

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. JAMES' C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hereford

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116885

Headteacher: Mrs A Mundy

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough  
8339

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 195289

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vicarage Road
	Hereford
Postcode:	HR1 2QN
Telephone number:	01432 273961
Fax number:	01432 273961
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend Paul Towner
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8339	Hugh Protherough	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Special educational needs Music Art and design Design and technology Geography History	
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Religious education Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Hugh Protherough Inspections Ltd.  
PO Box 396  
Banbury  
OX15 5XJ

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. James' is a voluntary aided primary school of average size with 204 pupils on roll comprising 111 boys and 93 girls almost all of whom are of white ethnic origin. The school serves an area that is socially mixed, but where the majority of housing is privately owned. As a result of its increasing popularity and the significant number of children who attend school from outside the immediate catchment area, the governors are currently reviewing their admissions policy. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average at 12.5 per cent. The attainment of the pupils on entry covers the full range, and this year was broadly average. The majority of the 30 per cent of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs are at the early stages that require action by the school. However, there are five with statements of special educational needs, four of whom are in Year 6 and one in Year 3.

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

Although standards in the current Year 6 are below average, the vast majority of the pupils are achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment and those with special educational needs do well. The quality of education provided is good and the pupils respond positively to their teachers and work hard. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership that is steadily developing a more cohesive management involving the entire staff team. The cost of educating pupils is cheaper than usual, and therefore the school offers good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership that is developing the staff team and improving the climate for learning.
- The provision for the pupils' personal development is strong and relationships throughout the school and its wider community are extremely positive.
- The very good education provided in the Foundation Stage gives the children a flying start to their time at school.
- The teaching in key stages 1 and 2 is good.
- Throughout the school, the quality of the pupils' work in art, music and physical education exceeds the levels expected.
- There is effective support for the pupils with special educational needs.
- The governors provide strong support and have a good oversight of the work of the school.
- The teachers give generously of their time to offer a good range of sporting and cultural extra-curricular activities.

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

- The time devoted to teaching in Years 1-6.
- The provision for the teaching of information and communication technology.
- The consistency of the challenge for some of the higher-attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in June 1997. Since then it has made good improvement because the strong leadership of the headteacher has created more coherent and consistent approaches to school management. As a result of the disproportionate number of children with special educational needs standards in the current Year 6 are below average. Nevertheless, the overall improvement in test results in recent years has matched the national trend. Standards in science design and technology and geography have improved since the last inspection, but in information and communication technology they are now lower. The teaching is far stronger than that described in the previous report, partly because there are now appropriate policies and curriculum guidance for all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Moreover, the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators now have a generally good oversight of standards and what happens in lessons. They are beginning to use this information effectively in setting improvement targets as part of the school's well-considered approach to Performance Management.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	B	C
mathematics	D	D	B	D
science	D	C	A	B

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The attainment of the pupils entering the school each September covers the full range and this year was broadly average. As they approach the end of the Foundation Stage, it is evident that the children have made good progress because in all the areas of learning the vast majority will achieve the learning goals expected of five-year-olds and a significant number should exceed them.

In last year's national tests, the pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In comparison with the results achieved by pupils in similar schools standards were above average in science, average in English but below average in mathematics. In recent years, the school's results have improved at a rate in line with the national trend and its own targets have generally been met. Furthermore, the current focus on improving the teaching of mathematics has led to a significant rise in standards in this subject throughout the school. This year the standards in Year 6 are much lower than previously because there is a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including four with statements. Nevertheless, the inspection findings confirm that the improvement in mathematics has continued and that with the exception of a few higher-attaining pupils who require more consistent challenge, the vast majority are achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment in English, mathematics and science.



In the national tests of 2001, the Year 2 pupils attained standards that were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, but were below average in writing. When compared with the results of similar schools, standards were below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. The inspection findings confirm that current standards in reading and writing are broadly average whilst in mathematics they have risen and are above average.

Throughout the school, the strong emphasis on art, music and physical education helps the pupils to produce work that exceeds the levels expected of seven and eleven year olds. Although standards in geography and history are broadly in line with the expected levels teaching time is limited and this makes it difficult for the pupils to achieve the higher levels of which some are capable. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	The vast majority of the pupils enjoy school and work hard in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The children are polite and considerate in their dealings with each other, the staff and visitors to the school.
Personal development and relationships	The school provides very well for the pupils' personal development and relationships within the school community are friendly and harmonious.
Attendance	Slightly above the national average.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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

The teaching has improved dramatically since the last inspection. On that occasion, almost one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory and only one in five either very good or excellent. On this occasion there was no unsatisfactory teaching, and almost one lesson in three was either very good or excellent.

The teaching in the Foundation Stage is extremely effective because the teacher has a very good understanding of how young children learn. Her planning is thorough and the purposes of each day's activities and the different ways that she and her expert teaching assistants will assess the children's learning are always made evident. She has very high expectations of the children and her strong classroom management encourages them to develop the skills of independent learning. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy so that the children are currently getting an early taste of the sorts of lessons they will experience in Year 1. However, the real strength of the teaching lies in the careful way that the adults speak with and question the children as they engage in various stimulating practical activities across the whole spectrum of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The teaching in Years 1-6 is good. The planning for literacy and numeracy is based on the guidance for the national strategies; it is generally well focussed and sets out clearly what the children are expected to learn. The recent emphasis on improving the teaching of mathematics has been effective in raising standards because at the start of each lesson the teachers revise the pupils' previous learning, make clear the next objectives and question carefully to probe the pupils' understanding. Throughout the school, there is particular strength in the teaching of music, art and physical education. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable, and their effective deployment in supporting teaching and learning leads to above average achievement in many aspects of these subjects. However, the current arrangements for the teaching of information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.

Strong support for the pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress. However, more attention needs to be given to the higher-attaining pupils to enable them to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable. For instance, the marking the pupils' work is inconsistent because the teachers do not always tell the pupils what needs to be improved or check that their work has been corrected.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although the school's curriculum meets the statutory requirements, the amount of time available for teaching is insufficient.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The teachers are swift to identify these pupils and make effective provision for their support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has made satisfactory arrangements to ensure the effective support of the occasional pupil who enters school speaking English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school makes particularly strong provision for the children's social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes satisfactory provision for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils.

