

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Meir, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124010

Headteacher: Mrs. S. Mayer

Reporting inspector: Natalie Moss  
22685

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2002

Inspection number: 193161

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Normacot Grange Road Meir Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST3 7AW
Telephone number:	01782 319097
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N W Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	Natalie Moss	Registered inspector	Music Religious education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13786	Susan Walsh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1390	Arthur Markham	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology (ICT) Geography Special educational needs	
31838	Martyn Williams	Team inspector	English Design and technology	

3687	Godfrey Bancroft	Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education	
23698	Jane Schaffer	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Equality of opportunity	
22173	John Evans	Team inspector	Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grange Primary School is bigger than most primary schools, with 420 pupils on roll, between four and eleven years of age, 56 of whom are in the Reception class. It occupies an urban site in Meir, in Stoke-on-Trent, on a large estate of mainly local authority housing, in an area of high unemployment. Most pupils attend the adjacent nursery school before entering the school. On entry to the school pupils' attainment varies, but it has recently risen to below average from its previous level of well below average. About half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, well above the national average. The school has 20 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs, many with emotional and behavioural difficulties, a figure in line with the national average, although the percentage of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is below the national average. There are no pupils of non-white British heritage. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the norm is high. The present headteacher is new to the post since the previous inspection. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2001 from the Department for Education and Skills.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Grange Primary School is a good school, which provides an effective education and a warm and caring environment in which children thrive, and very good value for money. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven are at least in line with the national average and well above those obtained by schools with pupils from similar background. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching. The very good relationships within the school, the pupils' very good behaviour and their positive attitudes towards their work contribute strongly to the school's success and its ethos. The school is very well led by its headteacher, supported by good senior management. Together, they have a clear and shared vision of the school's way forward and management is good overall.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Teaching is good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, so that they make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and their relationships with others are very good.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development, especially for their moral and social development.
- The school is well led and managed and has good priorities for further improvement.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standards reached in English and mathematics by the age of seven, and in music, design and technology and art and design throughout the school.
- The level of attendance.
- The provision made for the pupils' cultural development, including their multicultural development.
- The resources for teaching and learning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in 1997. There has been no complacency since then and recent good initiatives have ensured that standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) have continued to rise. The key issues from that inspection have almost all been effectively addressed. Pupils' levels of attainment have risen overall, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching has improved, so that teaching in Years 3 to 6 is now consistently good and better than that in Years 1 and 2. National Curriculum requirements have been met in most subjects. Standards in ICT have been improved by the introduction of new resources and effective staff training. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and good provision is made for them, with the help of a designated governor. The role of co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science has been developed so that classroom practice is effectively monitored and assessment procedures are used to plan future work and initiatives to raise standards. This has not yet become a consistent practice throughout all subjects. Lesson time has been increased in Years 3 to 6, though it is still below the recommended time. The success of the measures taken is to be seen in the substantial rise in levels attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 and in the fact that the school has received a School Achievement Award. The school is well placed to make further good progress.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	D	C	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	D	C	A	
Science	B	C	A	A	

Children in the Reception class progress well and most attain the nationally-defined early learning goals in all areas of learning, except in knowledge and understanding of the world, before they begin Year 1.

Standards for current Year 2 pupils are below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and in line with it in science. This represents good progress, since the rise in standards of attainment on entry is very recent and not representative of this year group. In the national test results in 2001, standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science indicated average standards. When measured against standards achieved by pupils in schools of a similar nature, however, reading is well above average and writing and mathematics are above average.

Standards for the pupils currently in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Standards reached by Year 6 pupils in the 2001 national tests were at least in line with the national average and were well above the average when compared with pupils from similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected level 5 was well above the national average in English and science and above it in mathematics. The level of attainment on entry for these pupils was well below average, so that these results show good progress and a



satisfactory level of attainment through the school. Since 1999, the school's results have improved at a rate a little higher than the national trend.

In 2001, the school met its challenging targets in mathematics, but not in English. Targets set for the next year are equally realistic. Standards are below average in literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 2, but average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs progress well as a result of intensive support. More able pupils achieve well through the initiatives the school has put in place to challenge them. Girls achieve less well than boys in English and science, though not significantly so.

Standards in history, geography, religious education and ICT are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in physical education are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards for art and design, design and technology, and music are below average for both age groups, as a result of a limited curriculum and subject organisation.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work make a significant contribution to their progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well, both in lessons and outside them. Pupils play well, with a good awareness of the needs of others. There have been four fixed period exclusions and one permanent exclusion in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very keen to take responsibilities and show initiative. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below the national average.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.*

Teaching is good overall throughout the school. Nearly three-quarters of teaching seen during the inspection was good, very good or excellent. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory. However, teaching is unsatisfactory overall in art and design and design and technology, because teachers have had insufficient training in these subjects. It was not possible to make a judgement on the teaching of music. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach speaking, writing and number skills well. They plan carefully to ensure that the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment are well catered for and met successfully, especially in Years 3 to 6. They create a good working environment in their classes in which pupils are stimulated and keen to learn. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, building effectively on what they already know. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and pupils are challenged by a good variety of activities. This overall high standard of teaching is an important factor in the good

progress that pupils make in their learning. Teachers make lesson objectives very clear to pupils, who consequently have a clear understanding of what they are doing and why. As a result, they work hard and are enthusiastic. Teachers manage their pupils very well and insist upon high standards of behaviour and good levels of effort. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is good in Years 3 to 6. Good use is made of the available support staff

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school offers pupils a good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. An emphasis on English and mathematics has led to improved standards, but provision for the arts has received too little attention. Lesson time is less than recommended for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Planning and provision are good. Plans are reviewed regularly and this ensures that parents are kept well informed of their children's progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and the school works hard to enable pupils to become thoughtful and responsible young people. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, but it is unsatisfactory for cultural and multicultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils and offers a high degree of warm, pastoral support. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are generally satisfactory and its results are used to ensure a good match of activities to pupils' levels of prior attainment. Procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory.

The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are appropriate. The school's links with parents are good and it works hard to involve parents in the work of the school. However, response is low.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good, clear and effective direction to the school, well supported by senior management. The efficiency of subject co-ordinators is, however, inconsistent. The action taken to meet the school's targets has been good and there is a commitment to raising standards that is shared by everyone in the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, and particularly its Chair, works closely with the headteacher and is enthusiastic in its support of the school's aims and values. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are omissions from the Governors' Annual Report to parents.
The school's evaluation of	The school is good at evaluating its effectiveness and working on

its performance	procedures for improvement. The school's priorities for development are well judged.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. The school budget is effectively planned to meet the school's priorities and all avenues are explored to ensure that the school obtains the maximum benefit from the money it spends and the best value ensured through its use of staff and resources.

Accommodation in the school is satisfactory, but learning resources are not, because of lack of provision of outdoor play areas for Reception children. Teaching staff are generally of a high quality, but the school does not have enough classroom assistants to support the teaching staff.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress in their work.</li> <li>• Behaviour at the school is good and their children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• The way in which the school works closely with them and deals with their questions or problems.</li> <li>• The good leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework their children are given.</li> <li>• More information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The provision of more out-of-school activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors judged that homework is used well in Reception and satisfactorily throughout the rest of the school. Parents are well informed about progress through newsletters, curriculum information and annual reports, although reports are not always consistent in the amount of detail they include. The school provides many opportunities for parents to attend parents' evening, but there are fewer opportunities for them to speak informally to their children's teachers. Pupils are offered a good range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are oversubscribed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Inspection findings show that standards for the oldest pupils are at least average in most subjects. The national test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2001 showed standards to be average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The number of pupils who achieved the higher than expected level 5 was well above average in English and science and above it in mathematics. These achievements show pupils making good progress overall within the school. Current Year 6 pupils are reaching similar standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science, with a good proportion of pupils likely to achieve the higher than expected level 5. The present Year 6 is a less highly attaining year group than the Year 6 that sat the tests in 2001. The school's results have been rising since the previous inspection at a broadly similar rate to the national trend and they exceeded it in 2001. Boys generally outperform girls in English and science, though not significantly so. The school has recognised the importance of ensuring that higher attaining pupils reach their full potential and these results show that its policy for its gifted and talented pupils is working well.
2. The principal factors in explaining the higher levels pupils are currently reaching lie in planning for progress in learning and the subsequent rate of learning. Both of these are now good and, as a result, progress is good. However, standards remain average in the majority of subjects, though in art and design, design and technology and music, standards are below average. There has been a great improvement in standards in ICT, which were well below average at the time of the previous inspection but are now average, as a result of the provision of better resources and training for staff.
3. Standards at the end of Year 2 in the 2001 national tests and teacher assessments were well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. Based on a comparison in schools where a similar proportion of pupils is in receipt of free school meals, the 2001 results for seven year olds were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Pupils achieved below average standards in the teacher assessments in science. Overall, current results for this age group are below those found at the time of the last inspection, although they have been rising steadily since 1999, with a revised curriculum and the emphasis on investigative work. The numbers of pupils attaining the higher than expected level 3 at this age have improved well in reading, writing and science. This has been largely as a result of the implementation of National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy, and of improved teaching.
4. In previous years, children's attainment has been well below average when they start school. Currently, the children in the Reception Year group have a wide range of attainment; a small number are very articulate and have already begun

to develop a good understanding of the world around them; others have limited vocabulary and do not form words and sentences well. Overall, the attainment of the majority was below average when they started in September and in January, as indicated by the assessments that the school is required to make at the start of the Reception Year. All children are making good progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, so that by the end of Reception Year, the majority will achieve the goals set for their age in these areas of learning. They recognise a good number of words by sight and many know all the sounds and letter names of the alphabet. They enjoy stories and confidently retell what has happened or predict what might occur. They count with accuracy up to 10 objects set out in an irregular pattern and many are beginning to add amounts together successfully. A minority, including those with significant special educational needs, will not achieve the goals set for them, particularly in writing and reading. Communication, language and literacy and numeracy are given greater emphasis than knowledge and understanding of the world, and children are unlikely to achieve the goals set for them at the end of Reception Year in this learning goal.

5. At the time of the previous inspection, standards by the end of Year 2 were generally in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils made steady progress through the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 6, however, were below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Progress was sometimes unsatisfactory because of the variable quality of teaching. The situation has now changed. Pupils are now achieving significantly higher standards by the end of Year 6, though standards appear to be lower by the end of Year 2, matching the fall in the level of attainment on entry until last year. Attainment on entry is generally well below average for most year groups in the school. In the last year, the level has risen to below average, but it is too soon to see the reflection of this in the results attained by the end of Year 2 as yet. Overall, inspectors judge that pupils are making good progress in Reception Year, in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6, and that the current Year 6 have moved from standards which are well below average on entry to the school to at least average standards by the time they leave the school.
6. Attainment in English is satisfactory and achievement over time is good throughout the school. This is a reflection of the high quality of teaching and of teachers' use of the National Literacy Strategy. Planning is more consistent, so that skills in reading and writing, in particular, develop well. While standards in reading and writing are below average by the end of Year 2, strategies for improving the skills in both aspects of English are being applied more rigorously. This results in good progress. Pupils achieve well throughout the school in speaking and listening. There are good opportunities provided in all classrooms for these skills to develop well, such as the presentation of findings across a wide range of subjects for older pupils. Both reading and writing develop well in fluency and range as pupils work their way up the school, largely through good planning of activities and pupils' interest. Very good work has been done in Year 6 to try to improve pupils' standards in writing, by the introduction of individual tutorial sessions where pupils carefully analyse their writing with their teacher and their partners, thus encouraging rapid progress.

