.
- 8 The results for the Key Stage 1 tests in 1998 show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above is well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. On the basis of teacher assessments the results for science are similarly well above national averages. Pupils' performances in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average in comparison with those of pupils in similar schools. The results for 1999 show that the percentage of pupils at the school reaching Level 2 in reading, writing or mathematics has increased upon the previous year's figures.
- 9 Over the three year period from 1996, pupils' performances in the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently above national averages and have also continued to improve each year. During the same three year period pupils' performances in the Key Stage 2 test have shown an improvement each year in English, mathematics and science.
- 10 Analysis of the end of key stage test results for the previous three years reveals that although there is little difference in the levels of attainment of boys and girls at Key Stage 1, boys out perform girls in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. During the inspection, classroom observation and scrutiny of work did not give any evidence of boys' levels of attainment in these subjects being superior to that of the girls.
- 11 Ninety-five percent of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are satisfied that the school enables their children to achieve a good standard of work. At the pre-inspection meeting there was unanimous support for the levels of attainment achieved by pupils at the school. Parents feel that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having a positive effect upon the standards achieved by their children. This view is supported by the members of the inspection team.
- 12 On the evidence gained from lesson observation, scrutiny of work, and talking to pupils, levels of attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of both key stages are above national averages in English, mathematics and science. The inspection findings relate to a different cohort of pupils, than the end of key stage test results, and the improved standard in English reflects the impact the National Literacy Strategy is having upon pupils' levels of attainment. In the other core curriculum subjects, levels of attainment are in line with national expectations in information technology, and commensurate with those expected for the agreed syllabus in religious education.
- 13 Attainment in both key stages is good in spelling, writing, handwriting, reading, speaking and listening. Progress is good in all of these areas throughout the school. These acquired skills are well used in other subjects across the curriculum.

- 14 Standards of numeracy are good in both key stages. The majority of pupils are making good progress in developing numeracy skills and using them effectively in science, design technology and geography.
- 15 By the time they are five years of age, the majority of the children in the reception class will attain levels which are above those expected nationally in personal and social development, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In language and literature, creative development and in physical education they will achieve levels of attainment which match those expected nationally. Pupils in the reception class are making good progress in all areas of their educational programme.
- 16 Throughout the school pupils are making very good progress in music, good progress in English, mathematics, science and geography, and satisfactory progress in art, design technology, history, information technology and religious education. In physical education pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1.
- 17 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. The careful planning of tasks to suit their needs, and the good quality of classroom support are enabling them to achieve the targets set for them. In one literacy class the excellent quality of the teaching enabled the pupils to make excellent progress in developing literacy skills.
- 18 Since the last inspection, the school has taken measures to address the issues raised with regard to attainment and progress. The new systems for assessment, monitoring and target setting have resulted in teaching being more tightly focused upon individual pupils' needs. As a result of these changes, there has been improvement in pupils' levels of attainment in information technology, art and design technology. The school has also successfully addressed the issues raised in the report with regard to higher attaining pupils achieving their full potential. Over the three year period since the inspection, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at Key Stage 2 has increased each year. In 1998, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in reading and mathematics was well above national averages, and in writing it was above average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 in science was well above national average and in mathematics it was slightly above average. During classroom observation there were numerous instances where additional work was available to extend and challenge the higher attaining pupils.
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Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 19 The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good and are a strength of the school. The personal development of the pupils is judged to be good. The school has maintained the high standards in these areas since the last inspection.
- 20 Children under five enjoy coming to school and quickly settle into routines. They show positive attitudes to learning and enthusiasm for their work. They develop good listening skills and behave very well. They interact well with one another and with the adults who work with them. They take turns sensibly and confidently participate in classroom duties such as tidying away at the end of sessions.
- 21 At both key stages, pupils, including those with special education needs, display positive attitudes towards their work. In lessons they show interest and enjoyment. They listen well to their teachers, other adults in the classroom and each other. They follow instructions carefully and levels of concentration are good. Pupils co-operate well, for example, helping each other when using computers and when researching information in history and geography. Pupils are keen to answer questions and volunteer to demonstrate their opinions, particularly in personal, social and moral education where they show responsible attitudes

towards sensitive issues. Pupils handle equipment sensibly and safely. They show respect for property and are trustworthy. The pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work.

22 Pupils' behaviour is very good both in class and around the school. They move around the school in an orderly way, showing consideration for others. They are courteous and polite, for example to visitors, and many automatically hold doors open for others. They are fully aware of the fact that bullying of all kinds is unacceptable and none was reported during the inspection. Pupils are fully involved in agreeing codes of conduct for individual classes and the school as a whole. Consequently, they are aware of the rules guiding behaviour and they follow them well. The school rewards good behaviour and pupils appreciate this. There were no exclusions in the twelve months prior to the inspection.

23 Relationships are very good. Pupils mix well together and relate appropriately to adults. At lunch and break times, pupils play well together. The small number from ethnic minorities are fully integrated and there is no evidence of racial tension. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively integrated into classes and respond well to the caring and supportive atmosphere.

24 Pupils' personal development is good. When given the opportunity, they willingly take on responsibilities and carry these out efficiently. This contributes towards the smooth running of classroom organisation. Through carefully structured personal, social and moral education lessons, pupils develop their self-confidence and their ability to relate to others. This is further supported by the opportunity to take part in residential visits while at the school. The pupils who are members of the school council show initiative and maturity when discussing the most effective ways to improve various aspects of the school.

• **Attendance**

25 Attendance is good. This level has been maintained since the last inspection and is firmly established above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most are early. Lateness is very minimal. Registration is prompt and effective. Lessons start and finish on time.

• **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

• **Teaching**

26 Overall, the quality of teaching is good and it has improved since the last inspection. There is still a variation between the key stages, but the number of unsatisfactory lessons has fallen from seven during the last inspection to one on this occasion. Of the 69 lessons, or part lessons, observed during the period of the inspection 68 were judged to be satisfactory or better, of which 30 were good, 12 very good and one excellent.

27 In spite of the fact that the single unsatisfactory lesson was observed in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching across this key stage is better than that in Key Stage 1. In the juniors 65 per cent of the lessons were judged to be good or better as compared with 50 per cent in the infants. Two contributory factors which have an influence upon this outcome are the timetable arrangements for literacy, music, numeracy, physical education and religious education in Key Stage 2. For literacy and numeracy, pupils are placed in groups by age and ability. This enables teachers to focus tasks on a narrower ability band and teaching has a more positive impact upon pupils' learning and rates of progress. The timetable arrangements for the other three subjects is such that each of the mixed age classes in Year 3/4 or Year 5/6 receive tuition from a teacher with specialist subject knowledge. This means

that the school can make positive use of teachers' personal strengths and areas of expertise. This works extremely well for all full-time staff but less well for some part-time staff when the structure of the timetable does not allow them to teach all of the three classes in the combined year groups.

- 28 Teaching for children under five is never less than satisfactory, being good in five of the seven lessons and very good in one. The teacher and her assistants form a very good team and they are totally committed to providing a safe, stimulating and friendly environment for the children. They plan tasks which extend children's knowledge and understanding and allow for the development of skills. Imaginative use is made of resource materials and display. The good quality of the teaching is enabling all children to enjoy school life and make good progress in developing educational and personal skills.
- 29 Good teaching occurs in all year groups and in almost all subjects. Very good teaching was observed in both key stages and of 12 such lessons, five were in music and instrumental teaching, three in numeracy and one each in science, religious education, personal, health and social education and in the education for under fives. In one Key Stage 2 literacy lesson the excellent quality of the teaching enabled a group of lower attaining pupils to make excellent progress in developing educational skills.
- 30 When teaching is very good it results from a combination of teachers' expertise, good organisation and enthusiasm. Activities successfully build upon pupils' previous knowledge and the carefully planned tasks enable them to achieve to their full potential. The quality of teaching has a real impact upon pupils' rates of progress. The lessons move with pace and effective use is made of time and resources. The whole lesson is broken down into small units and this results in pupils retaining interest and continuing to give of their best. Pupils enjoy the experience and eagerly look forward to the next lesson.
- 31 Where teaching is less successful, insufficient material is planned for the length of the lesson and this results in a loss of pace and direction towards the end of the session. Pupils become restless because tasks lack challenge and are not matched to their abilities and needs. The work fails to extend pupils' knowledge because it is not directly related to the detailed medium-term planning. Such lessons are rare in the school because teachers' planning and preparation are generally good and tasks are well matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities and ages.
- 32 All teachers have friendly, supportive and encouraging teaching styles which result in relationships in the classrooms being very good. They use a variety of methods to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that all teachers mark work conscientiously and on a regular basis. All teachers adopt a positive style and helpful comments indicate to pupils how the work could be improved. Much of the marking is completed as a normal part of classroom activities as teachers move round the working groups giving help and advice. There are no queues of pupils waiting for the teacher's attention and for their work to be checked.
- 33 The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is generally good. Teachers plan their work thoroughly and in line with the national recommendations. They are making very good use of the newly purchased resources in their classrooms. The quality of teaching is already having a positive impact upon pupils' levels of attainment in both literacy and numeracy skills.
- 34 The special educational needs co-ordinator, the external support specialist teacher and the classroom assistants plan very effectively for the pupils they support. Individual education plans contain targets which are challenging but attainable. This aspect of teaching is very good and the high quality teaching enables pupils to make good, and occasionally excellent, progress in their studies.

