

INSPECTION REPORT

Hob Hill CE/Methodist (C) Primary School

Rugeley

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124291

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Brakes

Reporting inspector: Dr Colin Lee
21854

Dates of inspection: 17th - 19th January 2000

Inspection number: 189545

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Primary with Nursery |
| School category: | Voluntary Controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Armitage Lane Brereton Rugeley Staffordshire |
| Postcode: | WS15 1ED |
| Telephone number: | 01889 256145 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Neville Blakeley |
| Date of previous inspection: | 30 th September 1996 |

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| Names of team members | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|---|--|---|
| Dr Colin Lee Registered Inspector | Science Information technology Music Physical education | The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management |
| Mr John Bayliss Lay Inspector | | How well the school cares for its pupils The school's partnership with parents |
| Mrs Christine Perrett Team Inspector | Mathematics History Geography Areas of learning for children under five | The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils |
| Mrs Pat Richardson Team Inspector | English Religious education Art Design and technology | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well pupils are taught Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hob Hill is a smaller than average, jointly controlled, Church of England/Methodist primary school for boys and girls aged from four to eleven years old. There are 137 full-time pupils and numbers increase during each Spring and Summer term as Nursery pupils attend the school part-time. On entry to the school, pupils' achievements are above that found nationally. Twenty-one pupils have special educational needs. As a percentage of numbers attending the school this is below the national average. Six pupils are from ethnic minority groups and this also represents a smaller than average proportion.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hob Hill is an effective school making a good contribution to pupils' all-round development. Academic standards are satisfactory overall although they fluctuate year by year. Pupils impress with the excellence of their relationships with each other and their very good behaviour and attitudes to school. The influence of good teaching and good leadership and management is strong. The school provides satisfactory value for money

What the school does well

- There is a very strong sense of family that results from pupils' excellent relationships and very good attitudes.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good, as is their all-round personal development.
- The school has an excellent ethos that is strongly reinforced by the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.
- There is good leadership by the headteacher who is ably supported by the senior teacher.
- Teaching is good and promotes sound progress in most pupils' learning.
- There are good relationships with parents.
- The governing body provides good support for the school's work.
- There is very good financial management that helps the school plan well for the future.

What could be improved

- Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 are not high enough.
- In history and geography, long term plans do not ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
- The use of assessment of pupils' learning is insufficiently matched to the planning of pupils' future work.
- The facilities for the youngest children are inadequate.
- Marking of work does not always help pupils improve.
- Expectations of the quality of handwriting are not high enough.
- Small groups of pupils do not have equal access to the whole curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in October 1996 found Hob Hill to be an effective school where pupils achieved above-average standards in many curriculum areas. Since then, standards, overall, have failed to follow the national trend of rising standards. The results achieved by its pupils in National Curriculum tests, at the age of eleven, show steady improvement in English but results in mathematics and science have fluctuated.

There are other aspects of the school's work that show satisfactory, and sometimes good, improvement. All the action points from the last inspection have been tackled satisfactorily.

The improvement in the information and communications technology curriculum is very good. Teaching has improved, particularly at Key Stage 2, and there has been satisfactory development of the curriculum as a whole. Leadership and management has improved and the monitoring of teaching is particularly effective. The governing body's effectiveness shows very good improvement and this has contributed to what is now excellent financial management.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 | |
| English | A | C | B | C | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| mathematics | A | C | C | D | |
| science | A | D | C | E | |

The 1999 results show improvement on the previous year and English has steadily improved over time. Taken together, the trend in these subjects is slightly below the national trend. However, targets, that have been set for pupils in the future, are appropriately challenging and the school is in line to meet these targets.

Work seen during the inspection has been of a satisfactory standard overall. Particular strengths are pupils skills at speaking and listening, their musical ability and the overall standards achieved by pupils in the class of Reception and Year 1 pupils. However, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are not high enough and the school has not paid enough attention to the gradual fall in Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results over the past four years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good; with complete absence of any inappropriate behaviour. |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and staff, contributing to the very good personal development. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory; in line with national figures with below average rates of unauthorised absence. |

Pupils' attitudes and values are a major strength of the school. There is a very high level of respect for the feelings of others that reflects the attention paid by the school to the pastoral care of its pupils. Pupils respond well to personal responsibility, they are enthusiastic about all their school experiences and they are often exemplary in their behaviour.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Satisfactory | Good |

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

The teaching seen ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, although the small number of unsatisfactory lessons was due to very specific weaknesses that are easily remedied. Seventeen per cent of teaching was very good, 51 per cent good or better, 91 per cent satisfactory or better and nine per cent unsatisfactory. All teachers show very good class management skills, they know their pupils well and they have good levels of subject knowledge across the whole curriculum. Literacy and numeracy are well taught in all classes but, in a few lessons, some teachers do not plan carefully enough for pupils of different abilities. This results in occasions when groups of both more and less able pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning. Overall, pupils are making good progress in learning due to their good concentration, willingness to work hard, and their attentiveness. There is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs when they are withdrawn in small groups from classrooms

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | A broad, balanced curriculum that is well enhanced by a very good programme of environmental education and good extra-curricular clubs. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good provision that is well-co-ordinated; there is early identification, appropriate target setting and good teaching. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good, overall, with excellent provision for both moral and social development. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school is a very caring community and procedures are very good. |

The school works well with parents, involving them fully in their children's education. A broad curriculum is provided by the school that combines good teaching of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with the full range of other subjects. Additionally, the programme of environmental education is an exciting initiative that pupils enjoy. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is of the highest quality and helps to reinforce the aims and values that permeate all aspects of school life. The care that is shown for all pupils is a major strength of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher leads the school well with good support from the senior teacher. Subject co-ordinators play a full part in moving the school forward. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The full involvement of governors is making a good contribution to management of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Thorough self-evaluation is leading to a good range of actions for improvement of performance. |
| The strategic use of resources | Physical and human resources are used well with very good management of finances. |

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all satisfactory for a school of this size. The present building limits the range of facilities that can be provided for children in the nursery. Good leadership has developed teachers' skills at evaluating their own and pupils' standards. There is close attention to standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, to the extent that the progress of younger pupils has not been monitored sufficiently. The governing body is enthusiastic and involved in the life of the school. Governors' monitoring of curricular provision is improving and their contribution to financial management is very good. By ensuring thorough application of principles to ensure resources and services are the best possible value, the headteacher and governors are achieving very efficient use of all resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children's enjoyment of school. • The progress pupils make. • Pupils' very good behaviour. • The standard of teaching. • The way the school handles any of their problems or concerns. • The school's high expectations. • The leadership and management. • That pupils are encouraged to be mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type and amount of homework. • The information received about progress. • How the school works together with parents. |

Inspectors endorse all the aspects of the school that please parents, although the school's expectations of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 could be higher. On the evidence provided by the school, the areas in which parents seek improvement are generally covered well by the school and parents' concerns are largely unfounded. Parents do, however, require more information about the organisation of mixed-age classes and greater assurance about the way work is presented in order to meet the differing needs of age and ability groups. Those parents who expressed concern about the timing of instrumental lessons are right to question the possibility of pupils missing important class lessons. While the school has no control over the visiting times of peripatetic teachers, there is evidence that pupils are not always brought up to date on what they have missed. Formal arrangements for meeting parents to discuss pupils' progress are satisfactory and all teachers accompany classes to the playground gate at the end of the school day, thus making themselves available for informal consultation with parents. Homework provision is satisfactory although there are some inconsistencies in the regularity with which homework is set.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The most recent National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of each key stage in 1999, show that standards have fallen in several subjects since the previous inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, the percentages of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above were below the national average in reading, above average in writing, average in mathematics and above average in science. The school's analysis of these results indicates that boys' reading and writing standards were below those of girls and this weakness is being addressed by improved teaching approaches. The percentages of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 were below the national average in reading and science, average in mathematics and above average in writing. The results over the last four years shows standards to be above average overall in these subjects but there is a clear trend of falling standards each year.
2. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, the percentages attaining Level 4 or above in English, and those reaching Level 5, were above the national average. Results in mathematics matched the national averages in both categories. In science, the percentage reaching Level 4 or above was above average, but the percentage attaining Level 5 was below average. When looking at the results for the past four years, the English results show improvement. Both mathematics and science show improvement from 1998 to 1999 but results in these subjects have not reached the levels evident at the time of the previous inspection.
3. The school's own analysis of each year's results at Key Stage 2 results explains the fluctuations. Each group of pupils, taking the tests, has varied in terms of numbers, and in the proportion of those with special educational needs. The latter, in particular, explains why results have fallen in some years but risen in others. Teachers' assessments have accurately reflected pupils' test results and there has been a close match between what the school has predicted and what has been achieved each year. Teacher assessment has been less accurate at Key Stage 1 and little attention has been paid to the regular fall in standards. This is a weakness in the school's otherwise good procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards. The targets that have been set for Key Stage 2 test results in the next three years are realistic and take account of the regular tracking of pupils progress which is used to predict the potential achievements of individual pupils. Targets for the current year are for the proportions of pupils achieving Level 4, or above, to be 76 per cent in both English and mathematics. These are sufficiently challenging as 26 per cent of Year 6 pupils are on the register of special educational needs.
4. In the comparison with similar schools, which uses the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals as the indicator of pupils in similar circumstances, results generally compare less favourably than with the national picture. At Key Stage 1, reading results were well below the average for these schools while writing and mathematics were below average. At Key Stage 2, English matched the average, mathematics was below average, and science was well below average.
5. Children under five are likely to attain standards that are above the expectations of children at the age of five in all areas of their learning. Their attainment is above average on entry and they make good progress. This maintenance of standards that are above expectations is continued by many of the pupils in Year 1. However, pupils currently in Year 2 are only in line to achieve standards in mathematics and science similar to the current national averages. These pupils' standards in English are slightly below average overall due to present standards of writing.