7. Attainment in mathematics is satisfactory. Progress is enhanced through good use of mental strategies at the start of lessons. This encourages pupils to try harder, and when solving problems or working on numeracy exercises, pupils progress well overall. Progress is better for junior age pupils than in the infants, where basic skills, such as in subtraction, are not always secure, though they are improving. There is equally satisfactory attainment by pupils in all aspects of mathematics, including data handling and graphs in the junior section of the school.
8. In science, pupils reach average levels by the end of Year 6 and standards have improved rapidly over the last four years. This improvement is largely the result of good teaching, improved planning which ensures that knowledge and understanding are built on well and improvements in the science curriculum. The curriculum focuses on investigative work. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to make tests fair and of the need for scientific enquiry. Teachers make many opportunities for pupils to undertake investigations and carry out experiments. This capitalises on pupils' enthusiasms and they make good progress in lessons and over time.
9. In geography and history, attainment is in line with national expectations. Staff make the subjects interesting for pupils, with plenty of independent research work, investigations and problem solving. This strategy is very successful in motivating pupils who enjoy and benefit from this style of approach. Pupils progress well in these subjects.
10. Standards are above average in physical education at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Skills in physical education are built up gradually throughout the school and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Where teachers use opportunities for pupils to assess and evaluate their own performances, progress is good and standards of attainment are high.
11. In religious education, there is sometimes too much emphasis placed on the narrative telling of stories rather than their religious or moral significance. Pupils learn something of the beliefs and customs of major world faiths and are able to think carefully about their relationships with their families and others. As a result, attainment is satisfactory and progress over time is steady.
12. In art and design, design and technology and music, standards are below average for both seven and eleven year olds. Too little development has taken place in these subjects, largely because the school has rightly concentrated over the last few years in raising standards in English and mathematics. In art and design, the range of work is limited. In music, there is currently no music specialist to guide the subject well and teachers are in need of training to help them cope with the demands of the subject. In design and technology, pupils have not made the gains in knowledge and understanding that they should because their range of experiences of planning, designing and making are limited and they have had too few opportunities for practical work in the subject. These arts subjects are currently the weakest point in the school's otherwise strong curriculum.

13. In ICT, pupils attain standards that are average compared with those expected nationally throughout the school. This is an improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection and reflects good improvement because the demands of the National Curriculum have risen significantly in recent years. The provision of a computer suite has been provided and the development of teachers' expertise in the subject enables pupils to develop an adequate range of computer skills. Teachers' understanding of the subject and of its uses through a number of key subjects, such as mathematics, science and geography, has improved as a result of training, and the quality of teaching has improved. The school has developed clear curricular guidance to show teachers what has to be taught in each year. Consequently, all pupils make good progress and achieve well.
14. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is good, given their starting points. The large number of pupils with special educational needs is supported well by the school and makes good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Staff have sufficiently clear advice and guidance to ensure early identification. Provision to support these pupils within classes is effective and the resultant progress is good. There is a sharp focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills, with successful strategies in operation. There are no significant variations in attainment by gender and the school ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and attainment are fully included in the work and activities of the school.
15. The school has recently identified a number of gifted and talented pupils whose achievement is good. A new policy is now being shared among the staff, who are making good provision for these and for higher attaining pupils. Particularly successful is the strategy of independent research work, which, with appropriate guidance, allows these pupils to extend their potential and so achieve well.
16. Targets set by the school and agreed with the local education authority were exceeded in the tests for Year 6 pupils in mathematics last year, but were not quite reached in English, where pupils had not had the advantage of the National Literacy Strategy throughout their time in the school. Targets for this year are realistic and achievable. The school has made much improvement in the precision of its target setting, an area tied in to the wider issue of the use made of assessment information, an area which has also improved.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to their learning. They come to school each morning happy and smiling and eager to see their friends. Most parents are conscientious about getting their children to school on time, but a small number of pupils drift in late and disturb lessons. The day begins well in the Reception classes because pupils quickly become engaged in co-operative games that increase their social skills. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils eagerly join in many activities such as the athletics club, where older pupils learn to run relay races, the environmental club, where pupils learn about bats, and the keep fit club. They are very willing to stay after school. Pupils even queue to join extra classes to boost their attainment.

18. Pupils have very good attitudes to their school work. Reception children view themselves as little people working hard. They have developed very good levels of concentration and listen well. Infant pupils also work hard. Pupils in Year 2 were attentive and well behaved during their history lesson, where they compared photographic evidence of seaside holidays. Older pupils are good learners. For example, Year 6 pupils were very interested in their geography lesson about mountains. They thought very carefully about the subject and were able to ask a range of very interesting and thought-provoking questions.
19. The school is aware that pupils do not always behave well when they are away from the school environment and works very hard to supply pupils with values and role models to follow. However, in school, pupils behave very well indeed, responding well to the school's high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are very friendly and welcoming to visitors. They have good manners, spontaneously holding doors open and saying 'please' and 'thank you'. They treat each other well. The school is a very orderly community and a pleasant place to be for both children and adults. Pupils' behaviour during assemblies is very good. Younger pupils behaved very well in their assembly, listening carefully and with interest to the teacher. Pupils of all ages really enjoy singing the songs in assemblies, especially the ones with actions.
20. Bullying does sometimes occur in the school and all incidents are investigated thoroughly. The school does not tolerate physical violence and physical bullying has led to permanent exclusion. There have been other recent fixed term exclusions for serious acts of vandalism. The school works hard to try to ensure that bullying does not occur. There are occasional fallings out, involving groups of girls in particular. The majority of pupils are trustworthy and respect school property.
21. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to develop respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others in lessons such as religious education. However, they do empathise with each other. For example, when a pupil is ill or upset other pupils are anxious to help. Pupils who applied to join the school's anti-bullying initiative wrote some very moving letters of application. The environmental club is helping pupils to appreciate and care for the environment around them and is very popular. Pupils' responsibility is extended by the environment council, where pupils discuss how they can improve and care for the school environment.
22. Personal development is good. Pupils are eager to help and assist. Pupils of all ages have many jobs and responsibilities around school. Even Reception age children are represented on the school council. Year 6 pupils are given responsibility for their own learning and are taught to analyse their own work carefully. Unfortunately, the school has limited library facilities and this limits pupils' opportunities for independent research.
23. Relationships in the school are very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils respond very well to teachers' gentle and friendly manner. They know that their answers and comments will be valued and this gives pupils the confidence to ask questions. They are not afraid to make mistakes and this encourages their eagerness to learn.



24. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their work. They are very enthusiastic and interested in the work they do in small groups with teachers and support staff because it is at the right level of difficulty for them. They are treated with tolerance and understanding by other pupils. These pupils are fully integrated into school activities and supported well.
25. The school attendance rate is unsatisfactory and well below the national average. Until recently, unauthorised absence was well below the national rate. Although attendance has been below the national average for a number of years, attendance rates had been rising slowly. During the last two terms, attendance rates have declined significantly and rates of unauthorised absence have risen. The school now has a significant number of pupils with serious attendance problems. Many of these have joined the school recently. The school is aware that its procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are not satisfactory and is planning new methods of dealing with problems of attendance.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

26. Teaching is good overall in the school. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and almost three-quarters of the lessons seen were judged as good or better, and nearly one-third good or excellent. This is a significant improvement since the school was previously inspected, especially in Years 3 to 6, where teaching is now of a high quality.
27. Teaching varies within the school. Most of the very good and excellent teaching takes place in the upper juniors. Elsewhere, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good.
28. The strengths in teaching and learning overall are:
  - teachers' good knowledge and understanding of what they teach;
  - very effective teaching of basic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy;
  - teachers' high expectations of what their pupils can achieve;
  - generally effective teaching methods that allow pupils to learn independently;
  - very effective management of classes so that no time is lost and pupils are kept busy and interested;
  - good use of time and resources to enhance pupils' learning experiences.
29. Additionally, in Years 3 to 6:
  - teachers' expectations and the challenge they offer to their pupils are very high;
  - the quality of day-to-day assessment is good.
30. Although no unsatisfactory lessons were observed in art and design and design and technology, teaching overall in these subjects is unsatisfactory. This is because many teachers lack expertise, direction and training in these subjects and therefore have difficulty in teaching pupils the necessary skills. These subjects have suffered from the emphasis of late on literacy and numeracy, but the school is aware of the weaknesses and has plans to address them.

31. The quality of teaching in the Reception classes is good. Staff take good account of children's previous knowledge and understanding when planning activities. The daily routines and organisation of the classes aid children's personal development particularly well. All staff develop very good relationships with children, so that they feel valued and are keen to learn. Over and above this, high expectations are communicated to children of all levels of attainment and, as a result, children respond by trying hard to do their best. Staff use, and expect children to use, challenging vocabulary when it is appropriate. Teachers have a good understanding of the best methods of teaching reading, writing and numeracy and for encouraging children to develop their skills in speaking and listening. However, teachers are less knowledgeable about methods to develop learning through independent play activities. On occasions, play activities are less successful in developing children's skills and understanding because of the lack of resources.
32. Teaching and learning overall for pupils up in Years 1 and 2 are generally good, with some very good features. Teachers build very successfully on the skills acquired in the Reception class. Management of pupils is good, so that interest and enthusiasm are not lost. Learning mirrors the teaching and is usually good. In the best lessons in this part of the school, teachers use time and support staff effectively. In numeracy in Year 1, for example, mental sessions proceed with great enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy the challenges, learn basic facts well and consolidate their previous learning effectively. In Year 2, science lessons are prepared very well to include use of a wide range of learning resources as pupils learn about the properties of electrical circuits. Lessons are less successful, while remaining satisfactory, when the pace is slower or questioning does not extend pupils' knowledge sufficiently. In some lessons, challenges are not high enough all the time and ongoing assessment by teachers is not always put to the best use in matching work to pupils' abilities.
33. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good, with many examples of very good practice. Where teaching is most successful, staff define very clearly what they expect pupils to learn and precisely how they will go about learning it. Aims for the lessons are clear, precise and achievable. In literacy and numeracy, these are more usually aims for the whole week. Pupils are clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. They enjoy and appreciate the very many varied opportunities that staff give them to work independently. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were given a problem to solve, on how particle size affects the rate of dissolving materials, and helped to experiment in order to come to a conclusion. Pace of learning was rapid as pupils formed small groups and discussed hypotheses together. They worked exceptionally well in these circumstances, learning rapidly through trial and error and experimentation. Teachers draw lessons to conclusions, checking learning and reinforcing the skills acquired very effectively.
34. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and both are taught well across most subjects of the curriculum. In English, pupils responded well to thought-provoking questions in a Year 5 lesson as they worked hard to draft an account of an air raid from a child's point of view. In Year 6 literacy, challenging tasks and effective group work allow pupils to understand a story on more than a superficial level. They also learn the skills of self-evaluation in literacy at this level very

effectively. There were high expectations of learning and challenge in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, as pupils worked with enthusiasm on understanding percentages and relating them to decimals and fractions. Pupils were so absorbed in their work that they were disappointed when the bell sounded at the end of the lesson. Teachers match their questions well to the different levels at which pupils are working. Constant use of relevant vocabulary by staff enables pupils to make gains in their wider range of language in literacy, numeracy, science and many other subjects.

35. Less successful teaching occurs for pupils in Years 3 to 6 when the challenges are not always sufficiently high. In Year 6 religious education, the quality of discussion failed to challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently well. When pupil self-evaluation is not undertaken, for example in physical education, pupils have less secure knowledge of what they have achieved during the lesson. When insufficient time is allowed for the completion of a task, learning is interrupted and less effective. The relative weaknesses caused by lack of training for teachers in art and design and design and technology are often outweighed by good practice. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress overall in Years 3 to 6.
36. The teaching of ICT varies between individual teachers, but is generally good. Teachers are beginning to plan the development of computer skills into their planning for other subjects, such as history and literacy activities. Opportunities are made to include an interesting and wide range of activities making use of ICT, for example in geography. Teachers are now competent overall in using ICT skills themselves and are able to communicate both interest and enthusiasm to their pupils, so that learning is good.
37. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers construct the individual education plans carefully, with small achievable targets, and refer to them regularly when planning their work. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and support staff co-operate very well together to plan work which is specifically designed to meet the particular needs of individual pupils. Teachers, support staff and adult helpers give pupils with special educational needs much sensitive support and attention. This good level of support contributes successfully to helping these pupils make good progress towards their targets. The school has more recently identified its gifted and talented pupils and staff are designing more demanding work with higher challenges for them. These pupils are making good progress as a result. This aspect of teaching and learning is improving fast, because of the effective start the school has made and the initiatives it has put in place.
38. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in the school. It is generally satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good for those in Years 3 to 6. The least effective marking provides only general comment such as 'fine' or 'good'. The best marking analyses what pupils have done well and praises them for it, but then goes on to inform them of what to improve, with guidance on how to do it.