35 There is a new homework policy and further details have been circulated to parents since their pre-inspection meeting. At this meeting, and in the responses in the questionnaire, some parents expressed dissatisfaction with the inconsistent way homework is used to extend their children's learning. The school now has a clear policy that all junior pupils will be given literacy and numeracy homework on one occasion each week. All children take home reading books and parents are encouraged to share reading with their children. It is too soon to judge the effect of the new proposals but scrutiny of pupils' previous work showed little evidence of the impact homework has previously had upon pupils education. The inspection teams' view is that there are still inconsistencies in the way that homework is used across the school to extend pupils' learning.

· **The curriculum and assessment**

36 The school provides a broad and balanced programme which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all the required subjects. The statutory requirements for religious education are also met. The curriculum offered has a positive influence upon the standards achieved especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science where achievement is above the national average. There is satisfactory promotion of physical development. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these initiatives are having a positive effect upon attainment and progress in both subjects.

37 The curriculum for the pupils under five is clearly and effectively related to the agreed areas of learning. It is broad and balanced and the planning is sound. Lessons are evaluated well and this informs future planning in an effective manner.

38 The curricular provision, the very positive attitudes to school which are created, the opportunities to assume responsibility and the fostering of mature, sensible attitudes all combine to prepare pupils well for the next phase of education.

39 Policies are properly approved by the governing body and individual governors visit the school regularly. The governing body has approved an appropriate policy for the teaching of sex education and matters relating to health education are given due emphasis. The school's programme of health education includes the required emphasis upon the dangers relating to the misuse of drugs. This is helping to ensure that pupils are provided with the knowledge and awareness which will help them to make informed choices as they assume greater independence and maturity.

40 All pupils have access to the curriculum and enjoy equality of opportunity. Positive relationships and respect for each individual are a strength of the school. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and promotes good overall progress. An effective balance has been established between group and individual help and support within the class. Where additional classroom support is not available activities are adapted to the particular needs of individual pupils.

41 Procedures for teachers' planning are satisfactory. Collaborative planning between teachers of parallel year groups provides a productive way of pooling ideas and ensuring classes are given a common programme. In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, planning is supported by national guidance, but in others the school is still adapting national documentation in order to make it specific to the school and to ensure the methodical development of knowledge and skills.

42 The range of extra curricular activities is good and they are very well attended by pupils.

Many members of staff give freely of their time to these activities and they are well supported by parents and other voluntary helpers. Competitive and non-competitive events with other schools are regularly organised. Visits to places of educational value make useful contributions to the curriculum in history, geography and the early years. The Year 5/6 residential experience not only extends the programme for physical education but plays an important part in pupils' personal and social development.

- 43 A key issue in the last inspection report was the need to establish a system for assessment and recording which was manageable and common to all classes and teachers. The subsequent review has led to the introduction of a policy which is manageable, universally used and is leading to assessment having an increasing influence upon future planning. Considerable emphasis has been placed upon using it effectively in English, mathematics and science where procedures are satisfactory. In some subjects, for example information technology and religious education, assessment of pupils' individual skills lacks rigour and detail.
- 44 Teachers have good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils and make detailed notes in order to address particular needs. Regular evaluation of lessons has recently been introduced in order to make subsequent lessons more effective. This has the potential to be very productive but is not yet sufficiently integrated into the planning system. Progress and attainment are also assessed through a satisfactory range of formal procedures in the core subjects. There is an increasing use of the analysis of test results to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and also those of the curricular provision. A direct result of these initiatives is the greater emphasis being placed by teachers upon spelling.
- 45 Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of a very high quality and completed in exemplary fashion. The precise, achievable short-term targets are frequently used and regularly reviewed. Progress towards specific targets is precisely documented in a diagnostic and evaluative way. The results of statutory tests are compared with previous years and all aspects of assessment relating to pupils on the special needs register, including those given by the local education authority support staff, are appropriately used and monitored.
- 46 The school has established a reliable system for finalising teacher assessments for the assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Staff work collaboratively and compare work at the various levels from pupils in different classes. There is good agreement between the teacher assessment levels and those reached by pupils in the tests.
- 47 Since the last inspection, the curricular shortcomings relating to information technology have been satisfactorily addressed although further development of the precise programme is still needed. Provision for higher achievers and for research is now satisfactory, whilst opportunities for extended writing are good. There has been satisfactory progress in implementing a manageable range of assessments in order to determine what should be taught next although some of these procedures are not yet fully integrated.
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Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 48 St Leonard's is a very caring and happy school which makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision for moral, social and cultural development. These aspects were reflected in comments by parents and is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- 49 One good feature of the provision for spiritual development is the regular, well planned programme of collective worship which is relevant to all pupils and in some cases further extends their understanding of religious education. Collective worship, which includes prayers, religious songs, carefully chosen stories and a high level of pupil involvement, takes

place in a calm and quiet atmosphere enhanced by the lighting of a candle. Opportunities for reflection and prayer are very well handled. Pupils are encouraged to make sense of their personal experience and feelings and to consider local, national and world issues. During the inspection the theme of 'Peace' was developed in an innovative manner where children were encouraged to reflect on aspects of peace relevant not only to them, but also to the school, to Britain and the world. The manner in which each aspect of collective worship was taken during the inspection encouraged pupils to reflect on social and moral aspects in a spiritual environment. Other aspects of school life which enhance pupils' spiritual development include the enjoyment of singing and listening to performances, the knowledge of the spiritual elements of religions and the increasing wonder at nature, the world and learning.

50 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has a strong moral code through a solid framework of values which encourages pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and to understand the elements of good behaviour. All adults in the school have the same high standards and expectations of behaviour and these are sensitively yet rigorously passed on to the pupils. School rules are understood by all, and the majority of pupils are able to explain the rules that apply both in school and in the wider community. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with swiftly yet sensitively by all teaching and non-teaching staff according to the school behaviour policy. Honesty and fair play are promoted very well during personal, health and social education and during circle time where pupils are guided towards thinking positively about other pupils in their class and the school. The headteacher, class teachers and support staff provide very good role models in order that pupils learn to relate positively to each other and to accept their share of responsibility for others. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are rewarded appropriately.

51 The school promotes pupils' social development very effectively. There is a tangible social cohesion within the school which includes pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents. Positive relationships are successfully promoted. Pupils are encouraged to show consideration and sensitivity for the needs of others and the range of responsibilities is effectively linked to developing a community spirit. One example is the introduction of the school council which increases pupils' understanding of democracy and decision-making in a larger group. Year 6 pupils are given positions of responsibility and they are proud of the trust placed in them. The greater responsibilities given to the older pupils represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils relate very well to each other and are provided with wide opportunities for co-operation in mathematics, music, science and physical education. Pupils' social development is further increased by their planned studies of communities in the home, school, shared interests and the special nature of religious communities. They learn the important virtues of citizenship in caring for the needs of others by supporting a wide range of charities. Opportunities for social contact outside the classroom are further enhanced through the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils spoke with interest about the wide range of school visits including the residential visit to Standon Bowers. They were exhilarated by the range of activities, new skills and sports which they experienced that week.

52 The provision for pupils' cultural development, including multi-cultural development, is very good. The school fosters pupils' cultural development very well by encouraging their own interests and achievements and by broadening their experiences of their own and other cultures, for example in religious education, music and story. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about the cultures of Britain through historical studies, visits to places of historical and environmental interest and museums, and to musical and dramatic productions. Geographical studies provide further opportunities for pupils to understand the cultural differences between peoples of the world.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53 Since the last inspection, the school has maintained good procedures for the support and guidance of pupils. A wide range of policies is consistently applied and teachers provide good

role models for pupils. This is a caring school, staff know all the pupils well and treat them as individuals. Teachers constantly encourage and praise their good work and endeavour. Parents support the attitudes and values that the school promotes and indicate that staff are readily approachable to deal with any problems. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development. Pupils are given a wide variety of roles in helping in the day-to-day running of the school and their classroom. As they progress through the school they are given increased responsibility and independence in their learning.

54 Staff effectively support all the children in their early years and always strive to promote their well being, health and safety. The staff are caring, approachable and supportive. Children entering the reception class are supported well and introduced smoothly to school routines. The reception teacher has a very good understanding of the individual needs of the children in her care.

55 The school has very effective procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs, targeting their support and monitoring their progress. All staff have positive attitudes towards helping these pupils and the quality of support is very good.

56 Relationships between pupils and all adults in school are very good. The school is an orderly place and the headteacher and staff work hard to ensure that pupils grow in confidence and self esteem. Pastoral care reflects the very good ethos of the school. Even pupils in the early years can confidently share their thoughts or concerns with staff. There are strong links with the police and school nurse who assist personal, social and health educational programmes. Responsible choice in stranger danger, drugs education and social issues is sensitively developed. Sex education is introduced through science lessons according to pupils' age and understanding. Parents have ready access to the lesson schemes supporting these sensitive issues.