6. Throughout the school, all pupils have individual targets for improvement that are agreed for each term. In Key Stage 2, pupils maintain steady progress towards achievement of targets in all classes and in Year 6 pupils are in line to achieve the expected standards in English, mathematics and science, despite 26 per cent of Year 6 being on the register of pupils with special educational needs and not expected to reach Level 4. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the specific targets set for them. Similarly, the progress of the few pupils with English as an additional language is good. The progress of more able pupils is variable and is very dependent on the planning and provision of learning activities that are appropriately challenging. Consequently, some of these pupils are making very good progress due to a teacher's high expectations, as in the standards expected in Year 6 individual research projects. Conversely, where more able pupils are simply required to do the same work as all other pupils in a class, with no tasks to extend their knowledge or understanding, their progress is unsatisfactory. This reflects the situation found at the time of the previous inspection.
7. At the end of both key stages, pupils' standards in information and communications technology are in line with expectations. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils successfully use word-processing and other computer skills to communicate their ideas clearly through text and pictures. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good use of information from sources such as the Internet or a CD-ROM, to extend their work and knowledge in subjects such as geography, history and art. In religious education, pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards in line with the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions is satisfactory for their age.
8. Pupils at both key stages are achieving very consistent standards between subjects and in all other subjects and their attainment is in line with expectations for their age. The exception is art in which standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below expectations, representing a fall in standards since the last inspection. Since that previous inspection, standards have been maintained across the curriculum, including the above average standards in music. There is, however, one visible trend relating to achievement that results from the requirement for mixed-age classes which is that, where pupils are in the younger age group in a class, standards are generally higher than those achieved by the same age group when it is the older. The limited awareness of this difference is a weakness in the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of standards.
9. A curriculum development since the previous inspection has been the successful inclusion of a programme of environmental education. Pupils show very good awareness of environmental issues and work hard to increase their knowledge and understanding. They have a mature understanding of the importance of the recycling of materials, sustainability and energy conservation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. They have continued to improve since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be good, and these aspects are now a major strength of the school. Pupils respond well to the strong Christian ethos of a caring community. These features help to promote pupils' progress and to improve standards of attainment. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved, they are confident and relate easily with adults. They are keen to come to school and are enthusiastic about their learning opportunities. They apply themselves well in the classroom and they sustain their concentration. Inspectors confirm the view of most parents that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible.

11. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They listen attentively and are keen to answer questions. They show an enthusiasm for activities and quickly settle to their work. Pupils work well together when required and take an interest in each other's activities. This is very successful in creating the positive, caring learning atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils with special educational needs particularly benefit from the emphasis on co-operation, for example, when pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 work together at appropriate levels in the literacy hour. Such arrangements lead to confident, positive learning.
12. The personal and social development of children under five is very good. The children settle quickly into school routines and behave well. They are developing positive relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. They are eager to come to school and become involved in the learning activities planned for them.
13. In both key stages, pupils behave well and show a positive attitude to learning. Pupils know the rules well because they helped to write them. The *Children's Charter*, is a very good example of the school's positive approach to behaviour management; for example, pupils are encouraged not to run in the school by the words 'thank you for moving safely in the school'. There is a strong sense of family in the school and an understanding that belonging usually carries with it a requirement to conform to expected values and behaviour. This is regularly reinforced, for example, through discussion in religious education lessons. The pupils enjoy the structure of literacy and numeracy lessons and most are very clear about what they are learning. They are keen to collect rewards for good behaviour and good work. They work hard to improve their work and respond well to targets set for them. Presentation is usually neat, for example in mathematics and science, although teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting are not consistent and this mars written work in English. Pupils behave well in the dining room and at playtimes, when older pupils take good care of the youngest children. They are polite and courteous, holding doors open without being prompted and enquiring if they can help. They enjoy conversations with each other and adults and listen with interest to what is being said, for example when pupils in Year 3 talked about the organisations to which they belong. No pupils have been excluded, and no incidence of bullying was observed during the inspection. Pupils are aware of the procedures that are followed if bullying occurs and have confidence that bullies will be justly dealt with.
14. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are excellent. Pupils respond well to the praise, support and encouragement their teachers give them. When working together, pupils take turns, share equipment and exchange ideas and opinions. They are eager to learn about other faiths and cultures and respect the values and beliefs of others.
15. Pupils' personal development is very good. In Year 6, pupils take on responsibilities such as selling snacks at playtime and help to supervise the youngest children. In lessons, pupils work independently with the minimum of support, such as when they effectively use dictionaries, thesauruses and CD-ROMS to access information.
16. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils are punctual arriving at school and a prompt start is made to lessons, ensuring that the maximum amount of time is made available for pupils to learn. There is no unauthorised absence which, again, has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good with over half the lessons observed being good or better and 17 per cent being very good or better. Three lessons were unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in planning. Standards have been maintained and further

improved since the previous inspection, for example, the percentage of lessons judged to be very good has nearly trebled.

18. The teaching of children under five is good overall. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, but with some weaknesses. Although there is evidence of good and sometimes very good practice, occasional unsatisfactory lessons impact on overall standards. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is never less than satisfactory and is good or better in three quarters of lessons.
19. Teachers know their pupils well and most lessons are taught in a relaxed but purposeful manner, helping pupils to gain confidence and a commitment to high standards. Teachers use questions well to consolidate pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Lessons are carefully prepared and linked to planning, which has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers work together well as a team, and often plan joint activities, such as a Celt day, held for pupils in Years 4 and 5, to consolidate their historical knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, teachers are confident and knowledgeable; there is a brisk pace to the work, lessons are well organised and work is well matched to pupils' individual needs and abilities. In such lessons, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress. In good lessons, pupils are actively involved in their own learning and this motivates them well, for example, when pupils enthusiastically conducted science investigations to find ways of purifying water. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when lessons were sometimes too prescriptive and pupils did not have enough opportunities to discover things for themselves. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and contribute significantly to the quality of learning. Teachers are implementing the literacy strategy well and, although the numeracy strategy is in its infancy, there is evidence of improvement in the teaching of mathematics. Pupils enjoy these lessons and rise to the challenge well. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to them, working conscientiously and co-operatively.
20. In the occasional unsatisfactory lesson, activities are not well matched to individual pupils' needs and not all pupils are sure what they have to do. In such lessons, assessment is not used well to inform planning for individuals and pupils with varying ability are given the same work to do. When this happens, the brightest pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Extension work for such pupils is usually to do more of the same. Similarly, the least confident pupils sometimes find the work too exacting and their attention wanders. On these very rare occasions, there is less harmony in the classroom and pupils produce insufficient work in the lesson.
21. In the lessons seen, teaching of English, science, history and physical education gave good learning opportunities. Teaching in the other subjects of mathematics, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, and music was satisfactory and led to pupils making sound progress. No direct teaching of information technology was seen as this was timetabled outside the period of the inspection.
22. Teachers' subject knowledge is good throughout the key stages. This leads to confident teaching and clear explanations. Basic skills are taught well in Key Stage 2 but there are some weaknesses in Key Stage 1, where planning does not always take fully into account the different stages of learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory across the key stages, although there are variations in the use of assessment to inform such planning. In one instance, planning was aided well by the use of assessment when a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 was re-planned due to pupils' lack of progress in the previous lesson. The school takes account of the constraints imposed by mixed-age classes, and teachers are generally successful in ensuring that the methods they use enables all pupils to make maximum progress. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods, particularly in Key Stage 2, which motivates all pupils. Management of pupils is very good. Good discipline, well-

organised lessons and efficient and imaginative use of resources helps pupils to make good progress.

23. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, with the result that these pupils generally make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. However, withdrawal of pupils from lessons such as art for support in literacy often causes pupils to miss the same lesson week on week, and this is unsatisfactory. There is evidence that pupils with English as an additional language are helped to make good progress, although there are currently no pupils in the school who need additional support in the acquisition of language.
24. Good marking of pupils' work helps pupils to recognise their achievements and understand what they have to do to improve. However, there are wide variations in the quality of marking and isolated instances of a good body of work not being marked at all, even where there is a clear need for guidance.
25. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning, particularly that of pupils with special educational needs. However, there are inconsistencies in the regularity with which homework is set and pupils do not have a consistent routine for the completion of homework tasks. Some parents are concerned about this, and it is a valid criticism.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

26. The curriculum for pupils is satisfactory. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, and religious education follows the Local Agreed Syllabus. Health, drugs and sex education are taught with the help of the school nurse and the police. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, although this results in the time allocation for the foundation subjects being reduced. Appropriate activities are set to meet the needs of the different age groups within the class. As a result of reduced curriculum time, and the necessity for a mixed age class structure, history and geography are taught using a two-year cycle of topics. This results in some pupils missing areas of knowledge, and there is not enough emphasis on a systematic development of skills in these subjects to ensure that there is a sufficient progression of learning.
27. The information technology curriculum has improved since the last inspection, as a greater emphasis has been placed on the subject, and teacher expertise and resources have improved. These developments are helping to improve pupils' standards. The curriculum has other strengths. Pupils in Key Stage 1 go swimming in the summer term, which enhances the physical education curriculum, and prepares them well for swimming lessons in Key Stage 2. The music curriculum is enhanced by the use of a specialist teacher, and good opportunities are given for pupils to learn to play musical instruments. However, pupils miss the same lessons each week, and the work missed is not always covered. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, but they are regularly withdrawn from lessons such as history, which adversely affects their experience of the whole curriculum. These are weaknesses.
28. The curriculum for the children in the nursery is planned appropriately, using the recommended areas of learning. Suitable activities are set so that the children work towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes¹. In reception, children are taught in the same class as pupils in Year 1, and activities are planned to meet their needs and abilities. Although lessons are planned under subject headings, the teacher is well aware of the links with the early years' curriculum, and tasks are planned appropriately to cover the areas of learning. The policy for children under five has been updated

¹ The nationally agreed goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five.

since the last inspection, and now relates to the appropriate curriculum for young children. This was a weakness identified at the last inspection which has been successfully addressed. The limitations of the accommodation for these young children reduce the opportunities available for structured play.

29. The curriculum in Key Stage 2 is enriched by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils, and all the staff are engaged in these activities. There is equality of opportunity for all pupils to join in these activities. For example, girls are encouraged to play football.
30. The school has good community links. The Cannock Rangers are involved in an ambitious scheme to redevelop the school grounds to give greater opportunities for the pupils to study the environment. The environmental awareness of the pupils has been considerably heightened since the introduction of the 'ECO' project, as can be seen by the 'Tree of Promises' displayed in the hall. Good use is made of trips to places of interest, such as the airport, and Shugborough Hall, to enhance pupils' learning through first-hand experience. The oldest pupils benefit from a residential trip each year. The school has many visitors who work with the pupils. For example, a parent talked to pupils in Key Stage 1 about Hindu festivals; a brass ensemble provided pupils with good opportunities to experience live music; and a theatre company involved the whole school when they were Romans and Celts for the day. The school has effective links with the receiving schools, and there are good induction procedures in place for the youngest children.
31. The opportunities given for pupils to cultivate their personal development are very good. This was a strength of the school at the last inspection, and remains so. The school has a strong Christian ethos, which permeates school life. Pupils say prayers at the end of sessions, and are encouraged to value the beliefs and ideas of others. Spirituality is well developed in the curriculum, for example, when pupils in a music lesson were asked to describe the qualities of music in terms of how they felt. Statutory requirements for collective worship are fully met.
32. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. There is a strong sense of a family community. For example, the oldest pupils help the youngest at playtimes, and this sense of co-operation is developed well in assemblies, where different examples of co-operation are effectively explored. The school promotes excellent caring behaviour, where pupils are aware of the needs of others. The principles of right and wrong permeate all aspects of school life, and pupils are honest and trustworthy. For example, the older pupils run the school tuck shop, and take complete responsibility for all the monies involved. Relationships are excellent, and pupils work co-operatively in lessons without fuss or disagreement. The needs of the whole school community are developed through a pupils' committee that considers ways to improve the school environment for the benefit of all. There are very good opportunities for pupils to consider the effect their actions have on the wider community, and the ways they can look after the environment through, for example, by recycling goods.
33. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is good. They develop a good understanding of their own culture through the curriculum in subjects such as history, English, and music. Good opportunities are given to extend pupils' multicultural education through religious knowledge, where they learn about other world faiths, and geography where they learn about cultures in other parts of the world. The school has increased the level of multicultural resources, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is very good. It enhances the quality of education that is provided by the school and has a positive impact on attainment and progress. The positive situation found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. All members of the school community work together to provide a very caring environment in which the pupils feel secure. Staff have very good knowledge of the pupils as individuals and this enables them to respond sensitively and positively to their needs. The resulting supportive atmosphere within the school is conducive to learning. Relationships amongst all members of the school community are excellent. The pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice.
35. Mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They provide good support during lunchtimes which has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. First-aid and fire safety arrangements are satisfactory and the school provides a safe and supportive environment in classrooms and public areas that facilitates learning. The school's procedures for dealing with accidents are secure. No health and safety hazards were observed during the inspection except for a slight potential risk presented by the inadequately guarded pond area.
36. The school's procedures for child protection are very good. They meet statutory requirements. The designated member of staff has received relevant training and is suitably experienced to properly undertake these responsibilities. Class teachers and support staff are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge.
37. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Records for attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Procedures for recording unauthorised absence are rigorous and there are good procedures to deal effectively with any unexpected absence.
38. The measures that are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. Rewards and sanctions are well understood and accepted by pupils. The procedures allow the pupils to take advantage of the opportunities for learning presented to them in an environment in which there is an absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, set a good example which encourages learning.
39. The school's arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory overall. Informal arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development, which benefit from teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals, are good. The procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils needing special support are well defined. Good links exist with outside support services that contribute well to the work of the pupils with special educational needs.
40. The school has developed comprehensive procedures for recording teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, including those necessary to identify and track higher-attaining pupils, or those with special needs. However, at the present stage of development, much of the recording is in the form of tick sheets with insufficient diagnostic comment. As a consequence, teachers' planning is informed more by schemes of work than information about pupils' attainment, and work is not always matched carefully enough to pupils' learning needs. Portfolios of pupils' work form part of, and complement, the school's assessment procedures. However, there is a lack of annotated work with agreed levels of attainment to help teachers carry out formal assessments consistently across the school. The school's marking policy has yet to be consistently applied.

41. Statutory assessment and recording procedures, including the use of optional end of year testing throughout the school, and termly testing in Year 6, are satisfactorily carried out. The results are discussed by staff to identify weaknesses in attainment, in teaching or the curriculum. The results of these discussions are used to help identify individual targets for improvement, which are shared with pupils and parents. One result of the regular formal testing, particularly in Year 6, is that teachers' assessment of each pupil's attainment compared with national standards at the end of each key stage, is generally accurate. However, there is a need to refine the use of the information gained to better identify pupils' needs for their next stage of learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents are very supportive of the school. They are satisfied with the education the school provides for their children. The response to the parents' questionnaire was very positive and those parents attending the pre-inspection parents' meeting were appreciative of the provision for their children's welfare and education. Parents think it is a caring school that encourages the development of positive values and good attitudes, and provides well for their children. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.
43. Parents are comfortable approaching the school when they have worries or concerns. They consider that the school works closely with parents and keeps them informed about what the school is doing and the progress made by their children. A small number of parents have concerns about some aspects of the school's provision. However, apart from a lack of comparative attainment information in pupils' annual reports, except at the end of each key stage, no inspection evidence was found to support the negative views.
44. The school has good links with parents that provide enrichment to pupils' learning experiences. The positive features found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Parental support at home in many aspects of the curriculum, especially in reading and supporting information technology, is good. The home-school links have recently been strengthened by the introduction of a home-school agreement and parents are encouraged to support their children at home from the time they start school. Target areas for specific help to be given at home are identified, which cement relationships and help to ensure progress is made.
45. Parents and other helpers are warmly welcomed into school. Those that are able to help are used well, contributing positively to the support of pupils in class and elsewhere. The direct involvement of parents and other volunteers in the work of the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. This is particularly evident in reading, information technology and environmental education. There is positive involvement of parents, and pupils, in social and fund raising activities. A committed Parent, Teacher and Friends' organisation provides financial support that is much appreciated by the school. By their direct involvement, parents have a considerable impact on the work of the school that directly assists the progress made by their children.
46. The quality of information provided by the school varies. It is satisfactory overall with much of it good or better. The school prospectus is a very well produced, comprehensive and user-friendly document that gives parents very clear guidance on the work of the school, especially about curriculum matters and the school's expectations of parents and pupils. It fully meets statutory reporting requirements. Regular newsletters and other items of information sent to parents are well planned, informative and helpful. They are supported by meetings to explain curriculum matters, such as the national literacy and numeracy strategies, regular parents'

evenings to discuss progress, and the school's 'open door' policy that provides for parents seeking information to be dealt with sensitively and effectively.