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

39. The school provides a broad curriculum for its pupils. Pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 have lessons in all the subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education. The school complies with statutory requirements and all the pupils have equal opportunities to take part in lessons and other activities. The school takes care to make sure that pupils who have special educational needs and those with particular gifts or talents have a chance to fulfil their potential. Shortcomings identified at the time of the last inspection in the curriculum for ICT have been resolved.
40. In the Reception classes, teachers make very effective use of the methods recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy in their curriculum planning. Other areas of learning are planned to reflect the nationally recommended guidance for this age. There is very good planning for children's personal and social development. However, the school does not have a designated outdoor environment for this age range and so teachers cannot include this in their plans as recommended. Planning for religious education follows the guidance of the school co-ordinator, but is not based fully on the locally agreed syllabus. Children are not taught about the wide range of different religions and cultures in our society. The school has made good use of the extra room available to this age range by splitting the two classes into three teaching groups for three afternoons. This strategy allows staff to be used to the best advantage.
41. In recent years, and particularly since the last inspection, the school has concentrated strongly on English, mathematics and science in order to tackle the important task of raising standards of attainment in these subjects. This emphasis has produced the desired results and in reading, writing and mathematics standards have improved. This is because the school has made a good job of implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy confidently and with increasing flexibility to respond to what they can see that the pupils need to learn and to set targets for them to address. Teachers have received beneficial training that helps them to plan purposeful and worthwhile lessons. Similarly, the National Numeracy Strategy has become an important cornerstone in the school's curriculum for mathematics. Teachers have good knowledge of the strategy and, although some lessons are lengthy, the pupils benefit from extended opportunities to work independently and to practise and refine their mathematical skills. Using the strategy has helped teachers to understand better the standards that pupils might attain and has led to a more rapid rate of progress.
42. In order to give much needed attention to these subjects, the school has not been able at the same time to devote as much effort as it would have wished to some of the other subjects of the National Curriculum. In particular, too little development has occurred in art and design, music, and design and technology. The school's curriculum is a little out of balance and standards in these subjects are not as high as they should be. A further aspect to this problem is the inefficient use of time in each school day, especially in the juniors, where the time devoted to teaching each week is 30 minutes below the nationally recommended

level, though that time has been extended since the previous inspection.

43. Much has been done since the previous inspection to improve the curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs. The governors have made sure that the school has enough personnel with the right expertise to give the pupils the help that they need. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life and achieve as well as they can. The assessment systems enable specific needs to be identified quickly. Individual education plans are agreed, with relevant and specific targets for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well within classes and in the two special needs classes. All activities, including extra-curricular activities, are open to both girls and boys.
44. In its determination to raise standards of attainment in basic subjects, the school has not lost sight of the importance of promoting pupils' personal development. Ensuring that pupils become confident about their capacity to learn well and grow into well-behaved, happy, young people is at the heart of the school's beliefs and practices. Formal lessons for all classes each week give the pupils good chances to learn and develop social skills and to learn important messages about health and welfare. Sex education and learning about the dangers of drugs are included successfully in a planned programme of personal education. While some subjects of the curriculum, such as religious education, give pupils insights into the traditions and beliefs of their own and other societies, the school does not do enough to help them to learn about the benefits and challenges of living in a modern, British multicultural society. Currently, the school is at an early stage of framing a policy to describe its principles and practices to promote race equality. It awaits guidance from the local education authority.
45. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities to enhance the quality of education and to extend pupils' interests. These activities are varied, open to all pupils and include sports. Some clubs cater for special interests, such as art and environmental projects, and succeed in furthering the school's aims to promote pupils' social skills. Visits out of school to places of interest, both locally and further afield, help pupils to learn about their own heritage. Although a minority of parents feel that the school does not provide enough extra-curricular activities, provision is, in fact, good.
46. The school has established good working links with other local schools with a view to boosting the achievements of its more able and talented pupils. The scheme is working well and has brought pupils into contact with like-minded pupils in other schools and added successfully to their social development.
47. The school has strong and productive links with the neighbouring nursery school and with the local high school to which the large majority of pupils transfer after they have reached the age of eleven. The pupils themselves feel well prepared for the move, reflecting the success of the school's sensitive approach and care in preparing them for the next stage of their education. Pupils in Year 6, for example, appreciated the increased responsibility that they had been given in their final year, the trust placed in them to work independently and the help they

had received to develop their capacity to work with sustained concentration: 'We have learned more grown-up ways of doing things'.

48. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Regular assemblies provide opportunities for worship and reflection on a range of spiritual and moral themes. Within the curriculum there are opportunities to explore profound emotional responses. For example, a Year 5 English class was deeply affected by the challenging task of writing an account of a wartime air raid. Recordings, photographs and contemporary accounts stimulated them to write movingly of experiences ranging from terror to euphoria. There is, however, no planned provision for spiritual experience through most subjects of the curriculum. Religious education lessons extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths, but could do more to help pupils explore their own values and beliefs.
49. Provision for moral development is very good. The school sets out its expectations clearly in its behaviour code. This is implemented successfully because all adults in the school present consistent models of care, courtesy and consideration. As a result, pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong from an early age and as they grow older, they have increasing opportunities to develop the positive values learned by putting them into practice. In several subjects, pupils have opportunities not simply to mark their own and each other's work but to offer considered evaluations. This is just one of the ways in which honesty and fair play are reinforced.
50. Provision for social development is also very good. Right from the Reception Year, pupils are elected to the school council, where they may contribute to the running of the school. There are plentiful opportunities to take responsibility as monitors, house captains and officers, and, particularly for older pupils, the challenge to act as mentors to younger pupils and 'buddies' to those of any age who need the support of a responsible friend. Within classes, pair and group activities are commonly planned, so it is usual for pupils to work harmoniously together. A good programme of physical, social and health education helps pupils to become aware of their personal responsibilities and also those towards the wider world, but links with the local community are not well developed.
51. Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. There is too little emphasis given in the curriculum to the arts in general, so that pupils have a limited awareness of their cultural heritage. Financial constraints mean that visits to theatres, museums, galleries and places of historical or cultural interest are rare. Although pupils learn about a range of faiths through religious education, and a little about aspects of African society through geography, little is done to prepare them for the practical implications of life in a culturally diverse society.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

52. The school provides a welcoming environment where children are well supported. Pupils are nurtured during their infant years and then encouraged to bloom into helpful young people in the junior school. Staff work extremely hard to raise pupils' self-esteem. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and pupils are made aware that their contribution to school life is valued.

53. The school has put in many initiatives to improve pupil's health and to try to ensure that pupils are well cared for. The school has established a very successful breakfast club where pupils, parents and grandparents can call in and eat an inexpensive breakfast in a pleasant social atmosphere. Recently introduced 'drop-in' sessions with the school nurse have proved to be very successful and many parents call in to discuss their children's problems. The school nurse has also been involved in delivering sex education to older pupils, and informing pupils about the dangers of smoking and the advantages of eating a healthy diet. The school's arrangements for first aid are satisfactory but, as yet, none of the lunchtime supervisors have been trained in first aid.
54. There is a need to raise awareness of health and safety issues. The governors have recently completed an audit of the condition of the outside of the building but have not completed a similar audit of the inside of the school. The toilets are old and dilapidated. The condition of the floors is very poor and toilet rolls are outside the cubicles in the infants' toilets. This is contrary to the general atmosphere in the school where pupil's welfare has a very high priority. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The school follows locally agreed procedures and works hard to ensure that pupils who may be at risk are identified and reported to social services.
55. The monitoring and promoting of good attendance are unsatisfactory. The school is aware that it has not done enough to improve its unsatisfactory attendance rates. Although the school is good at identifying and supporting pupils who have very poor attendance, it is less effective at monitoring the attendance of the rest of the pupils. The school has now introduced a standard letter to be sent to parents when the school has not had a legitimate explanation for the child's absence. The school does not attempt to contact parents on the first day of absence. There are few rewards for good attendance and the school has identified this as an area for improvement.
56. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school does not have a rigid discipline system, but provides pupils with very good adult role models. Pupils quickly learn that expectations of behaviour are very high and they respond extremely well to the atmosphere of mutual respect. They value their teachers. Assemblies are used well to promote high standards of behaviour. For example, younger pupils were enthusiastic about singing the song about school rules and teachers used the opportunity well to ensure that pupils fully understood what was expected of them in school.
57. The school works hard to try to ensure that pupils are not bullied. Most parents report that they are satisfied with how the school responds to incidents that might be regarded as bullying. The school has just begun an anti-bullying project where pupils are trained to act as 'buddies' and help other pupils to deal with squabbles and disagreements, which is proving to be very successful.
58. The school is good at monitoring pupil's personal development. Each teacher writes a brief termly report in the front of each pupil's record of achievement. This makes it relatively easy for teachers to judge whether pupils are maturing. At the end of each school year a full day is given to a transition meeting between

teachers, where both the academic and personal progress of each child can be discussed in detail, allowing teachers to pass on information from one year to another.

59. Pupils' special educational needs are identified at an early stage by the thorough assessment procedures. Teachers monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs carefully, regularly checking the targets specified in the pupils' individual education plans. These are generally broken down into small, manageable steps to enable pupils to make good progress towards their targets. Staff are very aware of the needs of these pupils and provide sensitively for them, giving much support and guidance both on their work and their behaviour. Arrangements to review their needs are regular and thorough and meet legal requirements.
60. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. However, procedures in Years 1 and 2 are not as thorough as those in Years 3 to 6. Assessment is used well to help the grouping of younger pupils. For example, Year 1 pupils who find their work difficult have been identified and are taught in a smaller group. Although the local education authority provides the school with predictions for pupils' attainment at the age of seven based on the analysis of assessment on entry, the school has not used similar information to track the progress of individual pupils through Years 1 and 2. Target setting is used for individual pupils in this age group, but its quality and use is inconsistent.
61. Pupils' progress in mathematics is carefully tracked and analysed by the mathematics co-ordinator, but less work has been done to ensure that all pupils are making effective progress in English. Assessment in science is satisfactory though the steps which are assessed are large and have yet to be subdivided. There is limited assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge in subjects such as history, geography, religious education, design and technology, art and design and music, with the result that teachers have too little knowledge of the way in which pupils are progressing.
62. Assessment to aid curriculum planning is satisfactory. There are some very good examples of how assessment has been used to inform teaching and the content of lessons in Year 6 through careful analysis of the Year 6 national test results. For example, it was found that pupils did not understand how to gain full marks when answering questions during their science tests. Work was done to improve pupils' examination techniques. In mathematics, pupils were found to be weaker at solving word problems and measurement, so extra classes have focused on these elements.
63. Very good work has been done in Year 6 to try to improve pupils' standards in writing. Pupils attend individual tutorial sessions where they carefully analyse their writing with their teacher. Pupils also analyse their written work in co-operation with their response partner. Pupils in Year 6 have good knowledge of their own learning, including National Curriculum levels, and this helps them to make good progress. There is the potential to extend this good practice throughout the school.