Although the school's curriculum is enhanced by the emphasis on art, music, physical education and a very good range of out of school activities, the amount of time devoted to teaching falls far short of the minimum recommended by the Department for Education and Skills. This limits the time available for subjects such as geography and history. The school is working successfully to improve still further the strong links with the parents, church and wider community. Much better use is now made of test and assessment information to monitor the pupils' progress, but the tracking of attendance lacks rigour.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school. She has successfully harnessed the support of the staff who in turn have become increasingly confident in the exercise of their wider management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed. They carry out their duties assiduously by offering both support and appropriate challenge to the staff team.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management team draws effectively on an increasingly wide range of evidence in evaluating progress and setting the priorities for school improvement
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school's budget is spent carefully according to the priorities of the school improvement plan.

The leadership strives to ensure that it gets best value from its small budget. However, the lack of computer systems to support the modelling and monitoring of expenditure limits the efficiency of the evaluation process. There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers, supported well by a good number of teaching assistants, to ensure the delivery of the National Curriculum. Taken overall the accommodation and the provision of learning resources are adequate, but the school needs more computers.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The school's ethos has improved. The teachers are more welcoming and responsive to views of parents.</li> <li>• The teachers make learning fun and expect the children to work hard.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress in their work.</li> <li>• The strong leadership and personal example of the headteacher.</li> <li>• The very good range of sporting and cultural activities provided by the staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the vast majority of parents. Appropriate homework is set in line with the school's policy, although not all families ensure that it is completed.

Although plenty of good information is provided about school life, the annual reports need the addition of more detail about what the children know and can do and their progress over the year.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. The pupils entering the Reception class each September come from eight different pre-school settings, including nurseries and playgroups. The teachers' records show that their levels of attainment generally cover the full range and include both pupils with special educational needs and some potential high attainers. The overall profile of attainment on entry this year was broadly average and similar to that at the time of the last inspection. As they approach the end of the Foundation Stage, it is evident that the children have made good progress because the vast majority achieve the learning goals expected of five-year-olds in all the areas of learning and a significant number exceed them. The major strength lies in the effective way that the teachers have developed the children's personal confidence, positive relationships and a commitment to work. As a result, the children see learning as fun and have made a good start to learning to read, write and count. They are inquisitive about the world around them and have a growing appreciation of the many ways that they can try to make sense of their lives through literature, patterns in number and shape, science, art and music.
2. Over the past three years, the improvement in the results of the national tests taken by the pupils in Year 6 has matched the national trend. Until last year the pupils' performance has tended to be stronger in English than in mathematics. However, following a careful review of the teaching of mathematics, the results achieved in 2001 showed a considerable improvement. Consequently, in last year's national tests the pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In comparison with the results achieved by pupils in similar schools, standards were above average in science, average in English but below average in mathematics. Almost twice as many Year 6 pupils achieved beyond the expected level in English as did so in mathematics. The reason for this became evident in the inspectors' analysis of the pupils' work in mathematics, which shows that in some aspects such as data handling the work set for the higher-attaining pupils lacks sufficient challenge. **This is a key issue for action.**
3. Closer analysis of the test and assessment data shows that on average, the eleven-year-old boys have tended to outperform the girls in English, mathematics and science. This became a key focus for the inspection team, but their lesson observations and discussions with the pupils revealed no gender bias in either the teaching or the curriculum provision. This year the standards in Year 6 are much lower than previously because there is a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including four with statements. However, the inspection findings confirm that the improvement in mathematics has continued and that with the exception of a few higher-attaining pupils who require more consistent challenge, the vast majority are achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment in English, mathematics and science.
4. The results achieved by the Year 2 pupils have fluctuated considerably in line with the attainment profile of successive cohorts. In general terms, the results show that on average the pupils achieve standards in reading and writing that are in line with the national picture. Standards in mathematics were well below average until last year when they improved following the concerted action of the staff to address the weaknesses identified in their

review. When analysing the results of the last three years, there is little evident difference in the performance of the girls and boys. In the national tests of 2001, the Year 2 pupils attained standards that were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. When compared with the results of similar schools, standards were below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. The reason for this is that the proportion of pupils achieving beyond the expected level in reading and mathematics was only in line with national picture. The inspection findings confirm that the current standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and science are broadly average whilst in mathematics they have risen and are above average.

5. Throughout the school, the strong emphasis on art, music and physical education helps the pupils to produce work that exceeds the levels expected of seven and eleven year olds. The pupils are taught these subjects every week and the depth of the teachers' expertise leads to many lively lessons, much positive pupil response and consequently good quality work.
6. The teaching of design and technology, geography and history is arranged so that lessons occur in blocks of time, but not necessarily every week. Although the current provision covers the requirements of the National Curriculum, the depth of the pupils' work is not so great as it is in the other subjects and the standards attained are merely satisfactory.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. The current deployment of computers makes it difficult for the pupils to practice with sufficient regularity the skills taught by the teachers. The application of information and communication technology across the curriculum is at an embryonic stage of development, a priority of the school improvement plan **and a key issue for action.**

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

8. The great majority of the pupils are interested and involved in the life of the school. Their parents confirm that they are eager to come each day and levels of attendance are slightly above the average found in primary schools nationally. The teaching is consistently good, and sometimes very good, and prompts a positive and cheerful response from the pupils, who apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks. In an English lesson, for example, a very young pupil was heard to remark at the end of a challenging session, "I enjoyed that!" Many pupils take advantage of the very good range of extra curricular activities the school offers, with both staff and parents giving generously of their time to make these possible. The only exception to this positive response is found at the top end of the school. Here, the pupils can sometimes be more docile in the way they approach lessons, and make little effort to become actively engaged in extending their learning.
9. Throughout the school, the pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They are polite and helpful to each other, to staff and to visitors. In lessons, they settle quickly to their work and follow the classroom routines with little fuss. When working in groups, either supervised or independently, they display a good measure of self-discipline and are able to organise their activities effectively. For example, in a music lesson, when different groups were composing with percussion instruments, the pupils listened to each other's ideas and quickly fitted them together to create a coherent piece of work.
10. Across the whole school, the ability to work and play in a co-operative and friendly way is an evident feature of the pupils' personal development. One way this is fostered is through the sporting activities that are provided, both as part of the curriculum and after school. A telling

example was seen during a cricket lesson taken by a visiting coach. The class was divided into three relay teams, one of which repeatedly came in last and was required to perform extra “press-ups” or “sit-ups” each time. The third time this happened, the whole class spontaneously joined in, both to keep them company and out of sheer enjoyment of the physical challenge. The strong Christian ethos of the school is another positive element in fostering the very good relationships, both between the pupils and with the staff.