47. The governors' annual report to parents briefly reviews the work of the school but is not a particularly stimulating document that suffers in comparison with the quality and presentation of the prospectus. The 1999 report has some minor reporting omissions and misses opportunities to capture the attention of parents, or to properly celebrate the school's considerable successes.
48. Pupils' annual reports meet reporting requirements. They provide a satisfactory summary of pupils' attainment and progress and are appreciated by parents. However, whilst the reports provide appropriate information on what the pupils' have done and can do they do not provide parents with sufficient information on how attainment compares with national expectations except at the end of each key stage.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Since his appointment, shortly after the previous inspection, the headteacher has developed very effective, purposeful leadership of the school. He is very ably supported by the senior teacher and they share a clear sense of educational direction for the school's progress. The headteacher's awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses has led to clear priorities for the school's development and thorough planning of how the school must move forward. The headteacher's good management skills and very effective day-to-day management of the school contribute significantly to the high quality of relationships at all levels and the development of a shared sense of purpose. A particular strength is the system developed for tracking the progress of individual pupils. Through his management of this system, the headteacher is able to monitor and advise on the learning needs of each pupil in the school.
50. The school's aims and values are inherent in all its work and, following the example set by the headteacher and the senior teacher, all staff show high levels of concern for pupils' welfare. There is thus a very positive ethos that reflects the school's commitment to creating a secure, caring environment for all pupils in which they are helped to achieve high standards in their academic and personal development.
51. The school's equal opportunities policy is thorough and operates successfully in most areas. There are, however, occasions when groups of pupils are denied full access to the whole curriculum. This occurs with pupils having instrumental tuition from visiting teachers and those who have additional support in literacy. This specialist teaching requires pupils to be withdrawn from class lessons and not all class teachers ensure that the pupils are given the opportunity to catch up on what has been missed.
52. Management of the curriculum is the overall responsibility of the headteacher but there are co-ordinators in place for all subjects. The headteacher has successfully introduced a range of procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work. This involves all staff in their roles as subject co-ordinators and there has been good improvement in this area since the previous inspection. The strengths of these arrangements are the ongoing review of the curriculum, that enables new initiatives to be incorporated into what is taught, and the long term tracking of pupils' progress in their learning. The monitoring of teaching is very successful due to the focus on very specific skills. Observations that concentrated on teachers' use of questioning have resulted in this being a particular strength that was evident in many of the lessons seen during the inspection. A further strength is the creation of opportunities for co-ordinators of high priority subjects such as English, mathematics and information technology to work with colleagues in support and advisory roles. At present, there are still some weaknesses to be overcome. There is insufficient monitoring of what is being learned by pupils in

the same year group who are in different classes. Co-ordinators have an overview of the topics being taught but there is insufficient checking that pupils in each year group are learning the same skills. The downward trend in test results at the end of Key Stage 1 has received some but not enough attention.

53. The management of special educational needs provision within the school is good. There is accurate identification of pupils' needs and monitoring of progress is very conscientiously carried out by the co-ordinator. The programme of work is delivered very effectively by high quality support staff.
54. The governing body provides good support for the work of the school and individual members visit the school to assist in a variety of ways. Through their visits and liaison with co-ordinators, governors are very familiar with the school's working methods. There is systematic monitoring of the school's developments by the governing body through direct observation and the reports received from teaching staff. The school development plan provides a sound framework with appropriate detail for the current year. This detail includes a range of targets that are prioritised. The financial and resource implications are identified, including the demands on personnel and detailed costings and success criteria are included. The governing body has carefully monitored the action plan that followed the last inspection and parents have been regularly informed of progress of the subsequent action plan.
55. The governing body works closely with the headteacher to plan the school's financial strategy and monitor its budget. The financial planning process is very well organised. There is prudent use of financial resources that effectively combines the immediate needs of the school, to ensure that appropriate provision is made for pupils' learning, whilst at the same time ensuring that a realistic level of financial reserves are maintained to support the school's detailed forward planning priorities. Although, at present, reserve levels are high they are necessary to meet planned future demands upon the school budget. The headteacher and governors are very aware of the need to provide as high a standard of educational provision as possible and they are planning to release the accumulated reserves, and make other changes, to ensure that the school's educational provision is sustainable and that its educational targets are met. There is no evidence that present pupils are denied access to any aspect of the curriculum or associated learning resources because of the present level of reserves.
56. There is good liaison between governors, the headteacher and staff in formulating the budget. Governors take an active part and feel ownership of the budget and the strategies behind it. They fully explore all options open to them and take decisions, even unpalatable ones, with confidence because of their individual expertise and the objective information provided to them by the headteacher. There is very effective corporate decision making that ensures that the financial resources available to the school, which are lower than the national average for schools of similar type, are properly targeted to improving standards throughout the school.
57. The specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, is well targeted. Its use by the school has a positive impact on the quality of learning provision for the pupils who are supported, such as those who benefited from the provision of booster classes to achieve Level 4 in last years National Curriculum tests.
58. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies. In addition to the support of administration activities, where computerised systems are well used, the school has moved positively to embrace the Internet, with its own web site, and there is good use of multimedia throughout the school.
59. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are good. Good use is made of the information available from the school's

computerised management system and there are effective procedures in place that allow the school secretary to positively support the work of the school. The school's most recent financial audit was satisfactory. Its few recommendations have been effectively implemented.

60. The governing body uses the four principles of compare, challenge, consult, and compete well, to ensure that the school receives the best value from its resources. Targets are set to continuously raise standards, and the school's spending is evaluated to ensure that the most economic, effective and efficient services are provided for the pupils and staff
61. The school is well staffed by teachers who are appropriately qualified to teach effectively in the nursery and primary phases. The experienced classroom and welfare assistants give effective support in the classes. They work closely with teachers in organising activities, and contribute directly to pupils' progress. The expertise and effective working partnership of the teacher and nursery nurse with responsibility for the youngest children ensure that those children receive a good start to school life. A part-time specialist teacher is employed to teach music to Key Stage 2 pupils, and the quality of her expertise has a very positive impact on the learning in music.
62. The headteacher and staff are regularly appraised, but teachers are not set individual targets other than those arising from observation of their teaching. Training needs are identified and offered according to the school's priorities listed in the school's development plan. Recently, the staff development has appropriately concentrated on the implementation of the numeracy strategy.
63. The outside facilities of the school are good, with spacious fields, hard playing areas and facilities for environmental study. The environmental awareness of the pupils is enhanced by these facilities which are soon to be developed further. The accommodation is generally satisfactory, but for the youngest pupils it is unsatisfactory. These pupils share a cramped classroom with pupils in Year 1, and there are insufficient opportunities for the children under five to experience the structured play that children of this age require. There is no separate secure play area for the nursery or reception children, who play with pupils from the whole of Key Stage 1. In spite of the unsatisfactory facilities for the children in the nursery and those under five in the reception class, all the children achieve well, and the staff make the best use of the accommodation available. Resources for the children under five are limited, and there are insufficient appropriate games to support language, literacy and mathematics. The provision of large 'ride-on' toys to enhance the children's physical development has improved since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to improve the standards of work and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- θ further develop long term curriculum planning to establish the step by step progression in pupils' learning of the skills that can be learned in each subject, (*paragraphs 26, 52, 84, 99, 110, 113, 130*);
- θ ensure that there is more specific assessment of individual pupils' learning in order to identify and meet pupils' needs in the next stage of their learning, paying particular attention to pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, (*paragraphs, 5, 6, 20, 22, 40, 41, 52, 82, 83, 84, 92, 98, 103, 117, 130*);
- θ review and develop the facilities for the youngest children in the school in order that their needs are fully met, (*paragraphs 28, 63, 66*).