64. Assessment is used well to identify those pupils whose work is just starting to approach the expected level and who might benefit from extra classes held in the evening, which are extremely popular with pupils. There has been good improvement in the use of assessment since the previous inspection.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

65. The school is working hard to overcome a well-established culture where parents have traditionally had limited involvement with their children's work at school. Relationships between parents and teachers are good. Many parents try to help with their children's education. For example, when a pair of slippers was needed for a Year 6 design and technology lesson, many parents allowed their children to bring in their slippers. Many parents also pick children up after school when they have stayed for sporting activities. Unfortunately there is only a significant minority of parents who give their children and the school even limited support.
66. Parents are very satisfied with the standard of education offered by the school. Parents say that they feel welcome in the school. They find the school very easy to approach if they have questions or problems. Parents report that the school has high expectations of their children and that teaching is good. They are pleased that their children like school and they make good progress. The inspection agreed with parents' positive views and found Grange Primary to be a good school where good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their lessons. A small number of parents were concerned about the provision of homework. Homework is used well in Reception, where reading books are taken home nightly. Provision for homework in other year groups is satisfactory.
67. Some parents were concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but inspectors found that a good range of activities is available. However, so many children have wanted to join in the activities that this has resulted in some areas, such as the bat club, being severely oversubscribed.
68. There is a satisfactory range of information for parents. There are regular informative newsletters. The governors' annual report to parents and the school brochure do not meet statutory requirements, as they do not contain a substantial proportion of the information that is required by law. The headteacher is currently involved in developing a new school brochure in order to reflect more fully the vibrant life of the school. Although some parents were unhappy with the quality of information that they received about their children's progress, the inspectors found annual reports to be of satisfactory quality. Reports in Reception are very straightforward and understandable. For example, they make it very clear to parents when failure to attend school has damaged their children's education. There are variations in the quality of reports. Some teachers produce very readable reports, which clearly indicate what children know, understand and can do and the progress that they have made. A minority of reports do not contain enough detail about how children are progressing in English by differentiating between progress in reading, speaking and listening or writing. Occasionally, very similar reports are produced for a number of children of the same age.

69. The school has satisfactory procedures to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in the development and review of their specific needs and individual education plans.
70. The school provides many formal opportunities for parents to come into school, such as regular parents' evenings, but informal opportunities are more limited. Parents are welcomed into school at the very beginning of the Reception year, but they are soon discouraged from coming into the classroom. Although this may promote children's independence it does result in a missed opportunity for informal contact with parents. Parent helpers are rare in Reception classes and there are instances when learning through play activities would benefit from some adult intervention.
71. The school has run a number of courses for parents, with mixed success. There have been two family numeracy courses where parents of Reception age children worked with a representative from a local college to make resources that they could later share with their children in the classroom. The small number of parents who attended these courses felt them to be very valuable and thought they were provided with many ideas of how to work on numbers with their children. A similar family literacy course started during the inspection week. The school has tried to run computer courses and courses on how to manage children's behaviour, but support has been very limited. The school has had some limited success in involving parents in the life of the school. For example, a fund-raising committee has been recently established and a small number of dedicated parents are now busy organising a summer fair. Parents and grandparents now come into the breakfast club. Parents' concerns about managing behaviour have been addressed through the school nurse's 'drop-in' sessions, where individual issues can be discussed in private.
72. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school's links with parents are now good.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

73. Leadership and management overall are good. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. The headteacher ensures very strong leadership in the school. The principal characteristics of the strong leadership include:
- very clear vision, communicated to and shared with senior management, staff and governors, of how to improve standards and learning in the school;
  - effective teamwork built up over the years since the previous inspection;
  - good planning for the future to ensure all money is spent for the benefit of the pupils and that new educational initiatives are brought into the curriculum effectively;
  - clear identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to improve.
- These are areas which have shown improvement since the school was previously inspected. Areas of relative weakness in the leadership and management include:

- insufficient responsibility for the planning, evaluation and monitoring of their subjects by subject co-ordinators in art and design, music and design and technology.;
  - levels of monitoring and development of teaching, especially by subject leaders, in order to help raise standards further.
74. The ethos, created and cultivated by the headteacher, of raising the self-esteem of pupils, staff and community, permeates the school's work. The deputy headteacher and senior management team provide her with useful and considered support. Senior management links closely with the staff in an approach which encourages a strong sense of teamwork and high morale. All staff, including the support staff, value the regular meetings with senior management, as they help to clarify means of raising standards and using time to its greatest effect. The governing body, through training and increased experience, has developed more formal procedures and closer ties with the school since the previous inspection. Governors visit the classrooms regularly to give positive support to the staff. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision of where they want the school to improve. The governing body, very ably led by the previous headteacher as its chair, plays a central part in the decision making, based on a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Through a consistent cycle of careful planning, they are sure they have the appropriate strategies in place to achieve this. Inspectors confirm that these strategies are good. The governors do not, in a few minor points of their annual report to parents, fulfil their statutory duties. The whole staff share in a strong commitment to succeed. Their enthusiasm, backed by a comprehensive, planned programme of training, shows a very good capacity to achieve their vision.
75. The staff also share the headteacher's clear day-to-day educational aims, values and principles, which lie at the heart of the school's work. They give rise to the positive atmosphere and effective climate for learning, within which pupils feel secure and gain significantly in confidence. Parents comment very favourably both on the leadership and the accessibility of the headteacher and staff. Management of children in the Reception classes is very good. This enables all children in these two classes to make a very good start to their learning.
76. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed and co-ordinated well. The co-ordinator makes best use of the time available to her away from the classroom to discuss the progress of pupils on the special educational needs register with teachers, support staff and other agencies. She has established a very positive ethos within the school where the efforts and achievements of pupils of all levels of attainment and gender are equally valued and all are included and supported. There is a good supply of suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the demands of teaching pupils with special educational needs.
77. The demands of monitoring and evaluating the school's work have become more rigorous since the previous inspection. The senior management team has effectively supported the introduction of key educational initiatives, for example the extensive implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. A valuable programme of monitoring teaching has been put in place and subject co-

ordinators, particularly those responsible for English, mathematics and science, are now monitoring the progress of teaching and learning in their subjects well. This is not yet true of all subjects, but the emphasis rightly placed on literacy and numeracy in order to raise standards has left little time and energy to ensure that all subjects are firmly monitored. The school is well aware of this and is addressing ways in which all subject co-ordinators can support the headteacher in the crucial role of evaluating standards, monitoring provision and ensuring progress.

78. Subject management is unsatisfactory in art and design, design and technology and music, because the co-ordinators have received little training and, hence, do not have the confidence or expertise to support colleagues to the extent that they wish. There are appropriate policies and nationally recognised schemes of work in place, but few checks take place to see how well they are taught and how well pupils are learning. There is no record of assessment to plot the progress of individual pupils. The budget allocated to the subjects is insufficient, so that resources are poor.
79. School development planning is good; the right priorities are identified and costed carefully, with a clear focus on raising standards. The school development plan is much improved since the previous inspection. The targets are clear and criteria for successful achievement are written for all of them. The school does not just look for cost effectiveness; it strives for the wider principles of 'best value', which underpin its prudent financial planning. The school's budget is earmarked to support provision for ICT, to maintain staffing for the maximum number of single age classes and to provide for further initiatives to help to raise standards.
80. The day-to-day work of the staff in the school office is efficient and unobtrusive. Technology is used effectively across the school. The school is very well maintained and kept as a pleasant environment for its pupils.
81. Arrangements for appraisal and performance management are effective. They adhere closely to the nationally recommended guidance. Each teacher is observed teaching regularly and meets annually with the headteacher to identify areas for development. The areas for development are linked appropriately to the professional needs of the teachers and to the priorities for development identified by the school. Consequently, they are helping to improve teachers' performance and contributing to the improving standards achieved by pupils. Teachers also benefit from good opportunities to attend training courses. These are also linked appropriately to the school's priorities for improvement.
82. A fall in recent years in the number of pupils attending the school has led to a reduction in the number of teachers. However, there are enough to meet the demands of the curriculum. They are appropriately qualified and many are very experienced. The school has invested wisely to increase the number of learning support assistants and they make a positive contribution to pupils' achievements and to the good quality of learning. However, there are still not sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils in some lessons.

83. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classrooms are spacious and plentiful. There are two large halls, a community room and a recently developed computer suite and these are used well. However, the decorative condition of many areas is poor. There is a good playing field, a quiet area for pupils to sit and reflect, and two large playgrounds. These areas are used well by teachers and by pupils.
84. The resources to support learning are used very well, though they are insufficient in many subjects. Overall, the provision is unsatisfactory, with deficiencies in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT and religious education. Provision for the children in the Reception classes to play out of doors and to do practical activities is also unsatisfactory.
85. It is some time since the school has appointed any new teachers. However, arrangements for the induction of new staff are effective. Those arrangements required by teachers' conditions of service are in place. Staff work together closely in teams and are very supportive of each other. Consequently, teachers and learning support assistants make effective teams. This makes a very positive contribution to the good quality of teaching and learning.
86. Given the below average standards when pupils come into the school, the overall good teaching, management and leadership, and the improvement in standards by Year 6, the school provides very good value for money, in an ethos which encourages pupils to become secure, mature and responsible young people.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. In order to maintain the school's continuing improvement further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 by:
  - ensuring a consistent approach to assessment and target setting;
  - keeping a close check on pupils' progress.(Paragraphs 3, 5, 6, 7, 32, 38, 60, 61, 102, 110)
- (2) raise standards in music, art and design, and design and technology throughout the school by:
  - strengthening the planning of the curriculum;
  - providing training for teachers in these subjects.(Paragraphs 2, 12, 30, 35, 42, 73, 78, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 152)
- (3) improve attendance by:
  - ensuring that parents are contacted on the first day of absence;
  - initiating reward systems for regular attendance in school.(Paragraphs 25, 55)
- (4) improve the provision for pupils' cultural development by:
  - providing opportunities that raise awareness of pupils' own culture and the full range of cultures that makes up British society.(Paragraphs 12, 40, 44, 51, 100, 125, 129, 152)
- (5) improve learning resources by:
  - ensuring that there is enough equipment for teachers to plan for children to learn through outdoor play, role-play and other practical activities;
  - providing sufficient resources for learning in music, art and design, design and technology, religious education, information and communication technology, history and geography.(Paragraphs 31, 40, 84, 88, 109, 155)

In addition, the governors should also consider including in the action plan improvements to:

- ensure that the school prospectus and the governors' report to parents meet legal requirements.  
(Paragraphs 68, 74)
- lengthen teaching time in Years 3 to 6.  
(Paragraph 42).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	20	31	22	0	0	0
Percentage	5	26	40	29	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	420
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	218

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	86

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 (Year 2)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	34	24	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	31
	Girls	19	20	24
	Total	43	46	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (70)	79 (75)	95 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	20	18	19
	Total	44	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (72)	72 (79)	76 (69)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	25	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	25	29
	Girls	16	15	23
	Total	38	40	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (73)	73 (68)	95 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	29
	Girls	16	16	23
	Total	39	41	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (74)	75 (76)	95 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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



**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	420
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	4	1
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)	18.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	26.3

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

**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	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	817948
Total expenditure	801276
Expenditure per pupil	1908
Balance brought forward from previous year	16672
Balance carried forward to next year	33344

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	420
Number of questionnaires returned	159

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	39	1	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	39	15	4	1
The teaching is good.	65	29	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	33	14	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	26	6	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	41	8	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	55	33	4	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	36	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	35	13	6	9

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

87. Children start in the two Reception classes one term or two terms before their fifth birthday in September or January. Nearly all have attended the nearby nursery school.
88. At the time of the previous inspection, provision was found to be satisfactory. There have been significant changes in planning since then and the quality of teaching now ranges from satisfactory to very good. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, so that the majority are on track to achieve the nationally defined learning goals for this age group in these areas by the end of the Reception Year. Teachers have implemented planning from the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy very well and teaching in these aspects is a strength. In general, planning reflects the requirements of the nationally recommended guidance for this age range. However, there are no resources for teachers to plan for learning through the use of the outdoor environment and, as a result, they do not make as much progress as they might. Teachers also have difficulty in planning for role-play activities as the school has very few resources to develop imaginative play.
89. The school has established very good links with the nearby nursery school. Teachers make exchange visits regularly, which contribute to a good understanding of children's previous learning and help children settle quickly and confidently into their new class. Although not many parents help in school, a good relationship has been established and many parents are effective in supporting children's learning, particularly their reading. Each term the school invites parents into school to take part in special classes, led by the local college, on current methods of teaching literacy and numeracy, to enable parents to help their children with their learning. There are good systems in place to assess and track children's progress in reading, writing, mathematics and their personal and social development, but in the other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development, procedures to assess individual children's progress are not in place.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