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

11. Since the last inspection, the quality of the teaching has improved considerably. On that occasion almost one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory and only one in five was either very good or excellent. On this occasion forty-four lessons were observed none of which was unsatisfactory; 32 per cent of the lessons were either very good or excellent, 45 per cent were good and 23 per cent satisfactory. The majority of the very good teaching occurred in the Foundation Stage and elsewhere in the school in art, music and physical education.
12. The teaching in the Reception class is very good and based firmly on the guidance contained in Foundation Stage curriculum. The teacher is thoughtful, experienced and extremely effective because she has a very good understanding of how young children learn. For example, great care and attention is paid to ensuring that the children feel secure and valued. This is achieved in the way that the staff are always present to greet the parents and their children at the start and end of each day. The classroom is set out so that the children can start work straight away after registering themselves and this minimises any lingering anxieties over leave taking. During the inspection, it soon became evident from observing the informal conversations between the adults and the children that over the past eight months the staff have built up a detailed knowledge of all the pupils that clearly underpins their teaching. Each day’s activities are planned with care and precision so that the teacher and her assistants understand both the purpose of what they are providing for the children and how they will assess the children’s learning. For instance, in one lesson about the school and its locality, they checked to see whether or not one group of pupils could draw and talk about four “landmarks” that they passed on their route to school, whilst others had simpler tasks such as drawing maps of imaginary places.
13. The teacher has very high expectations of the children and her strong classroom management encourages them to develop the skills of independent learning. For instance, in one afternoon session when the focus was on the pupils’ creative development, a huge amount of work was completed as a result of thorough preparation, the careful deployment of the adults and the children’s enthusiasm for their work. Many children made and decorated their first thumb pots of clay, constructed large models of space ships and houses using cardboard boxes, tubes and glue, and created elaborate three-dimensional sculptures on the playground from twigs, leaves and other natural materials in the style of Andy Galsworthy. However, the real strength of the teaching lay in the careful way that the adults spoke with and questioned the children during these stimulating practical activities. These exchanges provided the staff with valuable insights into the children’s understanding of pattern, shape, size, texture and colour. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy so that the children are currently getting an early introduction to lessons they will experience in Year 1. The teacher is careful not to overburden the pupils’ concentration by speaking for too long and she uses various methods to ensure that pupils of all abilities are kept interested, for instance, by keeping her questions simpler for the lower attainers.

14. The teaching in Years 1-6 is generally good. The teaching of literacy and numeracy embraces the guidance of the national strategies and as a result the teachers' planning is generally well focussed and sets out clearly what the children are expected to learn. The recent emphasis on improving the teaching of mathematics has been effective in raising standards because at the start of each lesson the teachers revise the pupils' recent learning, make clear the next objectives and question the pupils carefully to ascertain their understanding. They provide strong and sensitive support for the pupils with special educational needs, but the level of challenge for some of the higher-attaining pupils is inadequate. For instance, in mathematics these pupils are capable of more advanced work in aspects such as data handling and probability. Similarly, in English, they should be challenged to edit and polish their writing so that it reflects the depth of their wide and varied vocabulary. **This is a key issue for action.**
15. There is significant strength in the teaching of music, art and physical education throughout the school. Each subject is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator and in music and physical education in particular this expertise is regularly deployed around the school to the benefit of the children's learning. For instance, the headteacher possesses considerable musical expertise and is timetabled to teach lessons each week, especially in those classes where the teachers lack confidence in this subject. She makes learning relevant and enjoyable, and understands how to get the best out of the pupils by providing them with a technical language to help evaluate the music they hear and by teaching them to breathe properly so that their singing improves. The teaching of physical education benefits from similar, positive contributions by the co-ordinator. In one lesson, for instance, his appreciation of body placement and foot positioning helped many pupils improve their ability to strike a moving ball with a cricket bat. The wide variety of well-attended extra-curricular clubs and activities, including a skipping team that performs displays around the Midlands, is a further indication of the positive effects of good teaching on the children's attitudes to sport.
16. Although their levels of knowledge and confidence vary significantly, the teachers do their best to ensure that the pupils acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in information and communication technology. However, the current deployment of the school's inadequate stock of computers means that the pupils can practice what is being taught only in very small groups. As a result, the use and application of information and communication technology across the full breadth of the National Curriculum is insufficient. **This is a key issue for action.**
17. The support for the pupils with special educational needs is strong, well resourced and helps them to make good progress. The majority of the pupils identified are experiencing difficulties in learning to read and write. For those with specific difficulties, particularly the children with statements of special educational needs, the special needs teacher follows a carefully structured multi-sensory approach. The initial emphasis is to ensure that the pupils learn their letters and sounds. This work is effectively supported by the team of teaching assistants who have acquired good understanding and skill through their close working relationships with the children they assist each day.
18. A weakness in the teaching lies in the inconsistency in the marking of the pupils' work. At its best, for instance in the Reception class, the teacher's commentary provides helpful information about the task and a response to what the child has written. It is clear that discussion about the work often takes place because the higher-attaining five-year-olds are starting to write back in response to the teacher's comments. In one or two books, the teacher writes questions such as "Did you enjoy playing on the swings?" and underneath the



child has written, “Yes.” However, the marking elsewhere in the school does not always build on this good start. An analysis of the children’s exercise books reveals that all the teachers mark their pupils work on a regular basis and frequently write encouraging comments. Their marking is accurate in identifying spelling and punctuation errors, but many teachers do not have rigorous systems to check that these are properly corrected. A further significant weakness, especially in Years 3 to 6, is the lack guidance as to how the pupils might improve their work, not just its presentation, but more significantly its structure. Although many pupils use planning books, it is rare to find work “in best” that differs significantly from their first drafts. This is particularly significant for some of the higher-attaining pupils who are not receiving sufficient challenge, either oral or written, necessary to lift their performance to the higher levels. **This is a key issue for action.**