57 The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. Parents appreciate the school's approach to high standards. Policies are consistently and very successfully applied. This is a credit to all adults in school, lunchtime and non-teaching staff, as well as the academic team. Occasional lapses in conduct are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Any tendencies towards bad behaviour are dealt with firmly and fairly with parents involved. Bullying is not an issue at the school.

58 The school has very successful procedures for promoting good attendance. Monitoring is very prompt and thorough. The whole family of the school is well aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance as good habits to be fostered for the future.

59 All adults in school are familiar with the child protection procedures, although lunchtime supervisors have not had formal training. Arrangements for children who have accidents or are unwell are very good. There is ready access to a range of medical, social and educational specialists. Some minor matters of health and safety have been reported to governors for their attention. Otherwise the general health, safety and wellbeing of pupils are secure.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

60 Partnership with parents and the community is good. There are regular letters to parents covering practical matters. The annual report of governors and the school prospectus are lively, informative and user friendly. A few minor omissions are being addressed. Parents feel they are well informed about their children's progress and given a clear understanding of what is being taught. Curricular and topic information is provided at the beginning of each term. Consultation evenings are extremely well attended and viewed as a beneficial dialogue between parent and teacher. Pupils' work is always available and target setting is shared with

parents. Reports are individual to the child and are evaluative. The school is aware that some parents are not happy with the inconsistent levels of homework. A revised homework policy has been sent to all parents in conjunction with a good home-school partnership agreement.

61 Parents feel they are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. The school values parental assistance in their children's learning at home. Parents are strongly encouraged to help in school. Volunteer home-school co-ordinators run well structured courses. Certificates, on completion, are presented to individual parents at school assemblies. As a result, a good number of parents give regular and meaningful help in class. Their assistance and help is included in teachers' planning and their support contributes positively to the pupils' education. Teachers always encourage more parents to join the ever-increasing band of helpers. Many more parents and extended family act as escorts on trips. All parents are automatically members of the strong and enthusiastic parent and friends association. The group work very hard running events such as discos for their children, quizzes, and beetle drives. There are Spring and Summer fayres. There is willing assistance at sports day and the school concerts. Money raised by parents is donated for the purchase of resources which are beyond budget limits, for example, pocket book computers, library improvements, and additional books.

62 There are a good links with the community. Local clergy from a wide variety of denominations and faiths come into school regularly. They share in assemblies and religious education. The school holds carol concerts and a harvest presentation in nearby churches. Harvest produce of dried fruit and tinned goods have been sent to Kosovo. Representatives from local, national and international charities have visited the school to talk to the children and prepare them for activities. Small groups of pupils work for their chosen charity with the enthusiastic support of the teachers and fellow pupils. Pupils play their part in the community, for example, by carol singing at a nearby residential home for the elderly. Parents are invited to assemblies throughout the year and particularly enjoy those led by classes.

63 There are good, purposeful links with the Staffordshire Business Partnership. This is a mutually beneficial exercise. Views of industry and commerce increase pupils' awareness of the world around them. The school has drafted company plans to ensure interesting and fruitful days for visiting students. At area level, the school has demonstrated the benefits of circle time to a wide audience of people involved in education.

64 Induction of children entering formal education for the first time is thoughtfully and sensitively structured. Procedures for pupils moving on to secondary education are well organised, secure and effective. Year 6 pupils spend time at their chosen school and meet pupils joining them from other schools.

· **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

· **Leadership and management**

65 At the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher had been in post for only six weeks but she had already started to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school. During the subsequent three years she has built up a very good working relationship with her staff, the governing body, the parents and the local community. She gives unstintingly of her time to the school and she has introduced working practices which have improved the management and organisation of the school and allow her to keep daily contact with the classrooms. She has the ability to see through problems and suggest sensible solutions for discussion by governors and staff. There is a clear vision for the future development of the school and the headteacher provides strong, firm, but sympathetic, leadership for the school.

- 66 The deputy headteacher has been in post for 14 years and she is strongly committed to her role in the school. In addition to her full-time teaching role she is responsible for leading curriculum development and co-ordinating aspects of assessment, recording and reporting. She has successfully deputised for the headteacher on a number of occasions, one of which was for a period of two terms. She has a good working relationship with the headteacher and she makes a significant and positive contribution to the management of the school.
- 67 The senior management team consists of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and four other senior members of staff. The team meets once each month and is very involved in the production of the school development plan, responding to new initiatives and discussing issues to take forward to full staff meetings. In addition the team is becoming increasingly involved in monitoring both the curriculum and pupils' personal development. An example of the team's good work is the way in which the school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. At their pre-inspection meeting parents praised the school for the effective way in which they had been kept informed of the literacy and numeracy initiatives and for the good quality of the information meetings. The senior management team plays an effective and important role in the management of the school.
- 68 The key stage co-ordinators lead their teams effectively. They hold their own team meetings and have considerable responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and updating the curriculum within their key stage. They organise work moderation sessions in order to check pupils' progress across the key stage and the standards they are achieving. The good work of these middle management teams means that curriculum planning is well managed throughout the school. At the present time there is no evidence to support parents' fears that the establishing of mixed age classes in Key Stage 1 will diminish the quality of their children's education.
- 69 The headteacher monitors classroom practice as an ongoing part of her role and the literacy co-ordinators have had opportunities to monitor the delivery of the agreed programme. This monitoring has had a positive effect upon classroom practice and the setting of achievable targets for staff and pupils. Plans are already in place to allow time for the numeracy co-ordinators to monitor the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinators of science, information technology and religious education have no opportunity to work alongside their colleagues and monitor the delivery of the curriculum in their core subject area.
- 70 The school development plan covers the period 1999 to 2002 and clearly identifies the priority areas for development. All staff and governors have opportunity to contribute to the production of the draft document and there is full discussion of all proposals before the final document is approved. The governors give due consideration to the items in the development plan when fixing the budget and there are securely established systems for monitoring the progress in meeting the various target dates and deadlines. The school development plan is clearly linked to the shared vision for the future development of the school and it ensures that all staff and governors are aware of the issues facing the school in achieving its goal.
- 71 The governing body has a broad spectrum of expertise and it meets formally once each term. Committees with delegated powers are established for staffing and curriculum, finance and premises and they meet as required to do so. The governors have a full understanding of their role and they show a real commitment to carrying out their responsibilities fully. Attendance at all meetings is very good and many governors are frequent visitors to the school. During the last financial year the governors had to make a number of important decisions which affected the staffing and organisation of the school. Throughout this period of time they kept staff and parents fully informed of developments and showed that they are playing a full and important role in the management of the school. The governing body is a good critical friend to the school.

- 72 The headteacher and the office staff have established working practices which minimise overlap of responsibility and enable the headteacher to have daily contact with the classrooms. Daily routines are well established and the very good administrative organisation ensures that the school runs smoothly. Internal and external communications are very good and the parents are strongly supportive of the letters they receive from the school. The very good working relationships between the administrative staff and all who come into contact with them contribute positively to the ethos of the school.
- 73 The school sets itself a challenging aim in its mission statement and it has moved forward since the last inspection as it strives to achieve it fully. The caring and thoughtful work of all those connected with the school goes on undiminished and the school is now meeting the educational needs of its pupils more fully than previously.
- 74 The school has adopted an appropriate policy for equal opportunities and all pupils are given full and equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Observations during the inspection confirm that all aspects of equal opportunities are well managed.
- 75 All aspects of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are well co-ordinated and extremely well managed. Monitoring and record keeping are exemplary. The use of specialist support from outside agencies is effectively managed and the school fully complies with the code of practice.
- 76 The school has established effective management systems for the setting of targets to improve pupils' levels of attainment in English and mathematics. These not only aim to increase the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2, but also the percentage reaching Level 5. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are already having a positive effect upon pupils, levels of attainment and the school is making good progress towards achieving its targets for the year 2000.

• **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 77 The school is staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced teachers for children under five and for pupils of all abilities in both key stages. Recent re-organisation has resulted in some part time job sharing for teachers and no full time support staff in class. In spite of these changes the staff, classroom assistants and voluntary helpers form an effective team in the classrooms. The administrative staff cover a very wide range of activities and make a significant and valued contribution to the work of the school. Mid-day supervisory staff and assistants are very well organised and contribute positively to the ethos of the school.
- 78 Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. The co-ordinator's role is well developed and he successfully arranges for staff to attend in-service training courses which enhance personal skills and expertise, in line with the requirements of the school development plan. Since the last inspection a programme of appropriate in-service training has increased staff competence and confidence in teaching the new programme of study for information technology. There are thorough procedures for the induction of new members of staff which are successfully integrating new members of staff into the systems and procedures of the school. The arrangements for appraisal are good and all teaching staff have been recently appraised.
- 79 Accommodation in this listed building is adequate for the effective delivery of all areas of the curriculum. The school is well maintained, clean and welcoming. Displays of pupils' work and other materials enhance the fabric of the school and contribute significantly to the educational environment. There is a good hall, used well for a full range of activities but this can inhibit movement to and from the six rooms accessing it. Two classes have the disadvantage of using a separate, temporary building which lacks toilet facilities. The very

good team work of staff and pupils result in the deficiencies in the accommodation being minimised and they have little negative impact upon the quality of education provided for the pupils.