90. When children start in the Reception class, they have already gained a good understanding of how to listen to adults and to work and play well together. Children settle quickly into their new classes and the teaching by all members of staff in the Reception team builds successfully on children's previous achievements. The daily routines, in both classes, are exceptionally well thought out to encourage children to become independent and confident learners. For instance, at the start of the day children leave their parents or carers happily, take responsibility for placing their reading book and key word cards in two separate places, place their name card on their group check sheet for the register and then choose for themselves their initial activity. They are proud that they can carry all of this out by themselves. All adults have established warm and friendly relationships which are based on trust and fairness. Over and above this, high expectations, both of behaviour and learning, are communicated well to the

children. As a result, children are already achieving many of the age-related goals in this area. For instance, all children can dress and undress themselves independently and they can select and use resources that they need for their work. When left to work independently, children share resources well and show an interest in each other's activities. However, the organisation of some activities is insufficiently challenging. For instance, there are too few opportunities for children to persist for extended periods of time at an activity of their choosing, or to return to it if it is necessary to stop. Despite this, teaching in this area is very good and children are on track to exceed the learning goals for this aspect.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

91. The teaching in this area has some significant strengths, particularly in the careful organisation and assessment of children's reading and the use made of support from parents. Overall, teaching is good, with just a few aspects that could be developed further. As a result, children make good progress and nearly all are on track to achieve the learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. A few, including those with significant special needs, will not achieve the goals.
92. Children are given very good support to develop their skills in speaking and listening. All adults speak clearly and use as many opportunities as they can throughout the day to develop children's confidence in speaking. For instance, during a good session, in which children learnt about a 'visit' to the seaside by the class bear, the teacher explained different geographical features of coastal areas. None of the children knew the word for a harbour. The teacher described what a harbour was for and asked the children to say the word 'harbour' several times. Later in the lesson when a child who learned more slowly than others was sorting postcards of seaside scenes, he remembered the explanation and with very little prompting used the word correctly. In literacy lessons, teachers use correct terms for different parts of speech and literary terms, and children learn these and use them well. There is lively use of stories from which children learn about the conventions of reading. During group reading times, they are encouraged to predict what might happen to a character, or to retell what has already occurred. There is very good teaching of letter sounds by both teachers and by the nursery nurse and classroom assistant, both of whom often work with a small group of children to give their learning an extra boost. Careful assessments, carried out each week, keep track of children's progress and enable teachers to move children on as soon as possible. Children of all levels of attainment are confident in trying to sound out words they do not know. Those of higher attainment know most single letter sounds and are beginning to join sounds together to build words. Those who learn more slowly than others know fewer sounds but use the ones they do know well.
93. The school introduced a different method of teaching writing at the start of this year. In the autumn term, children made good progress in writing sentences using the few words, such as 'I' and 'am', that they knew how to spell correctly, and words that they could copy, to write their own sentence. However, many lacked confidence to write more than one or two words. At the start of the spring term, the new methods used by teachers encouraged children to write words, using the letter sounds they know, irrespective of whether the spelling is correct. In this way a higher attaining pupil confidently wrote the sentence, 'I went to

Purchgal' and carried on to write a further sentence. This new method is being taught well so that even less able children begin to gain confidence in their own writing and are eager to write. For example, a group of children of mixed attainment wanted to write labels for a display of seaside mementos. One more able pupil was happy to try to spell the word 'bucket' on her own, while a less able pupil made a very good attempt at the word 'shell', even though only two letters were correct. Previously, this child had been very reluctant to write. Only one or two of the children are beginning to use full stops and capital letters, but nearly all have begun to put spaces between the words they write and to write their sentences in a logical sequence.

94. The direct teaching in literacy lessons is generally very good, though insufficient use is made of independent activities for children to write and read. In the 'café' area, the children pretending to be waiters have pads to 'write' the orders given by 'customers', but this could be developed much more with menu boards that changed each day, job description badges, opening and closing times to be decided on by the current 'staff', a variety of 'drinks' for sale with different labels, take-away orders and so on. Similarly, in other role-play areas and in construction, sand play or writing areas, opportunities are missed for children to write either their names or simple words such as 'yes' or 'no' in response to a challenge set. Children enjoy their work in this area and are eager to communicate and read.

### **Mathematical development**

95. This area is taught well. As a result, despite the below average level of attainment on entry, the majority will achieve the learning goals by the end of the Reception Year and a few will exceed them. Planning is good and teachers organise lessons well, with a very good range of methods and opportunities for children to use numbers in practical situations. Number rhymes and songs are used regularly and in both classes numbers are displayed and used incidentally when the opportunity arises. The judicious use of a commercial scheme has allowed the teachers to introduce the routines, games and the various characters that appear in the scheme. They add to children's enjoyment in their learning in mathematics and motivate them to try hard.
96. All children can recite numbers up and down from ten and they are able to compare collections to find out which has more or fewer objects. For example, three children of average attainment, who were making cakes with play dough, used varying numbers of straws to represent candles. When asked whose cake had the most candles, they all counted carefully and correctly identified the cake with nine candles as having the most, and the one with four candles as having the least. The child whose cake had six candles said that she had two more than the child with four. During their current topic on shopping children have learnt the vocabulary related to money and can recognise coins up to £1. More able children can add coins together, for instance, adding a 2p and a 5p coin to make 7p. During a very good session in which children used small amounts of money from home to buy treats such as crisps and a lollipop, nearly all children were able to select the right coins for their purchases of small amounts such as 6p and 8p. They understood, when they gave too much, that they would be given

change. Lower attaining pupils can recognise coins and have an understanding of their values. All pupils are involved and interested in their work on numeracy.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

97. Although some lessons and aspects of teaching are good, overall teaching in this area is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress but only a few are on track to achieve the required goals by the end of the Reception Year. Children have the opportunity to use computers and other equipment such as tape recorders and to understand the use of technology in everyday life. However, their understanding could be developed further. For instance, in the role-play area representing a travel agency, a computer and keyboard were noticeably lacking. The current topic on a holiday in Wales by the class bear provided teachers with good opportunities to discuss with children aspects of an environment different from their own. However, although most children could say that there was no seaside near their school, they found it hard to describe their own environment as a town or to say how the countryside was different. Although the teacher used maps to explain that England was an island, very few children understood that the blue colour on the map represented the sea. Teachers missed the opportunity to link this difficult concept to small world play. Some children using a wooden rail track with a few wooden houses did not play very fruitfully because there was little to structure their play or to develop their imaginations. The opportunity was missed to suggest that the train should start at Stoke-on-Trent and go to Wales or to encourage the children to represent the sea by a piece of blue paper, thereby linking their play to learning about maps.
98. Planning through the year provides opportunities for children to learn about festivals and stories in the Christian calendar. However, there is little planning to introduce children to a range of cultures and religions through stories, explanations or creative activities, in line with the recommended planning for this age group.

### **Physical development**

99. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall, with many good aspects. Children make satisfactory progress and are all on track to achieve the learning goals set for their age. There is no designated outside play area or outside storage for play equipment such as wheeled vehicles and large building blocks. As a result, teachers do not have the opportunity to allow children to move spontaneously between indoor and outdoor environments and this poses a limitation on some aspects of planning for this area. Nevertheless, teachers provide children with some good opportunities to develop their skills and physical awareness. In a good lesson using a range of small equipment such as bats, balls and hoops, children made good progress in running, catching, throwing and controlling a ball with a stick as they ran around small cones. Children are enthusiastic about these activities and they are enjoyed by children of all levels of attainment. Children are taught to name the different parts of their bodies in songs and games. They are taught to play 'follow my leader' games, noticing quickly when the teacher changes her actions. Higher attaining children reach a good level of physical development and lower attaining children become accustomed to using motor skills at an appropriate level. Most children use tools such as scissors,

paintbrushes and pencils as expected for their age, although some lower attaining pupils still grasp brushes and pencils awkwardly and their control is unsatisfactory. The school has some indoor climbing apparatus, but it poses little challenge for higher attaining children. They enjoy using it but opportunities are missed to develop language and collaborative play. Similarly, there is too little development in areas such as the play dough by offering a greater range of tools and techniques and related vocabulary. Good opportunities to develop dexterity had been given earlier in the year when the children had produced individual pieces of weaving and a large woven wall hanging, but in the main children's range of techniques is an area for further development.

### **Creative development**

100. Teaching is satisfactory. There are some strengths, but also some areas for development. Children make satisfactory progress and in many areas will achieve the expected goals for their age. However, they do not make sufficient progress in exploring and investigating media and texture for themselves, as the opportunities to do so are limited. In a very good music lesson, the teacher provided the children with a wide range of experiences. The lesson was planned very well to provide a balance between singing, performing with instruments and listening activities. All the children, including those with special educational needs, joined in the activities with evident enjoyment. At the end of the lesson when they mimicked the sounds they had heard on the tape of a boat being rowed on a river, one child remarked that it reminded her of the song they knew and she started to sing spontaneously, 'Row, row, row your boat'. The others all joined in and were able to sustain the melody without an accompaniment.
101. Higher attaining children produce paintings, chalk pictures and crayon pictures, but they are provided with mixed pots of paints rather than trying to mix paint themselves, and the choice of tools and techniques are limited. Although there are good work bay spaces, there is no opportunity for children to choose different media and to experiment with texture or colour, or to create their own models. Staff are aware that children need adult support from time to time to develop role-play in areas set aside for this. For instance, the classroom assistant joined in play in the café as a customer and the class teacher developed the play of three children in the travel agent's by pretending to book a holiday. Lower attaining children often need this kind of help to enable them to participate productively in activities. However, the two classes have only three areas for role-play and a lack of good quality resources and structure to help get the children's imaginations working.

### **ENGLISH**

102. Standards are below the national average by the end of Year 2 and are in line with the average by the end of Year 6. These findings reflect the latest national test results in 2001 for Year 6 but not for Year 2, when standards were well below average, and are evidence of the improvement in standards. This improvement can be accounted for by the good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the development of teachers' confidence in the teaching of basic skills of literacy. Although boys achieved better than girls in the tests, during the inspection there was no significant difference either in their work or in

their positive attitudes to lessons. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with the average by Year 2, but below average by Year 6. Given their low attainment on entry, boys and girls are both achieving well over their time in school and current standards represent an improvement. Higher attaining, average and lower attaining pupils make equally good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their 2001 results are well above those for similar schools at the age of eleven.