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

19. There has been good improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection, but there remain some aspects that require adjustment. The school has improved its arrangements for planning through a complete review of its policies and schemes of work in all subjects. The planning for children in the Foundation Stage is securely based on the Early Learning Goals for their age group. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is well planned, and includes appropriate arrangements for the teaching of sex education and the dangers of the abuse of drugs. Parents are able to view the teaching materials used prior to the lessons. The new requirements for the teaching of citizenship have been addressed successfully.
20. The good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, to which many staff give generously of their time, considerably enhances the school’s planned curriculum. Lunch time and after school activities are well attended and parents are appreciative of the opportunities given to a considerable number of children, including a good range of cultural and sporting clubs. For example, the school skipping and chess clubs have enjoyed considerable regional and national success through their skipping displays and chess matches. Other activities such as soccer, netball, choir, recorder and cricket groups are also well supported by the pupils. Some of these activities show the strong links with the local community; for example, a local shop has sponsored the netball kit. Others, such as the choir and visits to the local care centre for the elderly, show how frequently the school reaches out to the wider community. The school supports a number of charities through sponsorship and has taken part in the national ‘Shoe-box Appeal’. Visitors to the school include all the local services, such as the Fire Brigade, whose visit to the infants during the inspection coincided with a lesson in Year 5 on the different ways we use water!
21. The links with the Church are particularly strong and the vicar is a regular visitor to the school, taking school assemblies each week. The school has made good use of the church as a resource in its teaching of religious and personal education, and every three weeks holds a community assembly there. It is also contributing to the church’s Centenary Celebrations, and is used each week for the Sunday school meetings.
22. The support for pupils with special educational needs is strong and helps these children to make good progress. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the small number of pupils, for whom English is a second language.
23. There is good teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy based squarely on the guidance of the national strategies. The school’s curriculum is enhanced by the emphasis on

art, music, physical education and very good range of out of school activities. However, the amount of time devoted to teaching falls far short of the minimum recommended and this limits the time available for subjects such as geography and history. Furthermore, it is not supporting the schools' intention of raising standards and providing the full range of opportunities for some groups of pupils. For example, the planned curriculum for groups of higher-attaining pupils, particularly in the junior classes, is occasionally lacking in challenge and depth and does not always enable them to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Opportunities for the use of information and communication technology across the full breadth of the curriculum are neither systematically planned nor sufficiently strong. All classes have computers and listening centres, but very little use of them was seen during the inspection. **These are all key issues for action.**

24. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils continues to be a strong feature of the school. The school makes particularly strong provision for the pupils' social and moral development. The views of parents that the school successfully promotes an atmosphere in which children can develop their own self-esteem as well as respect for others are fully supported by the evidence of the current inspection.
25. The spiritual development of the pupils is good. All groups show awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs, and an understanding of feelings and their effect on themselves and others. The teachers promote a style of teaching that values the ideas and opinions of the pupils. They listen to what the pupils have to say and give them opportunities to explain and expand their ideas. This was evident, for example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 4 when the teacher encouraged pupils to explain the different ways in which they tackled mental calculations. Visits to other local Baptist and Elim Churches help the pupils to develop awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs. In a 'Circle Time' discussion in Year 2, the pupils were guided by the teacher's sensitive questioning to explain what they consider valuable in their lives and were confident and open in their responses.
26. Across the school, the moral and social development of pupils is very good. All groups show an understanding of right and wrong, are able to express their opinions and ideas and explore those of others. Talking to pupils shows they have a respect for the needs, opinions and feelings of others. The school assemblies are also used to provide moral instruction. The children are well equipped to make right choices of how to behave and get on together by the good role models provided by all adults who work in the school. Conversations with the pupils in Year 6 shows they are reflective and thoughtful about right and wrong and have a clear view of what choices to make. All classes have class rules, which place great emphasis on consideration for others. This is also evident in the regular charity fund raising undertaken by the school. Most pupils show an awareness of the school community and their place in it. They talk with pride about the things they do in 'their' school. They enjoy the responsibility roles they undertake, such as putting out play apparatus at lunch times. All classes fully support the schools' reward system and take great pride in their own and others' achievements. Regular group working in lessons encourages the pupils to co-operate and support each other. The school's expectation that the pupils will support each other is evident during play times, when all groups of pupils play happily alongside and with each other. The Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit to an outdoor centre in Malvern.
27. Overall, the provision for the cultural development of the pupils is good. Their awareness of their own culture is developed by work in literacy, art, music, geography and history. They are also made aware of the cultures of others. For example, the reception children learned

about the Chinese New Year and the Year 2 pupils studied daily life in Mexico and compared it with their own. The pupils develop their sense of community through the many visitors to school. For example, every week a visitor from the local centre for the elderly comes to hear Year 6 pupils read. Strong links with local High Schools and colleges also help to give the pupils a sense of the wider community. Visitors from the police, fire service, the school nurse and a local dentist help the pupils to understand how society is organised. Significant numbers of pupils participate in the cultural and artistic activities of the school. However, the work of the school still does insufficient to teach the pupils about the multi-cultural nature of our own society. This remains an area of development for the school.

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

28. Taken overall, the school now makes satisfactory provision for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils. Since the last inspection, the arrangements for monitoring health and safety and carrying out proper risk assessments have improved considerably. A generous provision of trained staff ensures that first aid support is readily to hand in the rare event of slight injuries sustained by either adults or children during the school day. Appropriate procedures for child protection are in place and the staff report any concerns promptly to the headteacher. Contacts with outside agencies, such as social services, are infrequent, but effective when required. Although basic training has been provided for the staff, this might usefully be augmented with greater procedural detail in the staff handbook and easier access to the local education authority guidelines.
29. The attendance figures are slightly above the national average, but the school's procedures for monitoring attendance are not always followed with sufficient vigour. For example, the school sometimes finds it difficult to establish with some parents the explanation for a child's absence. As a result, reasons are not entered consistently in the class registers and it is difficult to know whether the absence has been authorised or not. Consequently, although the overall levels of attendance are good, the figures for unauthorised absence are not clear. Strict analysis of the data in the registers currently gives the impression that authorised absence is low, whereas unauthorised absence appears far higher than the national picture. Even though this may not be the case, the school needs to ensure greater accuracy in the way it records and explains day-to-day attendance. **This is an additional issue that the governors should include in their action plan.**
30. The school has made considerable strides in the way it uses its test and assessment data to guide its evaluation of the trends in standards and to plan for future improvement. A good example of this is the way that shortly after taking up post the headteacher initiated a successful drive to improve standards in mathematics. This action was taken in direct response to her analysis of the national data provided to the school in the annual PANDA report. Since then, she has begun to set up a system by which she can track the performance of individual pupils and entire year groups in order to assess the progress that they make year on year. The strength of this new approach is that she is making extremely effective use of her computer in devising this database. The next step is to ensure that all the staff have sufficient confidence and expertise to submit assessment data to the headteacher in the same format.
31. The teachers know the children very well indeed. They speak knowledgeably about individuals and in the case of the pupils with special educational needs are careful to ensure good provision in line with the targets suggested in the individual plans. The systems for recording the pupils' personal development are mostly informal, but the strong links between

teachers, pupils and parents ensure the effective communication of success as well as any concerns.