80 Parents have assisted in the refurbishment of a new library which is a good addition to the school's facilities. It is being used effectively in providing for the educational needs of, both individuals and small groups. The major part of the playground has recently been resurfaced with an excellent range of sports, road safety training and playground games marked out. There is no separate provision for early years outdoor play. Sinks in the early years and reception classes are at adult height and unsuitable for the age and size of the pupils.

81 Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable improvement in the range and quantity of resource materials available for supporting the teaching of information technology skills. In addition an extensive range of new materials have been purchased to support the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Resources are now at least satisfactory to cover the needs in all curriculum areas. Provision is good in religious education and very good in mathematics and music. There is a good range of large play equipment for the early years. Resources in physical education are considerably enhanced through the school's participation in the Top Sports Scheme.

· **The efficiency of the school**

82 Financial planning, control and monitoring are very good. The school is very efficiently organised and runs well on a day-to-day basis. The administrative staff make a significant contribution to the smooth daily routine.

83 The governing body is fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to the financial management of the school. They receive regular updates of the financial situation and they keep the budget under constant review. The draft budget for the next financial year develops naturally from this review process. There are clear links between the school development plan and the budget and this ensures that available funds are targeted upon the real priority areas for development.

84 The most recent auditor's report, dated December 1997, raised a number of issues for consideration, but commended the school for the quality and efficiency of its established procedures and practices. All areas for improvement raised in this report have been appropriately addressed by the governing body and the school.

85 Subject and area co-ordinators are allocated capitation allowances in order to purchase resources to support the delivery of the curriculum. In order to obtain value for money, co-ordinators are required to obtain more than one quotation before the order is placed. Discussion with the headteacher results in the final decision being made, and the established system is resulting in the delegated funds being spent well. All resources are stored sensibly and used effectively in supporting pupils' learning.

86 All full-time teaching staff are satisfactorily deployed but the timetable arrangements in Key Stage 2 do not allow all part-time members of staff to teach to their particular strengths. This less effective deployment of staff result in a variable educational experience for some pupils in religious education and this is reflected in their rates of progress.

87 Taking into account;

a. the average attainment of pupils on entry;

- b. the above average attainment throughout the school in English, mathematics and science;
- c. the satisfactory and often good progress being made in all subjects;
- d. pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour;
- e. the good and frequently very good quality of most teaching;
- f. the very good ethos within the school;
- g. the below average expenditure per pupil.

the school gives good value for money.

g. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

g. **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

Areas of learning for children under five

- 88 Provision for children under five is organised with a reception class and a small part-time early years unit. Children who become five years of age during the Autumn term are admitted to the reception class in September and those who will be five during the Spring and Summer terms join the school role in January. In addition, children who are four years of age are admitted into the part-time early years unit. At the time of the inspection there were 23 children under five years of age in the reception class and five in the early years unit.
- 89 On admission to the reception class the children represent the whole ability range with the majority in the average band. The standards of provision for children under five reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and improved upon significantly in that the children now make good progress in the early years. By the time they are five the majority of the children attain levels which are above those expected nationally in personal and social development, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, and levels in line with those expected nationally in language and literacy, creative development and physical education.
- 90 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, being good in five of the seven lessons observed and very good in one. The lessons are characterised by good planning for the needs of young children. Sessions are well resourced with a wide range of activities, which develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Children are managed well, particularly when they are involved in class discussions and when they move around the school. Basic language skills are systematically developed in all areas of learning. Children with special needs and those causing minor concern are identified early and given appropriate support. Groups are well organised. The teacher demonstrates good questioning techniques and gives clear instructions. Assistants are used well and give good quality support. Relationships between all adults and children in the reception class are very good. All the staff working with children under five are kind, approachable and positive in their dealings with these children. The limited area available to the under fives is well utilised by the staff.

Personal and Social development

- 91 The children under five enjoy coming to school, demonstrate good listening skills and display positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour is very good and children develop constructive relationships with adults and with each other. Most work in pairs and in small groups well and develop the skills necessary to work independently. They are often very settled and sit quietly for sustained periods. They take turns in discussions and show understanding of classroom expectations, such as putting up their hand when they want to speak in a whole-class session. Teaching is never less than good and this area of learning is promoted well, enabling the children to make good progress. Children reach standards above the expected levels in their personal and social development by the time they are five.

Language and Literacy

- 92 Most children are on course to attain the standards expected nationally in speaking, listening and writing by the age of five. Most children make good progress in this area of learning. Children gradually develop confidence in their use of language. Most are confident talkers and demonstrate good listening skills, as observed in the literacy lesson linked to animals. Children effectively recall information about themselves, their experiences and their families.

Most children enjoy books, understand their purpose and handle them carefully. They concentrate and listen to stories and recognise the humour in texts. They listen in a mature way to visitors and other adults who come into their classroom. The children learn the names and sounds of some letters. Many recognise familiar words and learn words from their reading books. All children take books home and attempt their reading with confidence. A few begin to use the sounds of letters to help them read unknown words. Children write their names and record their ideas and experiences through drawing and writing at an appropriate level. Children concentrate well in lessons, show interest and are keen to learn. They sit quietly for sustained periods and take turns when responding to adults. The quality of teaching in language and literacy is good. Activities in this key area are given a high priority, are planned carefully and take into account the varying levels of attainment.

Mathematical development

- 93 By the age of five the majority of children reach standards above those expected for their age. They count with varying degrees of success. Most count objects accurately and identify and name numbers up to ten and beyond. Higher-attaining children order numbers written in words up to ten and develop their understanding of writing numbers with correct formation. They name common two-dimensional shapes and start to describe the relative positions and sizes of objects, using terms such as over, under, bigger and smaller. Most children develop good mathematical vocabulary. The children work enthusiastically on mathematical activities in lessons. They behave well and co-operate with each other. They handle resources sensibly. Teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress through lessons which have clear objectives and systematic structure.

Knowledge and understanding of the World

- 94 The children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world and by the age of five most achieve above the nationally expected standards in this area of learning. Experiments with play-dough, paint, water and sand support the children's growing understanding of materials and their properties. Children are becoming more aware of the passing of time as they talk about the days of the week and how things change over time. Teaching is good and all staff make a valuable contribution to the children's progress by providing useful information and asking searching questions.

Creative development

- 95 In the creative aspect of their work most children reach the levels expected nationally by the age of five. They listen to and respond very enthusiastically to music. They begin to learn the names of the percussion instruments, which they play with confidence and good control. Most children develop good listening skills. A good example of this was seen when they listened attentively to the story linked to farm animals and played instruments 'accompanying' the teacher as she read the story. When given the opportunity, the children enthusiastically express their ideas and communicate their feelings during role-play sessions in the home corner. Careful artwork is created using a good variety of techniques such as collage, printing, painting and drawing. Teaching is satisfactory. Practical resources and support staff are used well and effective use is made of the school's accommodation.

Physical development

- 96 Most children reach the expected levels by the age of five. They listen to instructions and develop good space awareness when they take part in lessons in the hall. Most develop good body awareness and move on and off apparatus with confidence and safety. Response and behaviour are very good and children show consideration for each other. They handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with good control. Children use construction toys and

malleable materials such as play-dough showing increasing control. Teaching is good and the detailed planning ensures that the children make good progress in this area of learning.

g.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

g. **English**

97 The national assessment tests undertaken in 1998 by pupils near the end of Key Stage 1 show that the proportion achieving the national norm in English was well above the average. This standard was reflected in the elements relating to speaking and listening and to both reading and writing. Achievement in 1998 was well above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The 1999 results for reading and writing show that the school has broadly sustained the improvement shown in recent years, when compared with its own results. The inspection confirms that the proportion of pupils on course to reach the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1 is above the national average.

98 The national assessment tests taken in 1998 by pupils in Year 6 show that achievement in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was close to the national average for all schools but was below average when compared with schools with similar intakes. The 1999 results show a slight improvement over the schools' 1998 results. There has been some fluctuation in the numbers of pupils reaching the national average in recent years. The inspection findings relate to a different cohort of pupils and attainment reflects the progressive impact of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The inspection finds that the proportion of pupils on course to attain the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national standards.

99 At the end of Key Stage 1 the number of pupils who are able to express themselves orally with appropriate clarity and confidence is above that expected for their age. Teachers are skilful at utilising opportunities which develop pupils' skills in using the spoken word and this leads to good progress in speaking and listening skills. The proportion of pupils who listen attentively and constructively to their teacher and to the contributions made by others is also better than the national average. A good range of suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills is provided, with activities such as role playing and questioning used effectively as a means of promoting speaking and listening skills and of developing confidence.

100 At the end of the Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils achieving the national standards in speaking and listening is also above average. Most listen attentively to their teacher and respond thoughtfully to the contributions made by other pupils. An above average proportion are able to generate cohesive and complex sentences.

101 Achievement in reading is above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. The systematic programme helps to promote reading standards. Most pupils enjoy reading and are eager to discuss what they have read. They develop a good range of phonic and contextual skills in order to tackle unfamiliar words. Most are able to use simple dictionaries and satisfactory standards are achieved in relation to library skills.