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- to ensure rigour in the marking of pupils' work so that they are more aware of achievements, how to overcome weaknesses, and targets for improvement, (*paragraphs 13, 24*);
- to establish and maintain higher expectations of the standard of handwriting throughout the school, (*paragraph 76*);
- to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum, (*paragraphs 27, 23, 51, 122*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 31 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 40 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| | 17 | 33 | 41 | 9 | | |

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y[6] |
|--|---------|-----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 1 | 137 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 0 | 14 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | Y[R – Y6] |
|---|---------|-----------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 21 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 3 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 5 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.0 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 1999 | 13 | 12 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 9 | 11 | 12 |
| | Girls | 11 | 12 | 11 |
| | Total | 20 | 23 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 80(94) | 92(94) | 92(95) |
| | National | 82 (80) | 83 (81) | 87 (84) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| | Girls | 11 | 11 | 12 |
| | Total | 20 | 23 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 80(94) | 92(94) | 96(94) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85) | 87 (86) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 1999 | 16 | 17 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 11 | 15 |
| | Girls | 16 | 13 | 15 |
| | Total | 28 | 24 | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 85(63) | 73(53) | 91(63) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 10 | 14 |
| | Girls | 15 | 13 | 15 |
| | Total | 28 | 23 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 85(70) | 70(66) | 88(80) |
| | National | 68 (65) | 69 (65) | 75 (72) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 3 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 2 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 131 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 0 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.8 |
| Average class size | 27.4 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 73.25 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 0 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number of education support staff | 0 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 0 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 0 |
|--------------------------------|---|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 1998/99 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 230,628 |
| Total expenditure | 216,308 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,395 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 14,690 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 29,010 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 137 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 76 |
| Percentage of questionnaires returned | 55 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 64 | 32 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 47 | 45 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 57 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 32 | 53 | 13 | 0 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 57 | 38 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 38 | 46 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 57 | 34 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 66 | 33 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 43 | 37 | 17 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 45 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 57 | 38 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 49 | 26 | 9 | 0 | 16 |

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

65. Children start in the nursery class, mornings only, when they are four. They join the reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. The curriculum for the nursery children is planned appropriately, using the recommended areas of learning. Suitable activities are set so that the children work towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The reception children form part of Class 1, which contains reception and Year 1 pupils, and, although lessons are planned under subject headings, the teacher is well aware of the links with the early years' curriculum, and tasks are planned appropriately to cover the areas of learning. Children are introduced to the early stages of the National Curriculum, as they become ready. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of abilities, which are, overall, above average.
66. At the time of the inspection there was only one nursery child in school, and he was looked after by the nursery nurse, in the reception class. This is not an ideal arrangement, but the best use is made of the situation, and the child receives an appropriate curriculum. Increased numbers of children attend the nursery in the summer term and facilities, such as the school hall, have to be used to accommodate these children. This is unsatisfactory.

Personal and social development

67. Children under five enter school with well-developed personal and social skills. The children are polite, behave well, and respond positively to the caring ethos of each class. The teacher and nursery nurse work closely together, and both have consistently high expectations of the children's abilities and behaviour. Relationships between adults and children are excellent, and this ensures that children enjoy coming to school, settle to class routines quickly, and are clear about what is right and wrong in relation to school expectations. They are interested in their learning, develop good levels of concentration, persevere well, and show pride in their achievements. They change for physical activity lessons independently, and tidy their clothes away neatly. However, the teacher does not formally plan for this area of learning, and there are missed opportunities for children to choose activities, and take some responsibility for their own learning. The timetable is very structured, and there are few opportunities for role-play, or for children to use the home corner for co-operative and imaginative play. The children make satisfactory progress, and, by the age of five, achieve above average standards in this area of learning.

Language and literacy

68. The children enjoy books, handle them correctly with due care, and appropriately 'read' stories using the pictures. They talk confidently about the books they have read, and predict what might happen in a story. They know that print is read from left to right, and the majority of the children read, at least, the key words from their reading books. An appropriate emphasis is placed on reading in the early years, and children regularly take books home to share with parents. This has a very positive impact on learning, and the children make good progress in their reading, with some children attaining the early levels of the National Curriculum. The teacher and nursery nurse insist on the correct formation of the letters, to enable the children to write legibly. The teacher provides many opportunities for the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example during story time, and during class discussions, when children confidently share their experiences with adults and other children. The teacher uses every opportunity to develop the children's vocabulary, and insists on the correct use of technical language in mathematics and science lessons. Most children can write their names and hold a pencil correctly, although there are a few children

whose dexterity is not sufficiently developed to enable them to form their letters accurately. Some children 'copy-write', and a few more able children are starting to write freely. The children easily attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes for language and literacy by the time they are five, and some children are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum.

Mathematics

69. Children enter the reception class with above average abilities. They count and order numbers correctly to at least ten, and recognise simple two- and three-dimensional shapes. Some brighter children can count to one hundred. Children add numbers to ten and record their sums, using mathematical symbols for plus, minus and equals. The teaching of mathematics is good, and the numeracy strategy is being used well to deliver the mathematics curriculum. The teacher provides good opportunities for all children to develop their learning by providing appropriate activities to challenge all ability groups, building on their previous knowledge. The teacher works alongside children in lessons effectively, and explains mistakes clearly which enables children to understand and make progress. This good teaching has a positive impact on learning, and by the time children are five, they have exceeded the expected standards for mathematics.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children talk about where they live and their families. They examine Victorian toys and compare them with modern ones. They recognise what makes them look old, by using clues such as the wear and tear on the teddy. They plant sunflower and cress seeds, and know that they need water to grow. They know that static electricity enables a balloon to stick to the wall. They confidently use the computer, and accurately use the mouse to point to given items on the screen. The teacher gives clear instructions to the children when a new program is used, so that they can use it independently. Little teaching of this area of learning was seen during the inspection, but the teacher uses every opportunity to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the home corner is used as a garden centre, and the children are encouraged to look closely at objects using a magnifying glass. The children attain at least the expected standard by the age of five.

Physical development

71. The children are given good opportunities for physical development. They have two lessons a week, when they are given opportunities to develop their movements and perform simple skills. Children move confidently, with good co-ordination and control and an increasing awareness of space. They are aware of the effect exercise has on the body, and show amazement at the beating of their hearts. Teaching is good, with good opportunities given for the children to develop curling and stretching movements in a sequence. The teacher has high expectations of behaviour and ability, thus ensuring that the children's learning is continually developed. However, the use of a tape in one lesson was an inappropriate method to develop young children's skills, as it proceeded at too fast a pace giving insufficient opportunities for the children to practise new movements. The children handle tools, such as scissors, brushes, glue spreaders, cutters and rolling pins, with good control, and effectively join together building blocks to make a tall tower. Attainment by the age of five is above average.

Creative development

72. There was little evidence seen during the inspection of children's creative development. Children use dough and paint well to print different shapes, and use a folding technique to produce a symmetrical pattern. They paint pictures of themselves, and are given opportunities to mix colours. Although a range of activities

are provided, there are limited opportunities for children to use their imagination in their creative work. Progress is satisfactory, and children attain the expected standards by the age of five.

ENGLISH

73. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests showed that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading was below the national average when compared to all schools, and well below average in comparison with similar schools.
74. At the time of the previous inspection, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2, and above, was higher than the national average, although the percentage achieving the higher Level 3 was in line with the national picture. In the most recent tests, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard of Level 2 and above matched that of other schools, nationally, but the percentage achieving the higher Level 3 was below average.
75. In the 1999 tests, standards in writing were above average when compared to all schools but below average compared to similar schools. Girls outperformed boys in both reading and writing, which matches the national trend. When results from the past three years are taken together, the performance of pupils in reading is above the national average and in writing it is well above. However, this masks a steady downward trend. Although standards were high at the time of the previous inspection, subsequent annual test results show a sharp drop in reading and a steady fall in writing. Inspection evidence shows that current standards are just below average.
76. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. This was the case at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 1 speak clearly and listen carefully. Most use a good range of vocabulary to express their ideas. By the time they are seven, pupils achieve standards in reading that are about average for their age. Most can retell a story accurately. They read simple text fluently and apply a range of strategies to make sense of unfamiliar words. There are wide differences in ability however, and some pupils have no clear grasp of how to 'sound out' words they don't know. Most understand what they have read and are beginning to gain an understanding of how non-fiction books are organised. The more able pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately, and understand the main points of the story. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information but have no experience of using a library to find books for information. Writing skills are below average in Key Stage 1. Handwriting is unsatisfactory and, although pupils with above average ability are able to write accurately punctuated sentences, they are unable to achieve the higher levels in writing because they have not learned to join their handwriting. Spelling shows a developing understanding of spelling patterns but inconsistent marking of misspelled key words, particularly in other subjects, is slowing learning for many pupils.
77. Results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that standards in English were well above average when compared nationally, and with similar schools. There have been significant fluctuations in results over time, with a sharp rise in standards in 1997, followed by an equally sharp drop in 1998. There was a further significant rise in 1999, when pupils' performance in both reading and writing was well above average and the percentage achieving the higher Level 5 almost doubled that of the previous year. This represents an improvement since the previous report, when the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 was only in line with that of other schools.
78. Girls significantly outperformed the boys in the tests. The school explains these variations by showing that there are significant year on year differences in the ability of groups of pupils taking the tests at the end of both key stages. For example, there is currently a large proportion of girls with special educational needs in Year 6, and this is expected to be reflected in the forthcoming test results at the end of Key Stage 2.