103. In speaking and listening, by Year 2, average and less able pupils are not confident in communicating with others. Whilst average attainers structure their sentences satisfactorily, less able pupils, including those with special needs, usually speak in fragments. More able pupils are eager to discuss, for example, the books they have read, but tend to focus on their own views without sufficient regard for those of others. Communication is generally unambiguous, but few pupils have a satisfactory awareness of Standard English. For example, a more able pupil in Year 2 commented clearly but inaccurately, 'Fell on top of the table Kevin has'. By Year 6, the vast majority of pupils speak with reasonable confidence. The more able speak with assurance. In discussions they listen carefully, taking account of what others say before asking relevant questions to take exchanges further. They vary the style of language appropriately, speaking familiarly to friends, but more formally to adults. Words like 'hypothesise' and 'deduce' are used naturally. Average attaining pupils have a less extensive vocabulary, but when analysing a text on spiders, pupils used words like 'chronological' with understanding. They are sufficiently confident to take the initiative and to question, politely, what others say. Thanks to tactful adult support, pupils in the lowest set, who all have special needs, are making gains in both confidence and vocabulary. The use of drama helps them to lose self-consciousness. Responses are usually relevant because they listen well, but they do not develop their ideas at length. They do not use a formal style consistently on all occasions when it would be appropriate.
104. Year 2 pupils of all abilities obey simple punctuation when reading aloud, but even the more able show inaccuracy and little fluency. Whilst average attainers can recall the plot and characters of some of the books they have read, their capacity to express opinions about them is far less developed. More able pupils largely respond to prompts but tend not to take the initiative in offering opinions. Less able pupils have uncertain recall. Parents make a good contribution to the younger pupils' learning by hearing them read at home, but this becomes less frequent as they get older. In general, by Year 2 pupils are not secure in locating books or information, as they do not have a sufficiently well-developed alphabetical knowledge. By Year 6, the more able read fluently and with great expression when reading aloud. The works of Tolkien, for example, present no difficulties. Crucial features of the text are explained succinctly and inferences are justified with apt quotations from other parts of the book. Average attainers are less perceptive in drawing inferences but make appropriate references to the text when discussing some of the themes and ideas. They read well aloud, although not without occasional hesitation. Less able pupils are hesitant, but usually manage to correct their errors themselves. They discuss competently the main points of the text, with prompts, and express preferences. All pupils understand how to use a library to locate books and find information because they make regular visits to the public library.



105. Pupils' writing improves steadily, so that by Year 2 more able pupils put sentences together in a logical sequence to produce stories. An imaginative account of a road accident by one pupil included dialogue and accurate basic punctuation. Simple words were usually spelled correctly. Handwriting was legible, of a consistent size but not joined. Average attainers write in much shorter sentences and, unless they receive adult support, do not link them together well enough to develop their ideas clearly. Whilst they usually put full stops in the right places, they use capital letters inconsistently. Their handwriting is not joined and varies somewhat in size and shape. Less able pupils have great difficulty with spelling without close adult support. They produce few sentences and neither sentences nor phrases extend ideas in a coherent sequence. Their handwriting improves over their time in school but by Year 2 is still not consistent in form or size. By Year 6 the more able write accurately in varied and interesting ways. An account of the heroism of Grace Darling, for example, included the precise and evocative description of the aftermath of the storm: 'The next morning the sea was calm and lapping over the volcanic rocks'. Simple and complex sentences are well blended to create effective paragraphs that extend ideas well. Handwriting is clear but is not regularly joined. Average attainers use simpler, more repetitive sentences, but still combine them effectively into paragraphs. They are beginning to use words adventurously, as in the Victorian style of, 'The leaking boiler became ever worse'. Punctuation is used well, but spelling slips such as 'new bron baby' spoil otherwise good work. The less able structure their arguments well in bullet points to persuade, for example, a five year old to eat cabbage, but do not produce paragraphs. Common words are usually spelled correctly but the spelling of more complex vocabulary is erratic.
106. Throughout the school pupils use ICT satisfactorily to support literacy, especially redrafting. Pupils word process their work, using a variety of fonts and sizes, and take turns to write directly onto the screen. A Year 6 newspaper, for example, suitably emulates journalistic style and includes the attention-grabbing headline, 'Shearer Shoots Final Shot' to mark a footballer's retirement. Teaching is consistently good for all ages and abilities. Grouping according to pupils' level of attainment in Years 3 to 6 means that lessons are more closely focused on pupils' needs. In all years, classroom assistants and volunteers work well with teachers to provide even more individual attention. This means that in such activities as shared reading, pupils have the necessary support to improve their skills. As teachers share objectives with pupils, everyone knows what they are trying to achieve. Good feedback sessions at the ends of lessons mean that pupils and teachers see how well objectives have been met, and what they need to do next. Teachers ask questions well, drawing everyone in. They are effective in supporting the lower attaining pupils and also extending the higher attainers. Teachers and learning support assistants are vigilant in ensuring that pupils from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, are included effectively in all aspects of the subject. Class management is very good because of very good relationships between pupils and teachers. This contributes to unselfconscious and willing communication because pupils know that what they have to say will be valued. In their regular marking, teachers again make it clear from their supportive comments that all effort will be rewarded, which encourages pupils to work harder.

107. Literacy is well supported throughout the curriculum. Key vocabulary is regularly identified and reinforced, for example in science lessons, so that pupils express themselves effectively using correct terms. Postcards from Egypt help consolidate historical knowledge, as well as reinforce an informal style of writing. Throughout the school the work of pupils of all abilities is prominently displayed, which celebrates their achievement and strengthens their motivation.
108. Subject co-ordination is good in promoting consistently good teaching and learning and consequent rising standards. As a consequence, teaching and learning are often very good and standards are rising. The National Literacy Strategy is well implemented and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers keep up to date with the latest official guidance. A good programme of statutory and non-statutory assessments means that the strengths and weaknesses of individuals can be identified and addressed appropriately.
109. There is a good range of books, including graded readers, large-print storybooks, and a small range of reference material. Whilst there are distinct areas set aside for reading for all age groups, the school library is insufficiently developed to support pupils' research skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

110. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average. By the end of Year 6 they are average. Over recent years the results of the annual national tests show that standards are improving steadily. When compared with those found in similar schools, standards are very high and pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. These standards are achieved because the quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. Teachers and learning support assistants ensure successfully that pupils from all backgrounds are included effectively in all aspects of the provision made for the subject. At the time of the last inspection, standards in Years 3 to 6 were well below average and the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Consequently, improvement since that time is good.
111. Teachers have received training in applying the principles advocated by the National Numeracy Strategy. They use these very effectively and they contribute well towards the improvement in standards evident since their introduction. Teachers usually begin lessons with mental arithmetic and this part of the lesson is used well to consolidate existing mental mathematical skills. At these times the pace of learning is good. Teachers present the work with great enthusiasm and make the learning enjoyable. They match the questions they ask well to pupils' abilities. This means all pupils are included effectively and many show great enthusiasm for their learning. Teachers also make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy abilities in other subjects. For example, in geography pupils arrange data from traffic surveys correctly for presentation on graphs and charts.
112. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the values of coins and add coins of different values together correctly. However, many less able pupils struggle to work out how much change they should have when they make purchases from the

classroom shop. This is because their basic knowledge of subtraction is not developed sufficiently well. Even so, steady progress is evident in lessons when teachers successfully encourage pupils to use a range of strategies and to select the one that they feel most confident in using. A similar situation is evident in Years 5 and 6 when pupils examine the links between fractions, decimals and percentages. The work of both average and of higher attaining pupils with fractions often breaks down because their abilities to divide are not established sufficiently well.

113. Throughout the school, teachers successfully encourage pupils to use the correct mathematical vocabulary. Pupils are eager learners and in many lessons they are reluctant to stop and move on to other subjects. This is in response to the enthusiastic teaching they receive and the very good relationships evident between teachers and their pupils. Teachers in all year groups often ask pupils to explain how they have arrived at their answers or if anyone has used an alternative strategy. These processes contribute effectively to pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as their mathematical understanding. A pupil in Year 2, when asked what a 'strategy' is, replied, 'It's how you work something out'.
114. In Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils are grouped by ability. This arrangement works well, enabling teachers to make a good match between the work they set and pupils' abilities. This principle is extended well in the middle sections of lessons. At these times pupils work in small groups. When pupils in these groups are supported directly by teachers and by learning support assistants, they make good progress. However, when they work independently, the pace of the learning is not as good. This feature is more evident in Years 1 and 2, where pupils are less confident at applying the principles and strategies they are taught. A similar pattern is evident in mental and oral work for pupils in these year groups. Lower attaining pupils make good progress when they can refer to aids, such as lines of numbers. Teachers also use such aids to explain mathematical processes. However, when pupils are challenged to do calculations without such aids, many struggle. As a result, the mental arithmetic of many pupils in this age group is below average. They also find problem-solving activities difficult because their language skills are not developed sufficiently.
115. Standards in Year 6 are close to those expected for pupils of this age and many achieve well. They apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding well. Their teachers explain the mathematical strategies they need very clearly and reinforce them frequently. For example, many pupils know the 'Golden Rules' for problem solving by heart and apply them well to the mathematical challenges they face. They do this when they calculate the salaries of well-known personalities over different periods of time. They make sensible estimates to test if their predictions are reasonable and know that it is usually wise to deal with the largest numbers first in any problem. They apply these strategies well when they calculate, correctly, how long it would take a famous footballer to count his salary if he was paid in one pound coins.
116. The use of ICT to enhance the quality of pupil's learning is satisfactory. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a *Toy Shop* program well to calculate the amounts of money they need to purchase items and to work out the amount of

change they should receive. This program is also used well to enhance the learning of less able pupils in Years 3 to 6.

117. Arrangements to assess the attainment and progress of pupils are good. Teachers maintain detailed records that show clearly the strengths of each pupil's performance in the subject and enables teachers to identify those areas that require improvement. Subsequent actions taken to address these areas are effective. Teachers also ensure that pupils are aware of what is expected of them in lessons and of how much progress they have made. They do this by explaining the intended learning aims at the start of each lesson and reviewing the progress made towards them at the end of each lesson. They also set realistic, individual targets for each pupil to attain, and remind pupils, frequently, about the progress they are making. The subject co-ordinator looks closely at the results of the annual national tests and other tests taken by pupils. What is taught is modified appropriately in response to the findings of test results. This means the needs of pupils are met well and that they are helped to achieve well. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for overall attainment in the subject. These are based on the assessments made by teachers as pupils progress through the school.
118. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The co-ordinator provides very good advice and guidance for his colleagues. This makes a significant contribution to the good and often very good quality of teaching and to the steadily improving standards attained by the pupils. The scheme of work for the subject is good and embodies the principles advocated by the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. As a result, throughout the school, the curriculum is covered well, with appropriate time allocated to each aspect of the subject. Resources to support learning are good. This is because the subject co-ordinator has invested wisely in response to the deficiencies identified by an audit of the provision made for the subject. These resources are used well by teachers and cared for well by pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

119. The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 in the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds were well above average and also well above the average of those attained in similar schools. A large proportion of pupils attained the higher than expected level. Inspectors judge that current Year 6 pupils are reaching average standards, but with a high proportion of pupils likely to attain the higher than expected level. Teacher assessment shows that the standards attained by Year 2 pupils in 2001 were well below the national average, although a good number of pupils attained the higher than expected level 3. The test results of eleven year olds show steady improvement over the last four years and standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. This improvement is largely due to better teaching, improved planning and improvements in the science curriculum. The curriculum appropriately focuses on investigative work and as a result pupils have a good understanding of the need to make tests fair and reach good levels of attainment in scientific enquiry. The attainment of boys has been slightly better than that of girls over this period. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive in the classroom and their achievement is good in

relation to their earlier attainment. Teachers and learning support assistants between them ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment and background are included well in the provision made for the subject.