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

32. The parents are largely appreciative of the school's provision and are pleased with the quality of the teaching support and care their children receive. In particular, they appreciate that their children enjoy coming to school, the school ethos, and the way that the teachers make learning enjoyable and challenging. They feel that their children are making good progress and that the school is well led and managed. The interesting range of activities provided outside lessons, both sporting and cultural, is also greatly valued. However, they would like to see improvement in the level of information they are given about their children's progress and clarification of the homework policy. The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the vast majority of parents. The quality of the annual report on each child is not consistent from class to class; more specific information could be included on what the children know and can do in each subject, and the progress they have made over the year. Appropriate homework is set in line with the school's policy, although not all families ensure that this is completed.
33. The school works hard to provide an open and welcoming environment and many parents commented on the ease with which they are able to approach the teaching staff. There is a good level of information provided about what is being taught and the more general life of the school. In particular, the class timetables, which are provided for parents each year, give a clear idea of the shape of each school day, the topics being covered each term and general guidance on how they can support their children's learning at each stage. An attractive newsletter is produced with the help of a parent and this, too, gives a good picture of the life of the school. As well as giving out information, the school is prepared to listen to parental concerns and uses the active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association as a channel for questions and suggestions from parents.
34. Many parents play an active role in the life of the school, either by helping during the school day or by contributing skills and enthusiasm to the wide range of extra curricular activities. The PTFA raises valuable funds and arranges a number of events through the school year. The biannual parents' evenings to discuss the pupils' progress and the way they are settling in to new classes are well attended, and the parents also come to the occasional evenings organised to explain developments in different areas of the curriculum. The school has fostered good links with many groups within the area, including the WRVS and the local parish church, to the benefit both of the pupils and the local community.

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

35. It is less than two years since the headteacher assumed responsibility for the leadership of the school, but in that time she has brought about considerable improvement in its ethos and in the climate for learning. During the inspection, many parents, governors and teachers spoke with the inspectors about their views of the school and in almost every case pointed to the headteacher as the catalyst for important change. She has brought about improvement through a blend of careful consultation, effective communication and personal example. The inspectors agree with their views and found that the school community is fast developing a shared appreciation of its core Christian values and a commitment to raising standards.

36. A key feature of the many improvements being made relates to good school management. The previous inspection report identified several weaknesses in this area, most notably a lack of appropriate systems to ensure that the headteacher and the subject co-ordinators had a proper oversight of the curriculum and the quality of education being provided in lessons. In response to this, the headteacher and the governors have made a good start to the introduction of Performance Management. As a result, each teacher now has a clear understanding of their job and the specific targets that are agreed each year in relation to their role and responsibilities. This process has been extremely helpful in developing the influence of the subject co-ordinators across the school. All the co-ordinators are now responsible and increasingly accountable for the standards being achieved in their subjects. They analyse samples of the pupils' work and construct useful portfolios that help the teachers with their assessments. They occasionally observe lessons taught by colleagues and use their notes and evaluations as evidence when suggesting modifications to the teaching. Each co-ordinator benefits from the experience gained in managing a budget allocation for their subject and the headteacher is careful to ensure that investment is made according to the priorities of the school improvement plan. However, one or two teachers carry a significantly heavy load of responsibilities and this sometimes leads to difficulties in sustaining steady improvement, as has been the case with the development of information and communication technology.
37. The governing body contains a good depth and breadth of experience and expertise and is well led by its chairman. The relationship between the governors and staff is increasingly positive because each governor is attached to a class and through regular visits with an agreed focus learns at first hand about the quality of education offered at the school. Reciprocally, the subject co-ordinators are frequently invited to attend the governors' meetings in order that they might make presentations about the school's curriculum or fresh initiatives to improve the teaching. As a result of such regular contact, the governing body is developing an increasingly good oversight of the work of the school. However, the governors now need to review the discussions held in 2001 about the length of the school day in order to ensure that the good quality of the pupils' work so evident in art, music and physical education is also reflected in design and technology, geography and history. **This is a key issue for action.**
38. The strength of the staff and governor partnership is also evident in the thorough approaches taken in the design, review and evaluation of the school improvement plan. The priorities of this document form the basis for all the major actions and spending decisions taken each year and are referred to regularly by the teachers and governors alike. The governors and senior management team strive to get the best value they can from their small annual budget. However, the lack of a computer system to support the modelling and monitoring of expenditure limits the efficiency of both the planning and the evaluation processes.
39. The school's staff contains a good mix of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers whose expertise successfully covers the vast majority of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The teachers are increasingly well supported by a good number of teaching assistants who have been well trained, especially in the support of the pupils with special educational needs. The funding for certain of these support posts will disappear once some of the special needs pupils move to secondary school. However, the retention of some of this valuable expertise within the school through use of the school's own budget is a good example of the way in which "best value" principles are applied by the headteacher.

40. The school's accommodation is adequate, but despite recent imaginative adaptation of the premises, space is tight, both internally and externally. The school community works hard to ensure that attractive displays of the children's work enliven the learning environment. However, much of the furniture used by the pupils is old and is not always well suited to their size and shape. The levels of educational resources vary considerably. Taken overall they are satisfactory, with strengths in those for science, music, art, and physical education. There is a reasonable range of children's literature but the library provision for non-fiction contains much that is out of date, especially in history and geography. This would not be quite so serious if the pupils made regular use of CD Rom encyclopaedias and had easy Internet access. However, the school has yet to devise a coherent plan to ensure that new technologies are readily available to its pupils across the breadth of the National Curriculum.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

41. In order to build still further on the improvements of recent years the senior management team, staff and governors should now:

1. Review urgently the amount of time devoted to teaching in Years 1-6 to bring it more closely in line with the recommended minimums.

Paragraph 23, 37

2. Improve the provision for the teaching of information and communication technology by reviewing the deployment of the school's computers to ensure maximum use is made of them to support the teaching and learning in all the subjects of the National Curriculum.

Paragraphs 7, 14, 18

3. Increase the consistency of the challenge for the higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 to 6 in order to help these pupils attain the higher levels of which they are capable.

Paragraph 2 16

#### **In addition the governors should also include the following issue in their action plan:**

- Devise systems to ensure that the cause of any pupil absence is established speedily, entered into registers accurately and the data analysed regularly to check that school policy is translated into effective action.