79. By the time they are eleven, pupils have good speaking and listening skills, which are reflected in their writing. They listen carefully to the teachers and to each other and show, by their responses, a good level of understanding and maturity in their ability to develop a conversation. Reading skills are about average, although the pupils' understanding of how a library is organised is still below average. They are beginning to make inferences, for example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 solve a mystery based on the work of Arthur Conan Doyle. They are developing the skills to scan quickly for information and have a good understanding of how non-fiction books are organised. The previous inspection made opportunities for personal research a key issue and the school has addressed this by providing more non-fiction books and computer software. Pupils research personal projects at home, and school, and the quality of their finished work is good. However, they have limited experience of the school library and the classification system is a mystery to them.
80. Writing is much improved by the time pupils are eleven. They write well for a good range of purposes and audiences and use the computer regularly to structure their writing. Sentences are grammatically correct and reflect pupils' good oral skills. The school's literacy strategy is having a positive effect on the range of writing produced, but there are no timetabled opportunities for pupils to further extend their writing. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have raised expectations regarding presentation of work but there is little attention to the teaching of handwriting and most pupils do not develop a consistent cursive script until their final year.
81. Pupils enjoy their literacy lessons very much. They rise to the challenge of guided reading well and show a pride in their achievements. As they move through the key stages, pupils develop a good level of independence and they concentrate for long periods of time. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are excellent. Pupils co-operate well in these lessons, and those with special educational needs are well supported by other pupils. Pupils are consistently very well behaved. This good behaviour underpins the progress they make.
82. The quality of teaching for English is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, with some weaknesses. It is consistently good in Key Stage 2, where the school's literacy strategy is well implemented and where teachers' own enthusiasm motivates pupils well. A warm family atmosphere promotes good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, teachers use skilful questions to consolidate and extend what pupils know and understand and to extend their learning. In the best lessons, teachers are confident and knowledgeable, explanations are excellent, resources are used well to stimulate pupils and relationships are excellent, providing a confident and positive atmosphere in which achievement flourishes. In these lessons, pupils concentrate for long periods of time and make very good progress. In the occasional unsatisfactory lesson, tasks are not always appropriately matched to individual ability and some pupils do not know what they are doing. In such lessons, pupils lose confidence and concentration and make very little progress. Teachers are generally dedicated and work hard to raise standards. For example, two teachers gave up personal spare time to provide booster classes for pupils who were close to achieving national averages prior to the 1999 National Curriculum tests.
83. The literacy hour is well planned and good practice is spilling over into other lessons, for example in a Year 2 science lesson, where pupils had many opportunities to consolidate and extend their speaking and listening skills. This good practice also provides teachers with opportunities to assess pupils' understanding of subject related vocabulary. Assessment is used well in the reception class, when planning well-targeted activities for the youngest children, but there are some weaknesses in the use of assessment in Key Stages 1 and 2 that, sometimes, leads to a slower rate of learning. For example, pupils of all abilities in the mixed age classes are often given exactly the same task to complete and occasionally, the only challenge offered to the

brighter pupils is to do more of the same thing. Similarly, pupils who have difficulties in writing one sentence without support may be expected to complete three.

84. In the most recent Key Stage 1 tests, teachers' assessment of writing shows a significant discrepancy against actual test results, with the percentage of pupils likely to achieve Level 2 and above being seriously underestimated. Evidence from scrutiny of past work confirms low expectations for some pupils. The previous report criticised the lack of challenge for the more able pupils. Although evidence from tests shows that this situation has improved, there are still occasions when the brighter pupils are insufficiently challenged. This is particularly true in lessons such as history and religious education, where pupils in the mixed age, mixed ability classes often do the same writing activity.
85. Reading records are comprehensive and detailed, but do not always contain diagnostic comments to help individual pupils to move on. Occasionally, reading books are too easy and fail to match private reading habits. Marking of work is variable throughout the school, with both strengths and weaknesses. Occasionally, it is of a high quality and helps pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. More often, work is simply ticked, with an occasional positive comment. Where marking is weak, repeated mistakes are disregarded and sometimes work is not marked at all. Literacy lessons are monitored well by the headteacher, supported by the co-ordinator, to ensure the policy is put into practice, and to focus on specific areas for development.
86. Standardised assessment procedures for English are good and results from tests are rigorously analysed by senior staff. This evaluation helps the school to identify pupils in need of support and to set targets for groups of pupils and for individuals. For example, pupils who underachieved in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 receive extra support in literacy, which prepares them well for work in Key Stage 2. Daily spelling and reading activities support pupils with special educational needs well. Early identification of such pupils leads to carefully written individual education plans that contain achievable targets which are shared with parents and pupils and are regularly updated.
87. Since the previous inspection, considerable expenditure on books has improved provision. A new structured reading scheme accurately reflects modern society and group readers provide better opportunities for enjoyable learning. Although the range of class readers is narrow, home-school reading books provide a wider range of literature for pupils to experience. The quality of reading books throughout the school is satisfactory, although in Key Stage 2, books do not reflect a multicultural society sufficiently. Books in the library are well organised, but many are old and in poor condition. The library itself is underused.

MATHEMATICS

88. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' attainment was close to the national average. Compared with similar schools, attainment was judged to be below the average. A similar picture was recorded for results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence confirms that the current groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are in line to meet national expectations. Although there has been an improvement in standards recently by the end of Key Stage 2, there has been a considerable decline at the end of both key stages since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be well above the national average. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have been steadily falling since the last inspection. The school has analysed recent Key Stage 2 test results thoroughly, and identified strengths and weaknesses. The curriculum has been appropriately adjusted to give more time to the weak areas, and this is having a positive impact on current standards in Key Stage 2. There is no significant difference in attainment

between girls and boys. The National Numeracy Strategy gives pupils good opportunities to improve their abilities to find different simple ways for mental calculation, ensuring that they thoroughly understand mental processes. This, too, is having a positive impact on standards.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound foundation in mathematical skills and knowledge. They count accurately backwards and forwards to 100 and they correctly identify odd and even numbers. The more able pupils recognise the equivalence of different fractions; they place these fractions accurately on a number line. The most able pupils use their knowledge and mental calculations skills to solve problems. There is evidence that pupils recognise the common two- and three-dimensional shapes, can undertake simple shopping activities and measure, using non-standard units.
90. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to develop good mental recall and all have a good understanding of place value. Most work confidently to add, subtract multiply and divide four-digit numbers accurately. They understand simple fractions and most are beginning to understand their relationship with decimals. Pupils use their knowledge of number to find efficient ways to solve addition and multiplication problems; for example, by using their knowledge of factors to multiply two-digit numbers. They understand and use a range of mathematical vocabulary and are beginning to apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday situations and other areas of the curriculum. For example, they create frequency charts and graphs to record the results of their science investigations.
91. Pupils show interest in their lessons, and are eager to learn. They listen attentively to the teacher, are well behaved, and work co-operatively to help each other clarify understanding. They talk confidently about what they are doing, and take a pride in the presentation of their written work. The very positive attitudes shown by the pupils create a purposeful atmosphere in lessons, which is very conducive to learning.
92. Overall, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with some very good practice, and a few unsatisfactory elements. The strengths far out-weigh the weaknesses. Teachers are generally very skilled at improving pupils' mental arithmetic by using a variety of methods to stimulate pupils, and make them want to learn. For example, in class 3, the teacher very effectively used a 'Find the number' game, where the pupils had to identify a common rule, and then find the number. This activity provided all pupils with appropriate challenge, and gave them opportunities to use their previous knowledge to solve problems. This activity was highly motivating, and ensured that all pupils worked hard to find the answer. Teachers use questioning well to reinforce previous learning, and give clear explanations of the tasks, so that the pupils know exactly what they are to do. All pupils, even the very youngest, are expected to use the correct mathematical vocabulary, so from an early age pupils have a clear understanding of mathematical terms. For example, in the reception class, pupils 'find the total' and, in class 4, pupils use 'equivalence', and 'inverse operations'. This indicates that teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are generally well planned, with appropriate differentiated tasks for the mixed age groups to ensure all pupils extend their learning. However, on occasions the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged which is a weakness. Extension activities are often more of the same, rather than giving opportunities for the most able pupils to extend their learning. Some teachers use day-to-day assessment very well. For example, in class 4, the teacher made on the spot assessment of pupils' achievements in different parts of the lesson, and identified weaknesses in knowledge to be addressed in the next lesson. There are missed opportunities in some lessons, for pupils to explain their methods, and so improve current practice.
93. There is strong leadership for the subject. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of the subject, and targets weaknesses to improve standards. The school is effectively

using the numeracy strategy, but there is insufficient use of information technology in Key Stage 2 to support the data handling part of the mathematics curriculum. Assessment opportunities are systematically identified on the planning, so that teachers know what their pupils can do and understand. However, there is no school portfolio of examples of moderated work to help teachers agree on the levels of attainment in all the strands of the subject.