102 Achievement in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average. Most pupils are able to discuss what they have read with perceptive analysis of the characters and the plot. Higher achievers sometimes demonstrate perceptive insight such as a Year 6 pupil's comparison between the qualities of a book by Roald Dahl and the related video. Most display good skills when using phonic and other strategies, such as context, in order to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils are able to use inference and figurative language and develop suitable understanding and appreciation of literature.

- 103 At the end of Key Stage 1 achievement in writing is above that found nationally. Pupils' awareness of grammatical structure and punctuation is good in relation to their age. Most possess a sufficiently broad vocabulary with which to express themselves. Spelling is methodically developed and pupils achieve good levels of accuracy. Standards of letter formation and control are good and reflect the systematic refinement skills.
- 104 Standards of writing in Key Stage 2 are above average. By the end of the key stage, a good proportion of pupils have the appropriate skills in relation to grammatical structure and punctuation and are able to express themselves with accuracy. They are able to organise their writing and to develop a theme in a logical and sustained manner. They write with a growing awareness of audience and of purpose. Spelling continues to be approached systematically with levels of accuracy above average. Standards of handwriting are above average with consistent letter formation and control.
- 105 Pupils' increasing competence in literacy makes an important contribution to standards in other areas of the curriculum. Word processing skills are satisfactorily developed but information technology is not used sufficiently to support reading and writing at either key stage.
- 106 The majority of pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills associated with literacy which are broadly in line with those expected. The majority make good progress as they move through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In both key stages a range of suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills are provided which leads to good progress in this aspect of the subject. When they enter the key stage most pupils are able to speak in simple terms about something which is within their immediate experience, whilst older pupils are able to develop a theme and to consider more abstract subjects. The structured programme helps to promote reading standards and to ensure that most pupils make good progress in both key stages. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 progress from the recognition of a limited range of words to the ability to read a simple story with understanding and enjoyment. This sound foundation is an important element in the continued good progress in reading which is evident at Key Stage 2. By Year 6 the majority of pupils can read books of medium difficulty with fluency and expression and can discuss the contents maturely. Most pupils in both key stages make good progress in writing skills. From elementary letter and simple word formation at the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils develop increasing literacy skills until, at the end of Key Stage 2 they are competent in the use of sequential prose with accurate grammatical structure and appropriate use of punctuation.
- 107 Pupils of all abilities are presented with work which is well matched to their needs. The higher achievers are provided with material which has suitable challenge. Those with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported with work directed at their particular difficulties, and such pupils also make good progress. The grouping arrangements, which have been introduced in Key Stage 2, are having a positive effect upon attainment and progress.
- 108 Pupils' response to English is good in Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject. Most work diligently, persevere with their tasks and show obvious enthusiasm for their work. They collaborate productively in pairs and small groups. At Key Stage 2 pupils' attitudes are also good. The majority are very attentive and are able to sustain concentration over a period. They respond maturely when required to work independently.
- 109 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good. Activities are well matched to the needs of the pupils and a range of strategies are employed which help to sustain interest. Teachers have a caring and positive rapport with their pupils. Lessons are conducted with clear purpose. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is also good, with most lessons proceeding at a brisk pace and in a

positive working atmosphere. Excellent teaching occurred in a Year 4 lesson relating to the style of writing used by newspapers. Here the teacher's good subject knowledge, the stimulating tasks and activities which met the widely varying needs of the pupils, all combined to promote excellent progress. In both key stages lessons are carefully planned and are properly related to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. The need to cater for the differing abilities of the pupils is recognised in all parts of the school.

- 110 The co-ordinators for English and for literacy are both committed to improving standards and have a clear sense of purpose. The school places considerable emphasis upon English and the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced with care and rigour. This initiative, together with the quality of teaching, are significant factors in determining the achievement and progress made by pupils. Teachers' medium and short-term planning are satisfactory but some individual lesson plans are insufficiently precise when identifying the specific skills and knowledge which are to form the objective of the teaching.
- 111 The school regularly uses formal tests to measure attainment and a number of practical assessment procedures are being put in place to monitor pupils' progress. These include ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of particular lessons. Such measures complement and support the systematic approach to the teaching of English which the school employs but some are not yet fully embedded. More precise specification of the intended outcome of lessons is needed in order to make the process more objective.

Mathematics

- 112 The level of attainment in mathematics is above the national average at the end of both key stages. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils in Key Stage 1 attain levels which are well above national averages and the results of Key Stage 2 pupils are above average.
- 113 Results of the 1998 national tests and teacher assessment for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reflect levels of attainment well above the national average at both Level 2 and Level 3. These results are significantly higher than in 1996 but not as high as 1997. The results of the national tests for 1999 are very high, with 100 per cent of pupils achieving Level 2. The findings of this inspection indicate that the large majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving levels of attainment above the national average at this early stage in the school year, with the potential for a significant number to achieve higher than this.
- 114 Results of the 1998 national tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reflect levels of attainment that were above the national average for pupils achieving Level 4, with the percentage achieving Level 5 being close to the national average. Over the three year period since 1996 there has been a significant improvement in the levels of attainment in mathematics and the results for 1999 show improvement over 1998.
- 115 During the inspection period there was no significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 2 although there was a small difference at the end of Key Stage 2 national tests with boys achieving slightly higher results than girls.
- 116 Examples of pupils' high levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 are reflected in their secure understanding of place value to 100 with many using this information to numbers well over 100. They can add and subtract using a high level of rapid mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10 and in many cases to 20. They are able to apply these skills when calculations involve higher numbers, both in numeracy and other areas of the curriculum. They clearly understand when to use the appropriate process when solving problems and also understand that the answer to addition sums is the same whichever order numbers are added.

They count in 2s, 3s and 10s with accuracy and speed, often extending it to other numbers up to 10 and are developing a good understanding of number patterns. Pupils compare a wide range of measurements and apply their knowledge of number to money. They recognise and describe the properties of many two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes using accurate vocabulary. The majority tell the time using the hour and half hour.

- 117 At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils add and subtract numbers to well over 1,000 and can understand and explain the process of multiplying and dividing by 10s. They have good mental recall of many multiplication facts. Their rapid mental recall and ability to explain numerical thinking reflects the high quality of teacher preparation for the National Numeracy Strategy. They have a secure understanding of decimals and fractions, and levels of attainment in the understanding of shape, space and measurement are high. Pupils recognise a wide range of shapes, measure angles and use an appropriate range of units when measuring and calculating. Most pupils, especially the more able, handle mathematical investigations to a high level and with confidence. One very mature aspect of their mathematical skills is their ability to explain their mathematical reasoning, using precise vocabulary, numerical accuracy and realising that there are alternative yet equally viable ways of calculating.
- 118 Progress throughout both key stages is good overall. It is good or better in the majority of lessons and is never less than satisfactory. Progress directly reflects the quality of teaching especially the level of challenge and teachers' subject knowledge. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good and this reflects the very high level of provision through the school.
- 119 Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good. Their behaviour is at least good and often very good. The very positive relationships both with teachers and with each other enhance their learning. They listen attentively, work conscientiously and collaborate where required in an orderly yet enthusiastic manner. In many classes there are very good examples of pupils becoming increasingly independent in solving problems, responding to challenges and having the confidence to suggest alternatives and ask when they are unsure. Pupils handle all mathematical equipment carefully and the standard of presentation by nearly all pupils is very good. This contributes towards accuracy in both calculations and high levels of presentation.
- 120 The teaching of mathematics is good in both key stages and very good in many lessons in Key Stage 2 and in most lessons in Key Stage 1. It is never less than satisfactory. There are strengths in all aspects of teaching. Planning is thorough with activities well matched to pupils' abilities and the specific aims of the curriculum. The large majority of teachers use imaginative and thoughtful ways of explaining mathematical concepts. They are developing effective strategies for teaching rapid recall of numerical facts and mental mathematics. Teachers' strengths are also reflected in secure subject knowledge, high expectations and the quality of marking. This informs pupils of their standards, and where necessary develops into a dialogue where pupils amend their work appropriately. Praise is given when deserved and comments for improvement are precise and easily understood by pupils. Carefully chosen resources and their organisation enhances pupils' learning. One particular strength of teaching in every lesson observed is the fast pace of teaching mental recall balanced by the appropriate time given for pupils to answer in order that they can explain their thinking. This feature positively enhances pupils' numeracy skills and reflects a high level of understanding of a key element of the National Numeracy Strategy. In the most successful lessons teachers explain, with a high level of precision, the aims, skills and knowledge to be acquired by the end of the lesson. Teachers' questioning is probing and all lessons move at a good pace. The pupils are encouraged to examine their work critically and discuss standards. In the two lessons where the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall there were limited challenges for some pupils. Satisfactory but limited use is made of homework throughout the school. The National Numeracy Strategy is already a secure dimension of pupils' mathematical learning with appropriate training taking place and resources planned. In the short time since the introduction of the numeracy hour teachers are already secure in the process and structure of the lesson.