Paragraph 29

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	20	10	0	0	0
Percentage	2	30	45	23	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YRec – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	204
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YRec – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.1

#### 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	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86	90	93
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	11	11
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	22	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	22	24	24
	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	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	12	13
	Girls	10	7	11
	Total	19	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76	76	96
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	9	7	10
	Total	19	16	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76	64	88
	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	204
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YRec– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	29

**Education support staff: YRec – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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.*

**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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	341,775
Total expenditure	323,778
Expenditure per pupil	1,695
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,070

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	204
Number of questionnaires returned	47

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	45	6	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	49	21	4	2
The teaching is good.	38	55	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	55	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	40	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	55	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	36	51	9	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	47	43	4	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	51	0	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	32	4	2	4

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

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

42. The children start school in the September of the year in which they become five. Although some are comparatively young when they arrive in the Reception class, (twelve of the present thirty pupils have birthdays in the summer term), the school is sensitive to their needs and sensibly allows part-time schooling during the first few weeks. However, the major benefit of the current admissions arrangements is that the class has developed a strong group identity over the year and works and plays together happily.
43. The school receives pupils from eight different early years settings including nurseries and playgroups. Staff from the school visit each of these during the summer term to discover as much as possible about the children who are starting school next September. There are well-established induction sessions for the children and their parents, including opportunities for families to contribute information to the entry profile that builds on the records provided by the pre-school groups. A further strong feature of the current arrangements is the good information provided by the school about what is being taught and the ways that the parents and carers might help at home.
44. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school varies each year. This year the profile of the baseline assessment results covered the full range, but taken overall was broadly average.

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

45. The teacher and her assistants have successfully created a classroom that nurtures all of the key aspects of the children's personal, social and emotional development. From the outset, the children are encouraged to develop a healthy independence. For instance at the start of the day, all of the children register themselves by placing their name cards in the teacher's box before joining their group for some early morning work, such as building, drawing or filling letter shapes with play-dough. Helpers are identified in order that the equipment is tidied away at key points, such as the departure for morning worship. Their levels of self-care are very good. For example, it took little more than five minutes for all of the children to get changed after a dance lesson.
46. Throughout the day, the adults working in the class provide excellent role models for the children. They always speak calmly and quietly and when they have to interrupt a noisy group at work, they always say, "Excuse me, but..." Another effective ploy is the teacher's use of toy animals, such as 'Bertie Bear', to ask questions and provide feedback to the children. They all know Bertie is shy and dislikes noise, so they listen very hard to see if they can work out what he is whispering into the teacher's ear!
47. As a result of this good teaching virtually all of the pupils are attaining the levels expected of five-year-olds and many exceed them. The relationships within the class are extremely positive and the children respond with excitement and confidence when faced with new learning experiences. The vast majority of the children take good care of books, equipment and resources. They work co-operatively in pairs and groups and generally share equipment

sensibly and fairly. They know the rules and routines of the class and many of the higher attainers explain these to visitors and show them where to find things if they look lost.

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

48. The teaching of early literacy skills is very effective and enables the majority of the pupils to achieve the early learning goals and a significant number to exceed them. The key to much of the success lies in the skilful way that the adults conduct their conversations with the children. They model language effectively to steadily extend the depth and range of the children's vocabulary. Their questioning is carefully matched to the abilities of the children in order to check their knowledge and encourages them to offer their views, opinions and explanations at greater length. In one literacy lesson, for instance, the children were encouraged to use tape recorders as part of a role play in which they had to explain their late arrival at school. This clearly fascinated them and led to some entertaining and exciting results. As a result of these activities, most of the children are increasingly confident conversationalists who speak clearly and politely to adults and each other.
49. The children love to listen to adults read the poems, stories and literature that feature significantly at key points of every day. Most are eager to take books home to share with their parents and carers and are developing an enthusiasm for many contemporary children's picture storybooks such as "You can't catch me." The teaching successfully harnesses the children's positive attitudes by encouraging them to "write" and illustrate their own versions of such stories in simple folded books. The teacher has sensibly started to use some of the approaches that the children will experience next year in the literacy hour in Year 1. A strong feature of this is the way that she is successfully encouraging the pupils to recognise the shapes and sounds of letters, especially those at the beginnings of words.
50. The analysis of the children's written work over the course of the year presents a compelling picture of rapid progress for pupils of all abilities. At the start of the year, the higher attainers could already write their names and draw pictures of themselves as a head with two legs and arms. By October they were copying short captions under their drawings and are now starting to write independently with some vivid illustrations. For instance, "I lik play on a swic wiv my buyfor," (sic), is re-written correctly underneath by the teacher as "I like playing on the swing with my brother." A further strength of the teaching is the way the teacher writes a commentary on the context of each child's work along with questions about what they have written. These comments are read alongside the child and in some instances the children write back to the teacher.
51. Although the attainment of the less able pupils is lower, their achievements over the year have been good. These children could only scribble vague outlines in September and the adults would write what they said about their drawings. By October their control of a pencil was improving so that shapes begin to emerge such as an outline with two legs for a person. By Christmas, some of the colouring in started to fit within the outline shape and the children were tracing shakily over the adults' writing. This spring they have made the next step towards independence by starting to copy letters underneath the teacher's writing.

### **Mathematical development**

52. The vast majority of the pupils are successfully on course to meet the early learning goals for mathematical development and a significant number will exceed them. The classroom is full of stimulating displays and materials that engage the pupils' mathematical thinking. For

example, items such as the naughty teddy bear number line are skilfully employed to steadily increase the children's confidence in recognising the order of numerals from 1-30. When mixing up the numbered teddies, the teacher always makes sure that there are some involving the larger numbers to extend the higher attainers.

53. Sessions with a mathematics focus are now a part of every day and are usefully preparing the children for next year's lessons in Year 1. The opening discussion takes little more than ten minutes or so, but is carefully designed to ensure that everyone is involved and therefore has to listen very hard. For instance, in order to help the children record the number of boys and girls in the class, each had a coloured cube that they handed to the teacher as they added a tally mark to the flip chart at the front of the class. This worked well because the children were able to see the value of numerals in two different ways. In the subsequent group activities, they worked very hard and successfully because the tasks were well matched to their abilities. For example, the lower attainers were suitably challenged as they sorted and counted different coloured plastic teddies in the sand tray, and the higher attainers showed intense concentration in a game that involved the matching of cards to numbers on a number line and then counting on two more.
54. The analysis of the children's books and folders reveals that the teaching is successfully providing a good breadth of relevant mathematical activities in which the children are learning about shape, size, colour and position. They are also beginning to collate simple information about themselves and the local area and present it diagrammatically. The adults in the class ensure that whenever possible the children's mathematical language is reinforced and extended. For instance, when working with bricks and construction equipment the children are asked to compare height, length and breadth.