SCIENCE

94. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was close to both the national average and the average for similar schools. Compared nationally, and with similar schools, the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was below average. Over the past four years, the Key Stage 1 results have been falling year on year. The test results at the end of Key Stage 2 showed attainment to be close to the national average but well below the average for similar schools. The comparison with similar schools is influenced by the fact that the percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was well below that in similar schools. The Key Stage 2 results were a significant improvement on the previous year but not as high as those at the time of the previous inspection. At both key stages, a notable strength in pupils' attainment was their knowledge and understanding of the principles of scientific investigation.
95. The standards of pupils now at the end of each key stage are in line to meet expectations in the next assessments and tests. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge is broad and they continue to achieve high standards in their investigative work with good understanding of the importance of investigations being fair and accurate. This is shown in well-organised experiments. A particular strength in these pupils' work is their use of correct vocabulary when, for example, they name parts of plants. A feature of work by all pupils in Key Stage 1 is the good standard of presentation of their work, with drawings and writing being clear and accurate.
96. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in investigative work are high. Pupils plan work carefully, often in small groups, and they understand the principle of establishing a hypothesis then designing a procedure for testing the hypothesis. This was evident in investigations, by pupils in Year 6 to test the strength of different materials and to find out which objects float and sink, to establish the best method of purifying water. Various forms of filtration were tested and evaluated and the more able pupils recognised the importance of repeating and, in some cases refining their methods in order to ensure valid results. Correct use of scientific vocabulary is a strength of the work and of these and other pupils in Key Stage 2.
97. At both key stages, pupils' positive attitudes have a beneficial effect on their learning. Very good behaviour and careful attention to teachers' instructions results in no time being wasted in lessons and to good levels of concentration. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to work in groups and the excellent relationships, that exist between all pupils, promote mature levels of co-operation and collaboration.
98. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages with all teachers having secure knowledge of the subject. They have successfully built on support from the co-ordinator to ensure that lessons incorporate practical activities, wherever possible, and this results in good rates of learning by many pupils. The best teaching has a foundation of very thorough planning of different learning activities for pupils of different abilities. A lesson on plants with pupils in reception and Year 1, enabled all to make good progress and make significant gains in learning by the careful matching of activities to the varying needs of different groups of pupils. All pupils were challenged by what was expected of them and all made real gains in their learning. This, however, is not evident in all classes and there are other occasions when pupils of different ages and abilities are all given the same learning activity with no planning of

further activities to challenge the more able. This limits the progress of more able pupils and of those with special educational needs. Teachers use resources well, ensuring they are well prepared and have good potential to help pupils' learning, for example, in the worksheets for recording investigative work.

99. The subject is well co-ordinated by the headteacher. There is thorough monitoring and evaluation, particularly of the standards being achieved in tests during and at the end of Key Stage 2. Detailed analyses of pupils' answers to questions are used constructively to identify strengths and weaknesses and teaching and/or the curriculum is modified in order to address any weaknesses. The curriculum has recently been amended to incorporate new national guidelines but further attention to whole school provision is needed. There is currently insufficient awareness of what is being planned each week and the learning achieved by pupils in each year group, regardless of the class they are in, is not monitored carefully enough. This can lead, for example, to pupils starting Year 6 with differences in what they have learned and gaps in their knowledge. The subject is integrated well with information and communications technology as a result of the work of the information and communications technology co-ordinator. Science documentation fails to identify the information and communications technology links and the science policy requires review in order to consolidate these links between the subjects.

ART

100. Although it was possible to see only a few art lessons during the inspection, observation of these lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of displays, photographic evidence, and examples of pupils' past work, leads to the judgement that standards in art are below those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 2. The progress that pupils make is patchy and reflects weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and the poor use of planning for progression. Lesson plans sometimes fail to make clear the specific learning that is to take place, and there is little effective evaluation of work as it progresses. Occasionally, weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge prevent the effective teaching of specific skills.
101. Opportunities are missed for pupils to learn about the work of other artists, for example when Year 4 pupils find Tudor portraits by Holbein, whose work is not discussed, and the range of artists covered in other classes is too narrow. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 create designs and pictures in the style of Escher or Monet, but they are unable to recall the names of other artists they have studied. Although all pupils use sketchbooks, these are very limited in terms of their contribution to learning. There is little evidence of pupils using the books regularly to experiment with ideas and media or as a reference for future work, except for work in design and technology. Drawing skills are particularly underdeveloped, with little evidence of progression from year to year.
102. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy their art lessons. They behave well and try their best to produce work of good quality. They co-operate well and help each other with their learning. Occasionally, there is evidence of pupils using creative flair, for example, when pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 experiment with textures in lessons linked with science, design and technology and history.
103. The co-ordinator has produced a useful scheme of work that enables pupils to experience all of the elements of the subject each year. The scheme aims to develop pupils' knowledge and skills as they progress through the key stages. However, there are no assessment procedures for art that enable teachers to plan for the next steps in individual pupils' development and the long term plan is not always used effectively. The co-ordinator is very willing to support the subject throughout the school. She has worked hard to produce the policy and scheme of work. However, there are no

arrangements for her to formally monitor teaching and learning as, currently, the subject is not a priority in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. The previous inspection report judged standards to be in line with national expectations at both key stages. Evidence from observation of lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work, photographic evidence and teacher' planning leads to the judgement that standards remain satisfactory and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs make appropriate progress throughout the school.
105. The pupils enjoy designing and making very much. They investigate ideas and opinions enthusiastically, evaluate the different design of every day objects, such as telephones, and identify needs before choosing materials thoughtfully to create their own artefacts. Work is finished to a good standard. In Year 6, pupils have designed and made slippers to a good standard. They have evaluated materials in terms of their usefulness, created their own designs and made attractive finished articles, using joining techniques such as sewing and sticking competently. They have decorated the slippers using a variety of media such as fabric paints.
106. Not enough teaching was seen for a secure judgement to be made on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. In the one lesson observed, the teacher's subject knowledge was very good and knowledgeable; sensitive teaching helped pupils to evaluate their designs and to consider how they might make improvements. The lesson was well resourced and good opportunities were made for pupils to develop their creative flair.
107. The subject has good cross-curricular links. For example, in Year 3, pupils made card mummy cases to hold clay mummies during their history topic on Ancient Egypt. Pupils in Year 3 have used their scientific understanding of pneumatic force to make interesting and exciting monsters with moving parts, powered by balloons or syringes, and, in a link with science, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have designed torches for specific purposes, such as a diver and a paper boy. Art is well supported through design and technology.
108. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and keen to support her subject throughout the school. She has worked hard to create a scheme of work that enables pupils to build systematically on their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. An action plan for the subject identifies opportunities for assessment and a programme of focused monitoring to ensure policy into practice

GEOGRAPHY

109. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of both key stages is as expected for their age, and progress is satisfactory.
110. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1, and one lesson in Key Stage 2. Teaching is satisfactory, and pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to lessons, which has a positive impact on their learning. They show interest, and involvement, and concentrate well on their work. There is a systematic approach to the teaching of mapping skills throughout the school, which ensures pupils have a secure understanding of maps. For example, pupils in Year 2 identify the buildings they pass on their way to school, and draw a representation of their route to school. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a six-figure reference to find a place on an Ordnance Survey map. The curriculum is delivered using a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed age classes. This results in some pupils in Key Stage 2 not covering all the topics. Teachers assess coverage

of topics, but these assessment arrangements are not sufficiently linked to the development of skills so that teachers can ensure that pupils' skills are systematically developed whatever the topic covered.