121 Mathematics is effectively managed and monitored throughout the school. The leadership and management of the subject is good and is a significant contributory factor to pupils' attainment and progress. The co-ordinators have outlined a very clear educational direction for the subject and have successfully developed a heightened focus on mental and reasoning skills in numeracy. Parents have been extremely well informed of all changes and the direct implications of the numeracy hour on their children's learning. At their pre-inspection meeting many parents praised the school staff and governors for the effective way in which the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced.

g. **Science**

122 In the 1998 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or better was well above the national averages and the percentage reaching Level 5 was well above the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainments are well above average. Over the three year period from 1996 there has been an improvement each year in the percentage of pupils reaching both Level 4 and 5. The results for 1999 show that there has been further improvement in the levels of attainment achieved by pupils at the school in the tests at the end of Key Stage.

123 On the basis of teacher assessments, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or better at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 is well above national averages. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 is above average. During each of the last three years, pupils' levels of achievement in science have been consistently above national averages and at a level where it is difficult to improve upon them. The results for 1999 show that pupils have continued to achieve at a high level at the end of Key Stage 1.

124 Analysis of the Key Stage 2 results shows that boys consistently out perform girls in the end of key stage tests. During the short period of the inspection discussion with pupils, scrutiny of their previous work and observation of their response to classroom tasks did not reveal any evidence to support these findings. Throughout the key stage boys and girls were equally noticeable for the accuracy of their answers to questions and the good quality of their written work.

125 Inspection evidence indicates that attainment by pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 is above that expected nationally. The majority of pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of a range of foods and they are able to sort them into groups. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and know why some foods are more healthy than others. In planning a party menu many pupils were able to explain why on this occasion they would eat more of a particular type of food than would be in a balanced diet. In the Year 3/4 classes pupils can classify materials by property and have a good knowledge of a wide range of materials and their uses. They are able to explain which properties make the material suitable for the use to which it is put. Pupils in Year 5/6 are extending their knowledge of solids, liquids and gases. The majority of pupils can explain the differences in shape, volume and flow in terms of molecular structure. In discussion they demonstrated good knowledge of air pressure and how to investigate if air has weight.

126 The majority of pupils in both key stages are making good progress in gaining knowledge, developing skills and in using the correct scientific language and terminology. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are learning how to collect evidence, sort it into types and then make deductions and predictions. Progress is generally good, but a weakness is that all pupils are using the same work sheet for recording purposes. Scrutiny of previous work indicated that higher attaining pupils are rarely given opportunity to record work in their own way. Across Key Stage 2, pupils are making good progress in learning how to carry out fair tests and record results in a variety of ways making good use of their acquired literacy and numeracy skills. They are developing practical skills and use apparatus and resources sensibly, carefully and safely.

Pupils in Year 3/4 safely handled and shared a range of materials during their investigation into the properties of the materials. In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the classroom and the careful planning of tasks appropriate to their abilities is enabling them to make good progress in their studies.

127 Throughout the school, almost all pupils have a positive attitude and their response to the tasks in science lessons is good. They enjoy the challenging nature of the work and show a real interest. Behaviour is good and often very good. In practical sessions they work well with other pupils, handle apparatus carefully and give support to those who need it. Pupils listen attentively to their teacher when being given instructions, and to other members of the class when they are answering questions. They are keen to learn and in all situations are prepared to try hard and give of their best.

128 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Of the eight lessons observed during the inspection one was very good, six good and one satisfactory. All lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and details of the subject specific language and terminology. Explanations are clear and the quality of teaching has a direct impact upon pupils' rates of progress. Relationships are very good and all teachers establish a supportive learning environment within the classrooms. Teachers have good subject knowledge and good organisational skills. Teaching styles are friendly, supportive and encouraging. All teachers mark work conscientiously and give good quality feedback to pupils as to how their work can be improved. In the Key Stage 1 lesson in which teaching was very good the teacher had high expectations of what pupils could achieve. The lesson had real pace and purpose and the skilful use of questions stimulated and then maintained pupils' interest. Learning was fun and there was real enjoyment. In the least successful lesson the pace was not maintained for the whole session and although tasks were matched to pupils' ability some pupils were able to complete the set tasks too quickly.

129 Assessment is an integral part of planning and is an on-going process. Assessment at the end of each unit of work is used to inform future planning and to target recovery work for those pupils who require it. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 are a very accurate prediction of the final levels pupils achieve in the end of key stage tests.

130 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and she carries out her role effectively. She is keen to not only maintain the present levels of attainment but if possible to improve them. At present she monitors teachers' planning but has no opportunity to work alongside colleagues and monitor delivery of these plans in the classroom.

g. **OTHER SUBJECTS**

Information technology

131 The majority of pupils at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 reach standards in information technology which are in line with the national age related expectation. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when levels of attainment were below those expected for their ages.

132 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 display sound competencies in basic keyboard skills and are able, with support, to save and retrieve information. Most pupils display satisfactory levels of proficiency in word processing. Pupils know how to control programmable devices purposefully and are able to select options when investigating on-screen situations. They have satisfactory understanding of how information technology is used in the home and their environment.

- 133 In Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils who are able to work with confidence and independence across most of elements required by the National Curriculum is close to the average. The majority are able to save and retrieve stored information independently. Word processing skills are extended and the standards achieved in combining text and pictures are satisfactory. Pupils are able to print the finished product. They are able to establish, test, modify and store sequences of instructions to control on-screen events. Pupils' ability to monitor external events such as temperature is below that expected. They are able to enter, sort and classify data and to present their findings using a range of graphical representations.
- 134 The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- 135 Pupils in both key stages display very good attitudes to information technology. They behave sensibly and sustain concentration over time. Almost all pupils strive to achieve the desired outcome and interact well with each other and with staff. There is productive co-operation and behaviour is mature and responsible. Almost all pupils clearly enjoy their work in relation to information technology.
- 136 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have established positive relationships with their pupils and are conscientious in the support which they provide. Following school based training, staff have sound subject knowledge and are now more confident in their teaching.
- 137 The programme for information technology is adequately defined using national documentation although the process of making this guidance specific to the school is not yet complete and, therefore, details are not yet sufficiently precise. Following this relatively recent development in the school's provision for information technology the elements of the subject are now developed sequentially but this initiative has not yet worked its way through a full cycle and not every pupil has received the same exposure to the subject. Teachers maintain assessment records but these are not included as part of a whole school procedure for rigorously charting pupils' individual experience and progress.
- 138 In response to the findings of the previous inspection, the school has targeted much of its limited funding available for the purchase of resource materials on improving the level of provision in this subject area. A central computer suite has been established in order that there can be direct teaching of information technology skills. This new facility is already having a positive effect upon pupils' levels of attainment and rates of progress in developing skills. Pocket-book computers are available to augment this provision but there are few computers in classrooms readily available for use as a tool to support learning in other subjects. At the present time the central computer suite is insufficiently used to allow pupils to utilise their acquired information technology skills to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum. In spite of the extent of the new resource provision the software and equipment for the monitoring of external events is inadequate.
- 139 The co-ordinators are leading the many developments efficiently and effectively but they have insufficient opportunity to monitor classroom practice or work alongside colleagues.
- 140 The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the shortcomings raised in the last inspection report in relation to pupils' levels of attainment, improving staff expertise and the level of resources. However there are still areas of weakness which need to be addressed.

Religious education

- 141 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards which match the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus. By the age of seven, pupils have an appropriate knowledge of the Christian faith and its beliefs and are beginning to understand the difference between religious and secular festivals and events. The majority describe the special features of Christmas, Easter and Harvest, both in religious terms and in the activities taking place at school and at home. They know some of the miracles and parables of Jesus and describe certain features of Jesus' life from his birth to his crucifixion. During the inspection pupils in one class were at an early stage of developing the concept of a saint. Their questions and answers reflect appropriate knowledge about Christianity and the understanding that a saint was a special person. They learned some of the important features in the life of St Francis of Assisi, his popularity with people and how he cared for animals. Some pupils speak confidently about features of the church and their impressions of the roles of the vicar and ministers and their work in the community. Most pupils have a very good understanding about moral values such as kindness and distinguish between right and wrong. They have an appropriate knowledge of the world religions studied in school.
- 142 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards which are in line with those expected by the Local Agreed Syllabus. They recognise that different religions share similar features concerning right and wrong, have rules and, through visits to local churches and visits by Christians, Sikhs and Muslims understand that people have different ways of worshipping. Pupils describe the holy books, artefacts and customs and festivals that relate to these religions. Many pupils are able to identify aspects of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and know some of the Ten Commandments. They understand and explain initiation ceremonies, important features of the Gurdwara, a mosque and the different denominations of the local churches, and more detailed understanding of important festivals. This was reflected in one Year 5 and 6 lesson when pupils explained in detail the festival of Eid al Adha and the customs surrounding it. They also explained the differences between baptism in a Church of England and baptism in a Baptist Church.
- 143 Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages but progress is more consistent in Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2 than towards the end of Key Stage 2. This is a direct reflection on the quality of teaching. Pupils' understanding of the importance of specific religions to some people and the equal importance of those who do not have a specific religious faith is extended by studying communities in a wide range of contexts. An appropriate range of religious vocabulary is used and shows an increasing grasp of religious concepts and knowledge about beliefs and practices. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress because appropriate use is made of special resources and equipment and accommodation, and the sensitive knowledge of class teachers.
- 144 Pupils' attitudes and response to religious education are good and at times very good. They are attentive and interested, respond well to teachers' questioning and listen intently to each other's comments. In the majority of classes there is a high level of concentration. Pupils handle resources carefully and show respect for the different religions which they are studying. Scrutiny of work revealed there are inconsistencies in the quality and rate of written work and standards of presentation.
- 145 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory in the lessons observed. The timetable arrangements for the teaching of religious education and the unsatisfactory deployment of some part-time teachers in Key Stage 2 contribute to this variable level of teaching. One strength throughout the school is teachers' sensitivity to pupils' feelings in encouraging them to ask and answer questions. In the majority of lessons teachers use their specialist subject knowledge to plan appropriate tasks which extend the learning of pupils of all ability levels. Lessons move with a brisk pace and purpose and the available time is used effectively. Teachers' planning follows the agreed programme and builds upon pupils' previous knowledge. In the least successful lesson insufficient material was planned and this resulted in the poor use of time towards the end of the session. The content of the lesson did not extend the learning for all pupils.