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

55. The vast majority of the children have a good knowledge of the world about them and are course to reach the expected learning goals. The teaching builds effectively on their good general knowledge in varied and interesting ways. At the moment, the class are learning a little more about the area immediately surrounding the school. They have been out on walks and taken photographs of significant buildings such as the hospital, the dairy and the church. As a result, many are able to discuss enthusiastically the functions of these buildings and the sorts of things that go on there. Prior to this the children studied houses and homes and once again the introduction and use of correct technical language is evident. For instance, many children understand the difference between detached and semi-detached houses and explain this carefully. This work also broadened the children's cultural perspective by including different types of housing from around the world.
56. The school's Christian ethos is strongly reflected in the emphasis placed upon religious education. The class attends daily worship and benefits greatly from the varied and interesting themes that are effectively presented and explored. Over the course of the year, the children have learned a great deal about the major Christian festivals such as harvest, Christmas and Easter. They have also found out about equivalent festivals in other world religions, such as the Sukkot in Judaism. The teaching also makes strong links to the children's emotional development by exploring the reasons that may contribute to feelings of joy, sadness and loneliness.

### **Physical development**

57. The teaching makes good provision for physical development across a variety of settings so that the vast majority of the children are on course to meet the expected learning outcomes by the end of the Reception year. The secure outside play area offers a satisfactory range of wheeled vehicles that the children can push or propel in safety. Their levels of physical co-ordination are good and the majority can navigate happily along the outline of roadways. Many also observe and explain the road signs, such as “No Entry” or “Right Turn Only” that have been made as part of their project on the local area. The local police officer is a regular visitor to the school and has added authenticity to scene by lending a police accident sign.
58. The children are learning important physical skills in more formal settings such as dance lessons. Here the teacher and her assistant make effective use of a pre-recorded tape to encourage the children to move in response to ideas such as “Watery Places.” During this lesson, it was evident that most children are developing a good awareness of space around them and show consideration for others whilst skipping, jumping and running. A real strength of this lesson was the way that the adults were suitably changed so that they could join in with the children. Occasionally, they demonstrated movements and this proved helpful to the one or two children who were less than confident in this setting.
59. The provision for developing the children’s fine motor control is very good. Every day they are encouraged to use a variety of pencils, crayons, scissors, paint and modelling materials. As a result, the most are becoming increasingly dextrous and confident in their control.

### **Creative development**

60. The teacher provides a wealth of valuable learning experiences that rapidly encourage the children’s development in this area so that virtually every child reaches the levels expected of five-year-olds and a good number exceed them. Each day there is a good variety of creative work where the children, draw, paint and make models as part of their wider studies. However, it was during an afternoon dedicated to creative and artistic endeavour that the true quality of the provision emerged.
61. The classroom had been thoroughly prepared so that the children could choose from opportunities to make sculpture, build models, use clay and paint. The initial discussions were brief, but informative, with several children recalling the work of Andy Goldsworthy, a sculptor who builds artefacts from natural materials. There was therefore immediate interest from one group of children in the large bags of branches, twigs and leaves provided on the playground. This group worked unaided with intense concentration for more than ten minutes as they constructed from the assorted materials the outline of a tree on the playground, complete with nesting bird. They clearly showed a keen sense of what they wanted to achieve and high levels of co-operation as they adjusted the angle and position of the roots and branches before deciding on a final arrangement. The completed work was strikingly effective and the teacher, summoned to “Come and see,” arrived with a camera so that the children might capture their work from a variety of angles for posterity. Other children used collections of shells and fir cones to create tabletop sculptures. Here the teacher lingered a little to discuss colour, texture and shape with the pupils who plainly benefited from this interchange as they adjusted their arrangements.
62. The teacher’s expertise was also evident in the demonstration of how to make a thumb pot. The children are clearly used to handling clay, and they showed dexterity in the confident way that they rolled it into balls prior to pinching out their pots. A further sign of previous

effective teaching was the way that, on finishing, the children instinctively reached for a variety of simple tools, "...to decorate it!"

63. The pace of work was incredibly fast throughout the hour or so that the inspector was in the room and such was the high quality of the classroom management that it was impossible to detect any wasted time. The children knew what they wanted to work at and by the end of the session many had not only made a pot and a sculpture, but had also assembled a model plane or house using glue and tape to fix together a variety of cardboard boxes and cubes.
64. The children love to listen to music, sing and play instruments. The expertise of the headteacher who takes a music lesson each week makes a considerable impact and leaves the children breathless, but with a considerable sense of achievement.

## **ENGLISH**

65. Since the last inspection, there has been steady improvement in the standards achieved by the pupils in Year 6 in the national tests and last year they were above average. The results in the Year 2 tests have been more volatile, but taking the last three years together standards overall have been broadly average. The inspection findings show that with the current high proportion of pupils with special needs in Year 6 standards are below average, but in Year 2 they continue to be average. Throughout the school, the main strengths of the pupils' performance lie in speaking and listening and reading. Their writing is satisfactory, but more could be done to develop the depth and quality of the work, especially that of the higher-attaining pupils.
66. By the age of seven, the majority of the pupils demonstrate increasing confidence in their speaking and listening to each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. Many demonstrate careful listening in lessons and have a good recall of their previous learning. For instance, in one lesson about the use of contents pages several pupils were swift to point out features by saying, "It's got captions and labels." The pupils who discussed their work with the inspectors did so with clarity and enthusiasm and their correct usage of technical language is a significant feature in many subjects. The current Year 6 pupils are much more reluctant in their response. Although they listen carefully to their teachers, it is often difficult to get them to speak at length and to proffer a point of view. A good example of this was when a group of the higher-attaining pupils were being expertly taken through the text of Rosemary Sutcliffe's book about Beowulf. The teacher tried everything she could to spark a debate, but despite some pertinent responses from a minority of the girls this part of the lesson proved hard going. When discussing their work with the inspectors, the pupils were livelier and showed that they are perfectly capable of talking in an interesting way about their studies and responding appropriately to questions.
67. Throughout the school, the fundamental skill of reading is well taught. By the age of seven, the majority of the pupils are able to read accurately simple passages of writing and explain what they mean. They greatly enjoy stories and develop a good memory for their favourites. In one effective lesson in Year 1, the children took delight in correcting the teacher to ensure that the story of "Six Dinner Sid" was told in the proper order. There is particular strength in the way that the teachers have equipped the children with a generally secure knowledge of the sounds of letters. For instance, in Year 2 most of the pupils are able to identify the four alternatives that can be used to create the sound "or." This gives the pupils an important tool with which they can tackle unfamiliar words, although in many cases the children are often able to guess accurately from the context of the text.