HISTORY

111. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, but evidence gained from the scrutiny of past work, examination of teachers' planning, and talking with pupils, suggest that standards are as expected for the age of the pupils, and that they make satisfactory progress.
112. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, as history is not planned for this part of the term. There was insufficient evidence to make any judgements about the quality of teaching, but pupils' learning about the past is developing, for example, they recognise the differences between modern and Victorian toys. The school makes good use of the local loan services to obtain a variety of quality artefacts, which are well used in the classroom to enhance the pupils' learning. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 2, pupils were given good opportunities to handle Tudor artefacts, and to use their knowledge and understanding of the period to deduce what an item such as a 'Trencher' is. They were given opportunities to dress up in Tudor costumes, and this good use of primary evidence has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning, and gives them a real feel for the period. Visiting theatrical companies are used well to successfully recreate a bygone era, for example, when Years 3, 4 and 5 became Romans and Celts for the day.
113. The history curriculum is delivered using a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes. This results in some pupils in Key Stage 2 having gaps in their knowledge. Teachers assess coverage of historical topics regularly, but these assessment arrangements are not sufficiently linked to the development of skills, so that teachers can ensure that pupils' skills are systematically developed whatever the topic covered.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

114. No direct teaching was observed during the inspection and judgements of standards are based on scrutiny of pupils' work, and observations of unsupervised work by pupils at computers.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. They have a good understanding of control technology, evident in their ability to give instructions to a programmable toy to control its route in different directions. This ability has been well developed by Year 2 pupils in their design and manufacture of board games to be used in conjunction with the toy. Pupils' knowledge of the place of information technology in everyday life is good for their age and they can explain the function of different types of sensors, and the forms of information technology, used in a supermarket.
116. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is also in line with expectations. Current work is concerned with multimedia presentations and, in Year 6, pupils successfully download material from the Internet for inclusion in their research. Skill levels at computing are sound and pupils use keyboard, mouse and other peripherals quickly and confidently.
117. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their work although some express frustration at the limited opportunities that they have. This points to a weakness in teaching with teachers varying in the ways in which work in the subject is organised. Teachers' planning rarely refers to objectives to be achieved by direct teaching. Teachers keep

records of the fact that a pupil has experienced working with, for example, a particular computer program but assessment of the learning achieved by pupils is inconsistent.

118. The strength of the subject is the high quality of its co-ordination and this is the foundation of the good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection when various weaknesses were present. The co-ordinator, in addition to being an invaluable source of support and advice for colleagues, has produced an extensive scheme of work identifying a well-balanced and broad curriculum for each term for all classes. These guidelines provide a systematic progression in the skills to be learned by pupils at each stage of their learning. A significant feature of the curriculum is the wide range of links that have been established with nearly all other subjects and this has a very positive effect on pupils' learning in other subjects. In Year 2, pupils' literacy skills are very well consolidated by word-processing work, for example, brainstorming words about Christmas. Use of tape recorders is planned so that pupils' listening skills are enhanced as well as their ability to control the technology. Data handling in mathematics is successfully reinforced by the entry of data and production of graphs, as in the population studies of Rugeley carried out by pupils in Year 6.
119. The co-ordinator monitors standards very effectively by scrutiny of pupils' work stored in teachers' files. There is currently insufficient evidence of pupils' work stored on hard disk, but this is partly due to the periodic faults that have put some computers out of action and that has interrupted both pupils' progress and teachers' confidence in instructing pupils to save their work. When all are functioning, there is an adequate range of computer hardware and a good range of software. The governing body's commitment to the subject is evident in the release of funds to purchase an extra computer as the funding from the National grid for learning has been delayed.

MUSIC

120. Only one music lesson was timetabled for the period of inspection and no overall judgement of standards of teaching or learning is possible. During the previous inspection, standards were judged above expectations and the evidence of the singing in assemblies, of pupils in Key Stage 2, suggests that standards remain high in this part of the curriculum. High quality performance in hymn singing has the qualities of very good control of pitch and dynamics. Pupils sing confidently and enthusiastically with good diction and phrasing. In Year 2, pupils listen to and appraise music well. In the lesson observed they expressed interesting opinions about two contrasting pieces by Grieg, expressing reasoned preferences and responding with great enthusiasm. Many pupils were able to identify the dominant instruments heard at different times.
121. In Year 2, pupils' good standards and positive attitudes result from well-planned lessons and effective questioning by the teacher that encourages all to participate. There is clear communication of all contributions being valued and no answers being wrong which instils confidence in pupils of all abilities. The activity observed was used well as an opportunity to develop listening skills and, by writing the key words used by pupils, to make a good contribution to literacy skills.
122. In Key Stage 1, teachers teach their own classes but a specialist teacher is employed to teach the Key Stage 2 classes. The school also benefits from the specialist expertise of the headteacher who co-ordinates the subject. A well-balanced and broad curriculum is in place that provides a systematic progression in the skills to be learned at each stage. Lesson content is therefore chosen according to the stage in pupils' learning and this provides a good model for those subjects that are based on specific topics rather than what is actually needed in terms of what should be learned next. The school provides a rich musical experience for pupils, with opportunities for participation in music and drama productions, choral activities and instrumental tuition. The latter takes place at times determined by visiting teachers and pupils have to miss

part of a class lesson each week. This is a concern of some parents, shared by inspectors, when pupils are not always brought up to date with what has been missed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. In Key Stage 2, two gymnastics lessons were observed, and it is not possible to make a judgement on standards of teaching or learning at Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve satisfactory standards, maintaining the quality evident at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils perform gymnastic actions confidently and competently on floor and apparatus. They successfully link twisting and turning actions into smooth flowing sequences with clear starts and finishes. They use apparatus imaginatively, using the varying heights and types of surface to explore and refine sequences to interpret the theme of "Pathways". More able pupils demonstrate very good control and co-ordination and perform with above average agility and poise. All pupils work hard and strive to improve performance, making clear gains in learning in a lesson. The prominence of swimming in the curriculum enables pupils to make good progress from the term allocated in each year of Key Stage 1 throughout the two terms per year at Key Stage 2. Over 95 per cent of pupils in Year 6 leave the school with levels of attainment, well in excess of the national expectation.
124. Teaching is good overall. Careful attention to health and safety ensures that pupils prepare properly for exercise and also develop good understanding of the importance of this preparation and other factors related to health and exercise. Good teaching of techniques for apparatus handling has resulted in efficient, safe practice and sensible, co-operative behaviour by pupils. Teachers achieve a smooth transition from the floor work to the apparatus phase of lessons without interrupting the brisk overall pace of the lesson.
125. Teachers thorough planning makes good use of the comprehensive guidelines provided by the very effective subject co-ordinator. There is a broad curriculum that is well enhanced by a good programme of extra-curricular activities. Outdoor and adventurous activities are included in the curriculum to the extent that they are experienced during a residential visit to an outdoor education centre in Year 6. The potential of basic outdoor challenge activities is not explored with younger pupils and this is a slight weakness in the curriculum. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils have regular opportunities to test their skills in competitive situations, contradicting an opinion expressed at the pre-inspection parents' meeting.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Religious education makes an important contribution to pupils' total educational experience. All pupils make sound progress and, by the ages of seven and eleven, attain standards that are in line with the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
127. Pupils learn about Christianity in Key Stage 1 and they encounter some other religions such as Judaism and Hinduism. These pupils are developing a sense of awe and wonder as they study the plants and creatures in their environment and they are beginning to understand that symbols are often used as aids to worship. They appreciate the religious symbolism of candles and understand the nature of prayer and reflection. Their study of Christianity includes stories from the Old and New Testaments. They have a good knowledge of the life of Jesus and of festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They develop this understanding well when learning about celebrations in other faiths. For example, they particularly enjoyed a visit from a Muslim parent who talked to them about the Muslim festival of Eid.
128. In Key Stage 2, pupils consider stories from the Old and New Testaments more deeply, considering, for example, the importance of co-operation, when listening to the

story of 'Jonah and the Whale'. Their retelling of the story of 'David and Goliath', shows a heightened appreciation of human nature. Pupils are developing a sound knowledge of other religions. Through the study of Judaism and Hinduism, they understand the significance of symbolism, prayer and custom in other faiths. For example, they understand the significance of the Jewish Sedar meal, which commemorates the Jew's flight from Egypt and make appropriate connections with their experiences of Christian celebratory meals such as Christmas.

129. Pupils are very sincere in their responses to religious education. They are interested and enthusiastic and enjoy sharing and exploring new experiences and ideas. The concept of helping and being responsible for others is well developed throughout the school. A strong sense of family permeates school life and pupils demonstrate a love for their environment and for each other. Through studying world religion they are developing a respect and tolerance for values and beliefs that are different from their own.
130. The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was thoroughly sound, with many opportunities offered for pupils to consider their own feelings and responses. Through topics such as 'belonging', pupils gain a good understanding that belonging to a group usually brings a requirement to conform to its values. Although teachers' planning shows that pupils are offered opportunities to consider the relevance of newly acquired knowledge to their own lives, there is little evidence of this in written work, which is mainly factual. There are no assessment procedures for religious education and pupils of all abilities are frequently given the same work to do, which is unsatisfactory.
131. The co-ordinator has worked hard, with good support from the local education authority, to produce a scheme of work linked to the Local Agreed Syllabus. This helps pupils to build well on prior attainment.