120. Standards in the current Year 2 are average. Some good examples of investigative work were observed. In a lesson with Year 2, pupils constructed an electrical circuit and average and higher attaining pupils understood that a circuit has to be complete for the device to work. Pupils used the correct vocabulary when explaining their circuits and exploring how they could make more bulbs light up. More able pupils were aware that adding further bulbs would make the light dimmer. The teacher's good demonstration of the use of a light switch led to the introduction of the term conductivity and her clear explanations and careful questioning successfully developed pupils' knowledge and the understanding that metal to metal conduction is vital.
121. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils overall is average compared with the standards that are expected nationally, but a high number of pupils are on track to achieve the higher than expected level for their age. The school has analysed the responses made by pupils to questions in tests at the end of Year 6 and made amendments to the teaching programme to address the weaknesses identified. A determined effort has been made to promote experimental and investigative science and teachers give emphasis to this by planning a range of activities which develop pupils' investigative skills. As a consequence, their understanding of scientific concepts is developing well in pupils of all levels of attainment. Their work is neatly presented and close attention is given to developing correct scientific methodology when carrying out and recording experiments. Pupils have covered a wide range of scientific topics and have a good understanding of the need to make tests fair. This is seen, for example, in work in Year 6 when pupils investigate the solubility of a range of materials. Pupils of average and higher attainment are aware that only one variable should change in order for the experiment to be fair and carefully monitor the quantity of water used and the time allowed to stir the water prior to examining the solution to see if the material has dissolved. Most pupils can plan and carry out investigations, using deduction and forming hypotheses. In a lesson with Year 5, the teacher clearly explained how we hear sounds as a result of vibrations in the air and that some materials prevent these vibrations from reaching our ears. The pupils enjoyed carrying out an experiment to explore this by using boxes containing a clock surrounded by different materials. Their awareness of the need to keep all but the one variable the same was clearly demonstrated by their comments on the problems involved in carrying out the experiment. They were aware, for example, that the different hearing level of pupils and uncertainty over the amount of material in each box might have affected results.
122. The quality of teaching is good with a high proportion being very good and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be mainly satisfactory. The teachers have secure subject knowledge, prepare their lessons thoroughly and stress the importance of learning through structured practical activities. They clearly outline the aim of the lesson at the beginning and sum up the work at the end by referring back to the aim. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they can do, and a brisk pace to lessons ensures that all pupils work

with a high rate of effort. Very good questioning is used to explore and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, as was seen in a lesson in Year 3 on light and the hazards of sunlight. The teacher's skilled questioning developed the pupils' awareness of how they might use different factor sun creams on ultra violet detecting beads in order to determine which sun cream gave the better protection, developing the pupils' awareness that light can also be a source of heat. The pupils enjoyed this lively session and were able to judge their results against their predictions and record their findings with some accuracy. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment in lessons to ensure that the level of challenge in activities is appropriate and periodically test pupils to determine the progress they are making.

123. Pupils enjoy science lessons and their attitudes to the subject are very good. They are well motivated and engage in activities in an excited and enthusiastic manner. They apply their knowledge and skills of experimenting successfully to investigations and new learning. They are keen to ask and answer questions and make sensible suggestions. Teachers make effective use of literacy and numeracy in the subject and the use of ICT is developing, but is not yet a strong feature of the work.
124. The subject is effectively managed and the co-ordinator has a clear view of its strengths and the areas requiring development, although she does not yet monitor teaching of the subject. The policy and scheme of work give clear guidance to teachers so that they are fully aware of the areas they should be covering from term to term.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

125. Standards of attainment in art and design are below those that are typically achieved by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and below what is expected nationally. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should, because the range covered in the subject curriculum is too narrow. This picture is much the same as it was at the time of the last inspection. Improvements have been slowed because the school, of necessity, has concentrated its efforts on raising standards of attainment in English and mathematics. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, are included effectively in lessons.
126. Since the last inspection, the school has changed its planning for art and design and has made use of national guidance to provide an outline of the work in each year group. This potentially beneficial change has, to some extent, not worked wholly in the school's favour or had the anticipated effect on raising standards. This is because teachers were presented with a new set of challenges, which they found hard to incorporate into their work. The teacher who organises the school's curriculum for art has worked hard to tackle such problems and is having some success in overcoming them, though there is a need for teachers to be further trained. Teachers have begun to benefit from projects involving the whole school which provide pupils with good chances to learn and practise new skills and techniques and enable teachers to improve their ability to make critical evaluations of the work of pupils of different ages. Art is an emerging priority for a review of the curriculum.

127. Although all lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory, teaching is unsatisfactory overall in the provision it makes for the development of pupils' skills. There are pockets of good work arising from successful lessons. Where teachers have good knowledge of successful teaching methods and are confident enough to allow pupils the scope for invention and creativity, lessons are purposeful, well-paced and enjoyable. Average and higher attaining pupils make good progress in such lessons and broaden and refine techniques for making pictures in two or three dimensions. In one lesson, for example, pupils used a good range of materials and techniques for making masks. They learned how to soften the cardboard to make it more malleable and commented on the suitability of masking tape to make firm joins. The lesson contributed very well to the pupils' social development. Some pupils who have special educational needs and do not always find it easy to maintain their concentration and lower attaining pupils, enjoyed success, worked happily and gave their help generously to their friends. Following a lesson in an infant class, a small group of pupils talked enthusiastically about the work that they had done outside, using natural materials to create pictures. The lesson had clearly been successful, because not only could the pupils describe and evaluate their work lucidly, they had also learned some new vocabulary about making 'sculptures'. This kind of teaching indicates that the school is well placed to raise standards in art and design
128. Nonetheless, across the school, the range of work is limited. There are few examples of work in three dimensions and too few opportunities have been provided for pupils to make close observations as a basis for making pictures. Pupils know little of the styles and techniques of famous artists and have grasp of too few artistic skills. Some of the tasks offer little interest for the higher attaining pupils, for example, colouring in a commercially-produced worksheet. Because the subject has not been high on the list of the school's priorities, the resources for the subject are limited and serve to constrain the range of work further. The teacher in charge of the subject is well informed about standards in the school and is anxious to take the necessary action to raise them.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

129. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards which are below average. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were in line with the average. Achievement is unsatisfactory because the school has not devoted sufficient attention to the subject. Pupils of all abilities, both boys and girls, throughout the school have not had sufficient opportunities or resources to develop their design skills as well as they should.
130. As a result of the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2. The small amount of work in pupils' books and on display shows that only a narrow range of tasks has been attempted. Linked to their work in science, Year 1 pupils have selected appropriate materials for the construction of houses for the 'Three Little Pigs', and have sorted food into suitable categories to make sandwiches to support a healthy diet. Pupils in Year 2 have used the principle of the windlass in constructing models of 'Pussy in the Well' to demonstrate how to get her out. In conversation, a group of Year 2 pupils did not recall any design brief for this, and no choice in methods, tools, or

materials. There was no evidence to support any significant planning, or of evaluation and review, apart from one child's recall of gluing a peg to a shaft when it fell off. Models on display show reasonable, but not especially accurate, cutting and gluing, principally of card. Overall, there is little to show that pupils have much grasp of the design process, which suggests that learning has been unsatisfactory.

131. In the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 pupils learned well because teachers made them think about how things worked, what worked well and what could be improved. In two Year 6 lessons about bedroom slippers, for example, consideration of their use, users' views and fitness for purpose featured strongly, so that average and higher attaining pupils gained much knowledge about design and materials. Over the longer term, however, teachers have not received sufficient training in the subject and teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils have not made the gains in knowledge and understanding that they should because they have not done enough. They are only now beginning to generate ideas and starting to plan and select. They have no experience of ongoing evaluation, testing, and modification because they have had few opportunities for practical work. There is no evidence of the use of ICT.
132. Despite the limitations identified, pupils interviewed in and out of lessons showed interest in their work and an enthusiasm for making things.
133. Subject management is unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator has received only limited training and, hence, does not have the confidence or expertise to support colleagues to the extent that she wishes. There is an appropriate policy, and a nationally recognised scheme of work is in place, but no checks take place to see how well it is taught and how well pupils are learning. There is no record of assessment to plot the progress of individual pupils. The budget allocated to the subject is insufficient, so that resources are poor. In the lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 sufficient resources were available only thanks to the generosity of staff, parents and pupils themselves. The range of materials and tools available overall is inadequate to support the curriculum.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

134. Whilst only two lessons were observed during the inspection, from the work seen and displays around the school, both seven year olds and eleven year olds continue to reach standards that are average compared with those expected nationally, maintaining the position found in the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress and achieve well, compared with their attainment on entry to the school. Teachers ensure that pupils from all backgrounds are included effectively in the provision made for the subject.
135. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory awareness of their local area. Year 1 pupils can use their mapping skills, using a plan of the school to find places in the building. Year 2 pupils continue this by looking at their journey to school and developing a basic understanding of maps. Average and higher attaining pupils understand simple compass directions and can work out if something is north, south, east or west of a location. Their understanding of location and transport is



developed by the use of stories such as Katie Morag on the Isle of Struay. They study the seaside and lower attaining pupils can make simple comparisons with their own area. Good use is made of a visit to Shugborough Hall to make the study of a farm an exciting project for pupils in Year 1. Both higher attaining and average pupils acquire the basic skills of the subject satisfactorily.

136. By Year 6, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding about geography. Through good teaching they understand physical processes, such as an understanding of how mountains are formed by movements in the earth's crust. They are interested when learning of the effect of altitude on the amount of oxygen in the air and that there are mountains under the sea. In one lesson on this topic, the teacher's good subject knowledge and expert use of questions resulted in a lively discussion in which the pupils showed enthusiasm for the subject and a developing understanding of the effect that mountains have on rainfall and temperature. Average and higher attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place. They study the village of Chembakolli in India and compare it with the local area of Meir to develop an understanding of different locations. Pupils' mapping skills develop well through the study of the immediate area around the school. The teacher made effective use of their knowledge of the local area in a lesson involving Year 3 pupils, locating and plotting their home on a map and then using different maps to plot a range of buildings, including shops, churches and schools. This was a lively session in which the pupils were excited and enthusiastic and worked well together when exploring maps. The environmental awareness of pupils is developed in their studies of the recycling of rubbish. Year 4 pupils have written to the local council requesting the provision of litterbins and carried out surveys of litter, showing their results in graphs drawn up by use of computers. However, ICT is not used sufficiently in the subject.
137. Lesson observations, analysis of pupils' written work and discussion with teachers and pupils indicate that teaching is generally good and there is some very good teaching. Teachers explain things in an interesting manner in order to encourage pupils to listen carefully and this maintains their interest. In the lessons seen pupils had very good attitudes to the subject and generally learnt at a good pace.
138. Management of the subject is good, although, because the new programme of work instigated by the co-ordinator has only been used in the last year, its results are not yet reflected in standards throughout the school. Whilst the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching, she does monitor teachers' planning, and gives advice and guidance where required. She is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear view of standards. The curriculum has been reviewed and is now well structured as a result of the use of national guidance. A programme of work for each year group has been clearly identified which enables teachers to make sure that pupils' work builds systematically on work they have already covered. Improvements in the pupils' progress are already evident. The quality and quantity of resources are unsatisfactory, hindering pupils' progress in acquiring the required skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

139. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are close to those expected for pupils at these ages. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. The quality of teaching is good and pupils show good attitudes to learning. Teachers and learning support assistants ensure, successfully, that pupils from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, are included effectively in the provision made for the subject.
140. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. However, the quality of teaching has improved and a nationally recommended scheme of work is being used well to guide teachers' planning and ensure that the curriculum is covered appropriately. Consequently, provision in the subject is improving, though it is too soon for that improvement to be apparent throughout the school.
141. Pupils in Year 2 use photographic evidence well to identify differences between seaside holidays today and those in the past. With very effective assistance from their teachers, they also arrange photographs of seaside holidays in the correct chronological order. These pupils also consider the life and times of Florence Nightingale, with average and higher attaining pupils making realistic comparisons about how the hospitals of today differ from those at the time of the Crimean War. Pupils of all levels of attainment are encouraged and helped to make good progress.
142. The use of ICT to enhance the quality of pupil's learning is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 used the Internet to undertake research about the first group of immigrants to arrive in Britain from Jamaica. Their teachers enabled them to relate this event to their previous learning about the Victorian period and the expansion of the Empire. It gave pupils of average attainment a clear understanding of the historic links between Britain and the various islands that make up the West Indies. Pupils in Year 4 study Ancient Greece and the city states of Athens and Sparta. When they did this, teachers used questions well. This enabled pupils to draw conclusions and higher attaining pupils were able to make comparisons between the two city states. Pupils are very eager learners and responded very well to the questions posed by their teachers. They matched correctly statements about each of the city states, based on their knowledge and ability to make deductions from the available evidence. They also used a CD-ROM well to undertake research on this topic. Higher attaining pupils continue to research areas they have covered in lessons and pupils of average and lower attainment make good progress with work that is graded appropriately to match their needs.
143. Educational visits are used well to enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 visit Shugborough Farm to look at Victorian kitchens and Chester to look at evidence of the Roman occupation. Visitors to the school also make a good contribution to the quality of learning. Pupils in Year 5 benefited greatly from a visit by the education officer from Macclesfield Museum Trust. They looked at objects in common use during the period of World War II. They made realistic predictions about what the objects were and how they might have been used, such as a Morse Code signal button, ration books and identity tags. Later this work was extended when they wrote, in an English lesson, about what life was like during World War II. Teachers make good use of opportunities for

discussion at these times, helping to develop pupils' speaking and listening abilities. Links with other subjects are also developed well. For example, pupils in Year 5, in design and technology, produced good models in the style of Ancient Egyptian artists and craftsmen, based on their study of the period.