146 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has very good knowledge about all aspects of religious education related to the Agreed Syllabus. The positive effect of her subject knowledge and matching the level of learning to pupils' abilities is reflected in the high quality of medium-term planning. She has developed a very comprehensive action plan which includes reviewing the subject after the amended agreed syllabus is introduced next year and the need for assessment procedures. She has also identified as a priority the need to monitor classroom practice and the delivery of the curriculum. At the present time there is no systematic procedure for the detailed assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in religious education.

Art

147 In the school's last inspection report, the standard of work achieved by the pupils at the end of both key stages was said to be in line with standards expected for their ages, but was inconsistent across and within the key stages. Present inspection findings show that attainment is now more uniformly in line with age related expectations across the school. This represents an improvement in pupils' levels of attainment since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils use pencils, pastels and paint effectively. They understand how to achieve the shades they require for their paintings, and they confidently mix their own colours. Still life drawings, such as those linked to fruit demonstrate sound observational skills and good control of pencils and brushes. Pupils successfully undertake work in three dimensions, producing effective collages. They study the work of famous artists, such as Paul Klee, and successfully produce their own work in these styles.

148 In Key Stage 2, pupils show increasing skills in colour mixing, and they have produced a good range of watercolours, including self portraits. Their use of pencil is effective, especially when adding fine detail to drawings of leaves. Pupils have some opportunities to work from their imagination, and when they do so they show thought and flair in their work. They successfully use both paint and pencil to produce pictures in the style of many famous artists, such as Picasso. Pupils throughout the school are able to reflect on their work and comment both on its quality and how it might be improved.

149 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Sound progress is made in colour mixing to vary shade and tone, and pupils' observational skills become more acute as they move from year to year. Particular progress is also made in the use of pencil, with older pupils being most careful to use the correct hardness of pencil to produce the desired effect. As they move through the school, pupils learn about a growing range of artists, and they become increasingly confident in discussing the particular features of their work.

150 Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They listen carefully to their teachers, make sensible observations and then settle to their tasks with enthusiasm and concentration. They take their art work seriously and most are keen to master all the techniques and skills presented to them, taking care with all aspects of their work. They behave very well and collaborate successfully with other pupils when required to do so.

151 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good practice observed in Key Stage 2. Many lessons are well planned and teachers provide a wide variety of activities and experiences for pupils. Classroom organisation is good and displays of pupils' work are effectively used to enhance the learning environment. Relationships are very good and teachers and classroom helpers give good support, encouragement and praise. Some teachers give clear and helpful demonstrations of all the techniques to be used.

Design and technology

- 152 Pupils in both key stages achieve levels of knowledge and skill associated with design and technology which are appropriate for their ages. Pupils have experience of using an adequate range of materials when designing and making products. Proper consideration is given to the purpose of each item and to the subsequent design and construction. Older pupils pay due regard to the preferences of the consumer. Pupils in both key stages are competent in their ability to relate their product to their associated design and in their ability to evaluate and modify their work. Skills associated with design and technology are satisfactorily developed as pupils move through each key stage and the ability to select and use a range of tools is in line with the standard expected. The majority of pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress.
- 153 Pupils' attitudes and response to the subject are good in both key stages. They discuss their work with enthusiasm and levels of concentration and perseverance are good. Most work carefully and conscientiously. There is thoughtful evaluation of design and technology issues and careful consideration of points made by other pupils.
- 154 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have a sound awareness of design and technology requirements, lessons are carefully prepared, class management is sound and time is used productively.
- 155 The school is in the process of adapting national guidance to support coverage and to ensure progression. This process is not yet complete and the agreed programme for the school is not fully determined. Guidance relating to the building of skills incrementally has been satisfactorily defined but planning procedures do not fully ensure that it is incrementally delivered. Productive links with other subject areas are frequently established.

Geography

- 156 Pupils are achieving above the expected standards for their age at the end of both key stages. These standards indicate an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in both key stages are judged to make good progress, including those with special educational needs. The recent national changes to the non-core subjects has not led to any significant reduction of the time allocated by the school to the subject and, as a result, pupils continue to have access to a wide range of activities.
- 157 In Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils talk about their homes and the people they know best. They develop their knowledge and understanding of people and places by studying the school site and the jobs of adults in the school. They show a good grasp of a 'bird's eye view' from aerial photographs and start to use directional language when describing how to get to places on the site. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write about the types of building seen in the local area and start to extend their map skills by identifying geographical symbols on a map of Treasure Island, such as trees, grass, sand, sky, sea and the treasure chest.
- 158 At the lower end of Key Stage 2, pupils find out more about their local area, describe work and recreational facilities and produce their own guide to the neighbourhood. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make more detailed studies of distant places, most notably through a major topic on air travel in which they decide the best air routes from places such as Moscow to Tokyo.
- 159 Pupils of all ages show positive attitudes. They are interested in topics and work enthusiastically. Behaviour in the lessons seen was very good and pupils responded well to adults. They enjoy the visits they make outside school and the invited speakers. They think carefully in class discussions, make sensible contributions and ask interesting questions.

- 160 Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The planned cycle of topics is supported by a progressive list of skills and by national guidance which ensures that activities build systematically on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge in the lessons seen was secure and they had clear objectives which were translated well into activities. In the lesson on how pupils travel to school, tasks were varied well to match the full range of abilities in the class. Activities support and make use of pupils' literacy skills and the final drafts of pupils' work are often presented attractively in topic books.
- 161 Work in geography contributes positively to pupils' cultural development, leading them to an understanding of the country where they live and of how others live around the world. Good use is made of the immediate areas and of contrasting areas for field trips, including a residential stay. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the subject and the school is in a good position to continue to improve standards in the subject.

History

- 162 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages in developing historical skills and knowledge and standards are in line with those expected at this age. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 talk about the sequence of events in their lifetime and about how people grow old, such as their own grandparents. From these basic concepts about the passing of time, pupils in the rest of Key Stage 1 compare their school with schools in history and for example, comment on the differences in education for Victorian children and for themselves.
- 163 In Key Stage 2, pupils study distinct periods in line with the National Curriculum programmes of study. In Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about life in Stafford many years ago by examining artefacts from long ago and listening intently to the visiting speakers who came to speak to them during the week of the inspection. They use photographs and reference books as sources of evidence. Pupils at the upper end of the key stage can recount how men and women were employed in the 1930s. They describe the houses of the time and recall the traumas of the wartime evacuation. They use their literacy skills well to write about the life of Ann Frank and her family. Pupils continue to have access to a wide range of activities in all age groups.
- 164 Attitudes are very good. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in their work. They particularly enjoy the practical activities, examining artefacts, visiting places of interest and participating in presentations from outside speakers. Motivation and behaviour are very good. Pupils co-operate well in lessons and show independence in thought and research. They respond well to adults, listening carefully in lessons and sharing ideas and questions sensibly.
- 165 Teaching is satisfactory. Interesting activities are prepared which have clear learning objectives. Lessons build systematically across the school in line with long-term planning and with the available guidance on the progression of skills and knowledge. Teachers and visitors explain the subject clearly and make appropriate use of practical resources which bring lessons to life. They encourage independence and collaboration in research. Work contributes well to the provision for pupils' social and cultural development. There are good links with other subjects where appropriate. Teachers demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge and make good use of stories, artefacts and visits to enhance pupils' learning experiences. These make a good contribution to the enjoyment and positive attitudes demonstrated by pupils at both key stages. A balance of different teaching strategies is used to enable some pupils to become enquiring historians, whilst at the same time developing their literacy skills. Planning for individual lessons is satisfactory and pays due attention to progression in the long-term planning within the school's scheme of work. Teachers make effective use of visits and visitors to enhance provision.