144. The quality of leadership and management is good. The subject co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the strengths of the subject and possible areas for improvement. This is based on her discussions with colleagues and her analysis of pupils' work. However, there are not enough opportunities for her to monitor the quality of teaching and learning at first hand. Resources to support pupils' learning are unsatisfactory and there are not enough to underpin teaching for some of the units of work included in the recently adopted scheme, limiting pupils' ability to make deductions for themselves, based on historical evidence.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

145. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are average compared with those expected nationally. This is an improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection and reflects good improvement because the demands of the National Curriculum have risen significantly in recent years. Since the last inspection a computer suite has been provided and teachers are now using this facility regularly to enable pupils to develop an adequate range of computer skills. Teachers' subject expertise has improved as a result of training and the quality of teaching has improved. The school has developed clear curriculum guidance to show teachers what has to be taught in each year. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and are achieving well.
146. By Year 2, pupils of average attainment use computers confidently to produce pieces of writing and pictures linked to their work in literacy. For example, Year 1 pupils have written about 'Dipper is a dolphin' and created pictures showing satisfactory control of the mouse and knowledge of the keyboard. Year 2 pupils develop their word-processing skills by writing a letter to Santa and creating a story about 'The Shark with No Teeth.' Higher attaining pupils use computers confidently to label the parts on a picture of the human body. Year 1 pupils use the computer to produce graphs in mathematics lessons to show how children travel to school and develop their spelling skills using a spelling program in literacy lessons. However, a sizeable minority of lower attaining pupils, particularly those without regular access to computers at home, still lack confidence, and rely on help from adults or classmates.
147. By Year 6, pupils use computers with at least adequate confidence. Higher attaining pupils produce a newspaper using desktop publishing and use word processing well as a tool for presenting work. Pupils' skills in control technology are developed. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils explored patterns and predicted what a shape would be from a series of instructions, prior to entering the instructions and creating the shape on the computer. The high level skills of the teacher were reflected in his clear instructions and the very good support he gave to pupils when they carried out the task. This resulted in pupils demonstrating good skills in controlling the movement of a 'screen turtle' and making very good progress in the lesson. Pupils have used art programs to create computer art and simple

shape patterns and are making effective use of databases to support their work in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils have created simple branching databases on trees and penguins and Year 5 pupils have created a database on the pupils in the class in order to search and analyse information and produce graphs. Whilst pupils in Year 4 have made good use of spreadsheets to draw graphs linked to their work in geography on litter, generally pupils have had little experience of using spreadsheets. Similarly, pupils have limited experience in using e-mail and the Internet. However, in the short time the suite has been in operation, progress in the subject has been good. Higher attaining pupils are confident in their use of computers, while lower attaining pupils are being helped to use them to support their work in other areas.

148. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects. Whilst the use of computers is generally dependent on the skills and confidence of the teacher, there were a number of examples of good use in other subjects. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher made effective use of the computer in her word work session and subsequently in the group and activity session to develop pupils' spelling skills. Pupils in Year 3 used the computer to support their work in the addition of money in mathematics. Year 4 pupils used a CD-ROM to find information on Ancient Greece in a history lesson. The school is currently developing further the use of ICT across the curriculum.
149. In the two examples of direct teaching in the computer suite, the quality of teaching and learning observed was good and very good. Displays of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that, throughout the school, teaching is more varied, but is generally good. Teachers are attempting to integrate the development of computer skills into their planning for other subjects. For example, they provide opportunities for their classes to use computers independently to look for information on Ancient Greece in history or to edit and improve their extended writing in English when producing a newspaper. They plan a range of interesting activities, making use of ICT, for example in geography, using computer techniques to explain the types of mountains. They make good use of it themselves to plan their work or by using overhead projectors in the classroom. They also provide good opportunities for the pupils to work together and talk constructively about their work. Consequently, pupils throughout the school are very responsible and co-operative when using computers. They help each other out when in difficulties and treat equipment with respect. They are very enthusiastic about the subject and keen to learn more. Teachers make sure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are included effectively in the provision made for the subject.
150. All classes are timetabled to use the computer suite for one session a week. At other times during the inspection, when the room was free for independent or group use, it was rarely used. Assessment is not used sufficiently in most classes to identify pupils who are more able in their use of ICT or to prepare work which will challenge them, although the co-ordinator is developing a record system that may help to address this issue. Pupils with special educational needs usually receive extra support, which enables them to make the same progress as other members of the class.

151. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has developed an effective system to monitor the work of the school. A helpful scheme of work, which takes account of national guidance, has been introduced. The number of computers has been increased and training has taken place to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding. There is a detailed action plan for improvement. The skills, knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator have been used to good effect in Years 3 to 6, where he is based. The resources, although improved, are still inadequate. The computer suite has 15 networked computers, but overall the ratio of pupils to a computer is too high.

## **MUSIC**

152. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in music were above average at the ages of both seven and eleven. Standards achieved in music now are below those expected nationally by these ages. They are below expectations in performance, composition and listening to music, so that higher attaining pupils, average and lower attaining pupils make too little progress. The reason for this is that music has had too low a profile in the school of late. The scheme of work used by the school needs the input of a specialist in the subject, but the school no longer has a member of staff with this expertise. The new co-ordinator is not a specialist and, though making great efforts to implement the scheme of work, is unable to offer the support and advice necessary to enable other teachers to use it well. The school, with local authority advice, is moving towards the use of the nationally recommended guidelines as a scheme of work. However, it will take time before there is an appreciable impact on raising standards, mainly because there has been insufficient teaching of music in the school in the last 18 months.
153. There is little performance other than in singing, which is frequently taken by the headteacher as hymn practice in assemblies, as observed in the sensitive singing of a 'Taize' chant, well modelled and co-ordinated by the headteacher. Listening and appreciation are also undertaken, mainly in assemblies, and there is little composition undertaken. There is a recorder group once a week, but no instrumental tuition. Although standards in music are below expectations, pupils learn well when singing. They sing with enthusiasm and interest. All lessons are accessible to pupils with special educational needs and to pupils of all levels of musical ability.
154. It was only possible to observe one music lesson during the week of the inspection, again, a singing lesson, in which pupils were rehearsing a Greek song in readiness for their summer concert. It is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on teaching. In the lesson seen, the teacher explained clearly what the pupils would learn and maintained a high level of concentration and effort by pupils.
155. There is no formal assessment, monitoring or evaluation of the subject at present. Resources for the subject are barely adequate. The school attempts to provide some form of musical experience for pupils through concerts given by local authority orchestras, but pupils are exposed to insufficient musical opportunity.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards exceed those expected for pupils at these ages. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. The quality of teaching is good and pupils show good attitudes to learning. Teachers and learning support assistants successfully ensure that pupils from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, are included effectively in all aspects of the provision made for the subject.
157. Standards are higher than those found at the time of the last inspection and the quality of teaching has improved. Consequently, improvement since that time is good.
158. Pupils in Year 2 work hard and display good skills in gymnastics, responding well to the enthusiasm of their teachers. Pupils of average attainment jump and land with good control. Their sequences of work develop well when they combine jumping and landing with moving on other parts of their bodies. They also handle items of apparatus safely and efficiently. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance or that of others. High attaining pupils make good progress in learning new skills and pupils of lower attainment make satisfactory progress.
159. During games lessons pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 achieve well and make good progress because they are motivated well by competitive activities. In cricket and rounders they throw and catch and bat and bowl well. They do this most effectively in the games that are modified appropriately by their teachers to meet their needs. Lower attaining pupils are not always competent when they practise their skills before applying them in games. However, their teachers are alert to this and provide them with good advice that helps them to improve. They do this by drawing pupils' attention to the main points of technique for the skills they are developing. As in the gymnastics lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performances or those of their classmates.
160. The school provides an excellent programme of extra-curricular sports activities and achieves significant success in competition with other schools. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator does much to promote this feature of the provision, and liaison with external agencies is very good. For example, a coach from the Stoke City Football Academy visits each week to work with gifted and talented pupils. The pupils are joined for these sessions by pupils from other schools. They show very well developed skills and make very good progress. The range of extra-curricular activities includes athletics, netball, football and rounders. The athletics club is very well attended and is supported by a former pupil who is the current English Schools' decathlon champion. His presence inspires pupils to produce excellent performances. Considerable success is achieved in hockey and, over recent years, the school has been the most successful in the area, winning the district championship on several occasions.
161. The quality of leadership and management is good. However, there are no formal opportunities for the co-ordinator to evaluate the quality of provision. Little use is made of ICT to enhance the quality of pupils' learning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

162. Standards of attainment in both key stages are broadly in line with the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus, though the curriculum is narrow in range. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and resources have been improved so that they are now adequate to teach the subject, though thin in artefacts to illustrate and exemplify work done on other faiths and customs.
163. Pupils in Year 1 are becoming more familiar with the life of Jesus. The stories used by teachers are used well to extend pupils' knowledge. They are developing a good idea of the qualities required in a 'helper' through reflection on their lives, actions and attitudes towards others. Year 2 pupils are learning to appreciate the value of various famous people and the points of view of others through a knowledge of the lives of Jonah, Mother Theresa and St Francis. They begin to look at the customs and artefacts of Judaism. Scrutiny of their past work shows that pupils are beginning to understand the function of celebrations in faith communities, for example, in their work on Easter and Whitsun. Pupils of all levels of attainment make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 2.
164. Pupils' satisfactory achievement in Key Stage 1 is continued in Years 3 to 6. In Years 3 and 4 pupils know that the stories of Jesus are called parables and that they are stories with meanings for the everyday life of believers. Lower attaining pupils know that the Bible is a special book and that the stories of Jesus are found in the Gospels. Most have a ready understanding of the emotions of the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son and higher attainers explain what the parable means. They have some understanding of celebrations such as Harvest, Sukkat, Diwali and Hannukah and of places of worship, such as churches and synagogues. In Years 5 and 6 their horizons widen, as they look at 'special' books, such as the Qur'an and the Torah and religious symbols such as the Seder Plate. They begin to learn about leaders such as Moses and Mohammed and know some of the events of their lives. Since so much work in religious education is oral or subsumed into personal and social education, past recorded work is rather thin. It does, however, show little evidence of independent writing or personal research. There is also little reflective writing, so that the subject makes only a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
165. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching and learning seen was satisfactory overall. Teachers planned their lessons well so that pupils shared some good information about friends and friendship and about Jesus' friends. Their calm approach gave rise to a good response from pupils who wish to please their teachers and live up to their expectations, but pupils, particularly the higher attainers, became bored and inattentive when opportunities were missed to involve them in discussion. Pupils with special educational needs were helped to progress in line with their peers.
166. The co-ordinator for religious education has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of her role and the subject, but is not yet effectively exercising her

management role of monitoring and evaluating provision and classroom practice. The subject has strong links with personal, social and health education, but there are few planned spiritual links with other subjects. The school has not yet addressed the development of a sense of the spiritual, inherent in the teachings of major faiths and customs.

167. There are currently few opportunities for pupils to undertake visits to local places of worship to improve first-hand experiences. Although the school has purchased some good books and suitable artefacts, these resources are too few in number to have a positive impact. Similarly, teacher resource material is restricted and of insufficient help for development in understanding further the major faiths. There are few additional training opportunities for teachers to develop their own subject knowledge further.