Music

- 166 Throughout both key stages pupils make very good progress in all aspects of music and levels of attainment are above age related expectations. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress. In the lessons observed they benefited from highly appropriate levels of support, including the sensitive use of necessary equipment and accommodation. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in all pupils' levels of attainment and progress in music
- 167 In Key Stage 1, pupils' singing has many very good features including very accurate pitch and feel for rhythm, dynamic range and vocal projection. They play a wide range of percussion instruments, and follow and create scores. They listen to and perform a wide range of music from the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. The good features of singing found at Key Stage 1 continue throughout Key Stage 2 where pupils sing in two parts, listen sensitively to each other and develop advanced singing skills such as diaphragmatic breathing and awareness of the need for good posture. Singing and instrumental work, together with listening and appraising, develop a high level of understanding about the ability of musical elements to communicate moods and effects. The fact that an identical sound may make different impressions on different people was used to a very good effect in a Year 3/4 lesson where pupils illustrated their impressions of the wide variety of sounds created. This reflects a very high level of aural discrimination. Pupils have the opportunity to compare music from different traditions including African, Asian and European styles, and the use of African Ark is a significantly good feature in developing pupils' understanding of African music
- 168 In Key Stage 1, pupils identify the sounds made by some orchestral instruments and the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 know a much wider range. A significant number of pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 compose using conventional notation, bar lines, time signatures and markings representing dynamics. They understand and use an increasing range of musical vocabulary in the correct contexts. A small number of pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their instrumental skills by attending lessons conducted by visiting specialist teachers.
- 169 Pupils' very positive attitudes to music and the high level of involvement are reflected in their attainment and progress. An outstanding feature is the knowledge of pupils in Years 5 and 6 concerning European composers and the wide range of musical styles and influences which they discuss. The majority of pupils listen intently, have personal preferences, confidence and initiative, especially in the creative elements of music. In both the lessons and instrumental tuition observed, together with collective worship, pupils are very well behaved, listen intently and perform enthusiastically. In all classes there is a buzz of excitement, determination and purposeful activity and a commitment to producing very good work.
- 170 The quality of teaching is very good and this, together with good management, impacts on attainment and progress. Lessons are well planned with an appropriate balance of musical activities. Teachers have very high expectations and use a range of challenging questions. Many teachers have a significantly high level of competence in all aspects of music and their specialist skills are used very effectively. Musical resources are very well organised, frequently used and match the activities.
- 171 Throughout the year pupils perform for a wide range of audiences including parents, people in the sheltered housing, visitors and, most importantly, each other. During one collective worship, pupils performed with pride, consideration and accuracy for detail, and all pupils and adults listened intently and appreciatively. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including knowledge of music from a wide range of cultures and styles. This is reflected in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and extending knowledge, skills and understanding.

- 172 Although pupils use CDs and cassettes frequently, there are insufficient opportunities for using a wider range of information and communications technology equipment.

Physical education

- 173 Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with age related expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are successfully controlling body movements to represent moods, feelings and colours. They are able to travel in a variety of ways and are starting to combine the movements to form a sequence. In Key Stage 2 pupils are widening their range of basic gymnastic skills which they can perform with confidence. In the Year 5/6 classes there are a few pupils who include backward rolls and complex balances into their sequence of movements and they are performing at a level above that expected for their age.
- 174 Overall pupils' rates of progress are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school pupils are making good progress in working safely with both large and small items of apparatus. They are gaining control of body movement, developing hand and eye co-ordination and making effective use of space. In one Year 3/4 games lesson pupils made good progress in developing the skills necessary to control a ball with a hockey stick, dribble around cones and shoot into a goal area. Most pupils show gains in personal, social and moral development from their experiences in physical education lessons. They are able to respond quickly to instructions and contribute to group and small team performances.
- 175 Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the normal activities whenever this is possible. They have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and the extra-curricular clubs and activities. They are given very good support by teachers and their peers and this enables them to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.
- 176 All pupils enjoy physical education lessons and their response is good, and sometimes very good. Pupils have positive attitudes and they are always prepared to give of their best and try hard to improve their performance. Relationships are good and this has a positive effect upon rates of progress and levels of attainment. Pupils respond sensibly when invited to comment upon other pupils' gymnastic sequences and accept criticism of their own performance in a positive way. They work well in pairs, groups and small teams with good levels of self-discipline. During the walk to the swimming pool, which is some distance from the school, pupils' behaviour and response are good.
- 177 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Of the eight lessons, or part lessons, observed during the period of the inspection five were judged to be good and the remaining three satisfactory. There is some good teaching in both key stages but overall teacher expectations are higher in Key Stage 2 and this is reflected in the pupils' rates of progress in acquiring skills and improving their performances. All lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Relationships are very good and teaching styles are encouraging, supportive and friendly. There is much enjoyment in physical education lessons and this is due to the attitude and expertise of the teachers and their valuing of the contribution pupils make to the lesson. The good utilisation of staff in Key Stage 2, where the timetable allows specialist teachers to be responsible for physical education lessons, contributes to the good quality of teaching in this key stage.
- 178 Swimming is included in the curriculum programme for pupils in Years 1, 2 3 and 4. In each year they receive two separate half-term periods of instruction at the local Sports Centre. Observation at the swimming pool shows that the programme is successfully increasing pupils' confidence in the water and that they are developing basic stroke techniques. The majority of the Year 3/4 pupils involved in the session can swim a width unaided and all pupils are making good progress in acquiring the appropriate skills. Scrutiny of school records shows that all pupils who join the school in the reception class qualify for at least the

minimum award by the end of Year 4, and the majority achieve the higher awards.

- 179 In addition to the elements outlined in the National Curriculum documents, the school offers pupils a wide variety of games activities. By joining the externally funded Top Sports Scheme the school has access to specialist coaches and additional equipment and resources. In a series of fourteen week blocks pupils experience rugby, hockey, tennis, table tennis, netball and cricket. During the inspection the focus was on hockey and the after-school coaching session was well attended by both boys and girls. The high quality of the coaching enabled pupils to make additional good progress in acquiring the appropriate skills.
- 180 An impressive feature of the school is the range of extra-curricular clubs for sporting activities, and the open access given to these for both boys and girls. The success of these arrangements is that not only do boys and girls attend the practice sessions but they represent the school in mixed teams in a range of sports. These clubs and activities give pupils the opportunity to apply their personal skills in a competitive environment and develop the skills necessary to be an effective member of a team. The success of these clubs owes much to the enthusiastic lead given by both teachers and parents.
- 181 The school has a satisfactory range of resources, equipment and apparatus to support the delivery of the curriculum, but this level of resourcing is considerably enhanced by the specialist games equipment provided by the externally funded Top Sports Programme.

g. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

g. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 182 The school was inspected over a period of four days by a team of five inspectors, including a lay inspector. The total number of inspector days spent in the school was 19. Before the inspection the team read the previous Ofsted inspection report and an extensive range of the school's policies, publications and other documentation.
- 183 Prior to the week of the inspection, meetings were held for the school staff, the chair of governors, the chair of the financial sub-committee, the governing body, the headteacher, and the parents. Twenty-one parents representing all year groups in the school attended the meeting for parents. There were 38 responses to the parents' questionnaire and the factual evidence gained from the analysis of these was shared with the inspection team.
- 184 During the period of the inspection 91.33 hours were spent in collecting evidence, which included 67.75 hours of direct observation of pupils and the scrutiny of their work. One hundred and thirty seven observation forms were completed of which 100 were related to observation of pupils and scrutiny of their work.
- 185 The written and creative work of 69 pupils, representing the range of ability in each year group, was studied in depth by the subject inspectors. During their visits to classrooms the inspectors looked at the work of many more pupils and talked to them about the content. Thirty-nine pupils were heard to read individually and inspectors made positive use of the new arrangements for the literacy hour to listen to the group reading sessions. Interviews were held with 18 pupils representing the school council and 20 who have special responsibility or attend extra-curricular activities. Informal discussions took place with other pupils during lessons, morning and afternoon breaks, and at lunch time.
- 186 Members of the inspection team attended registration periods and acts of collective worship. They observed the pupils at play, during the walk to the Sports Centre for swimming lessons and in the dining hall.
- 187 Planned discussions were held during the period of the inspection with the headteacher, all subject co-ordinators, other teachers with special responsibilities, the office manager and link governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. Informal discussions took place with classroom support staff, parental helpers, the caretaker, the school meals staff and visiting peripatetic and support teachers.

g. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

g. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	279	4	46	23

g. **Teachers and classes**

g. **Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	11.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	25.14

g. **Education support staff (YR - Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	92.5

Average class size:	28
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g. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/9
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	£
Total Income	472008
Total Expenditure	453627
Expenditure per pupil	1482
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7410
Balance carried forward to next year	10971

g. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	279
Number of questionnaires returned:	38

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	28.9	63.2	5.3	0	2.6
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	47.4	47.4	2.6	0	2.6
The school handles complaints from parents well	14.3	54.3	22.9	5.7	2.9
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	15.8	76.3	5.3	0	2.6
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	36.8	55.3	5.3	0	2.6
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44.7	44.7	5.3	5.3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26.3	52.6	10.5	7.9	2.6
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26.3	44.7	7.9	21.1	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	34.2	50	7.9	7.9	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	31.6	52.6	7.9	7.9	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	39.5	50	5.3	2.6	2.6