68. The depth and breadth of the pupils' reading increases steadily as they move through the school. For example, by Year 4 most pupils are reading short novels such as "A gift from Winklesea." As a result of the thoughtful adoption of the national strategy for teaching literacy, there are regular periods each day for guided reading alongside the teacher. This enables the teacher to listen to the children reading aloud, but more significantly to question them about what they have read. The best teaching, such as that observed in Year 4, probes the children's understanding at a deep level. The teacher explores issues such as the motivation that makes a character act in a certain way or draws out features of language such as the use of dialect. These discussions help the pupils to learn to look backwards and forwards in the text to find evidence to justify their point of view. By Year 6, the majority of the pupils are reading widely and many reveal the inferential skills associated with the higher levels of reading ability. For instance, in one lesson the average and lower-attaining pupils were faced with the text of a Joyce Grenfell monologue. It took them little time to work out the setting and context of the scene and support their view with plentiful textual evidence. Many pupils are fond of the works of Jacqueline Wilson, Anne Fine and JK Rowling. The school fosters this enthusiasm with regular book fairs such as the one held during the inspection. Similarly, the strong links between home and school mean that most families also support good reading habits by finding time to read together each day.
69. Throughout the school, standards in writing are satisfactory, but could be higher, particularly for the more able. The analyses of the pupils' written work shows that they have covered a good range of activities suggested by the national literacy strategy and are making steady progress in the development of their skills. For instance, in September some of the lower-attaining pupils in Year 2 could only write strings of letters with no spacing that made little sense. By October, the occasional recognisable word was emerging and now they are writing one or two lines of decipherable text with correct letter orientation. The higher attainers were writing short readable accounts of their holidays in September, but without evidence of punctuation. This spring they are starting to join their handwriting and their use of full stops and capital letters is well established. These children have written a good range of stories, personal accounts and poetry as well as practising important aspects of ordering and sequencing instructions for events such as walking to school or baking bread. However, few are yet writing consistently at the level 3 achieved by some higher-attaining pupils nationally.
70. As a result of the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, standards in Year 6 are below average. However, it is evident from the analysis of work that the effective support provided for some of these pupils has produced rapid progress over the year. For instance, one boy was experiencing difficulty getting anything down on paper in September and his teaching assistant was frequently acting as a scribe on his behalf. Over the course of the year, his handwriting has improved dramatically so that he can now write more than a page in an increasingly fluent and joined script.
71. The progress of the average and higher-attaining pupils has been reasonable, but could be faster. In many classes, there is a plethora of separate books and folders for different aspects of English such as handwriting, spelling, practice/drafts, English, booster and so forth. Moreover, the teachers are not consistent in their expectations for work to be dated and laid out neatly on consecutive pages and this makes it difficult to track progress. It seems quite likely that the proliferation of workbooks also has a negative effect on the teachers' marking. Although the teachers are assiduous in checking the children's work and making supportive and encouraging comments, not enough attention is paid to ensuring that the pupils carry out



the required corrections. In many books there is no sign of the children returning to correct their work. Most of the marking focuses upon spelling and punctuation. However, in order to assist the higher-attaining pupils to write at greater length, the discussions with the teacher and the written commentary need to focus far more on the writers' intentions, the structure of the composition and the choice of language. These activities cry out for the use of word processing so that the pupils get used to the idea of cutting and pasting passages of text without the need to resort to lengthy "copying out." However, the current deployment of computers around the school makes this difficult to achieve. **These are key issues for action.**

72. The subject is led strongly by two experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinators. Their sampling of the children's work from around the school gives them a good appreciation of the standards being achieved and shows that the standards in reading are generally better than those in writing. However, this overview will be further strengthened by the test and assessment data for individual pupils currently being collated by the headteacher. They know what is being taught, when and where, and have regular opportunities to check the quality of the teaching in lessons. This information is then shared with the staff and used in discussions about performance management and future school improvement priorities.

## MATHEMATICS

73. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including four with statements. These standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection. However, the majority of the pupils are achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment. The current focus on improving the teaching of mathematics throughout the school has led to a significant rise in standards in this subject, particularly Key Stage 1 where much is due to the strength of teaching of the coordinator in Year 2. Overall, the standards in other Key Stage 2 classes continue to rise. For example, scrutiny of previous work and the current work seen in lessons in Years 3, 4 and 5 show that standards for most groups of pupils are securely in line with national expectations for their age. The majority of pupils are achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment with the exception of a few higher-attaining pupils, who require a more consistent challenge. The inspection findings confirm that the improvement in mathematics is continuing.
74. Recent standards in Key Stage 1 in mathematics were below average, but the inspection findings confirm again that have risen and are now above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national average. The current work seen in lessons in both of the Key Stage 1 classes shows standards to be above average for the higher and average attaining groups of pupils. The lower-attaining groups of pupils achieve in line with expectations for their prior attainment. Scrutiny of previous work in Year 2 shows the work of the majority of pupils to be very securely in line with national average. This work has been successfully developed through the strong teaching of the mathematics co-ordinator so by the end of Year 2 standards are now above average.
75. The recent focus on improving the teaching of mathematics has been effective in raising standards, particularly in Key Stage 1. At the start of each lesson, the teachers review recent learning, make clear to the pupils the aims of the current lesson and carefully probe the pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils' interest and enthusiasm was aroused by a quick, well paced mental calculation session based on pairs of

numbers up to fifty. This was then used in the main activities of the lesson to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of partitioning numbers for addition and subtraction. In Year 1, the pupils are able to write their own number sentences following good teaching that has a clear focus on extending their understanding. A scrutiny of their previous work shows that by the end of key stage 1, the majority of pupils can understand place value of three-digit numbers and can solve number and money problems using mental calculation. The higher-attaining pupils are secure in their understanding of numbers up to 1000 and use the facts from the 2, 5 and 10 times tables in their calculations.

76. Scrutiny of previous work in the Key Stage 2 classes shows that the majority of pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding of number, measures and shape. The Year 3 pupils can use decimals correctly in recording money and by Year 5 most apply this knowledge in addition and subtraction to two decimal places. The pupils in Years 4 and 5 can recognise and record simple fractions and by the end of Year 6 most can correctly identify simple, proper and mixed fractions. Across the school, the teachers take every opportunity to reinforce the correct use of vocabulary in mathematics' lessons. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson on problem solving. The teacher led the pupils to consider what information is needed to answer the question and to review the different ways in which addition, subtraction, multiplication and division can be written. Well targeted questioning enables the teacher to assess how secure this knowledge is before the pupils move confidently to the problem solving activities themselves. By the end of Year 5, the higher and average attaining groups of pupils use a range of methods to solve problems. They can calculate the area of squares and rectangles and draw accurately measured angles. Data handling work is satisfactorily developed over the key stage, but the work of higher-attaining groups does not extend their knowledge and understanding beyond simple block and line graphs. For example, there is little evidence of work on probability or recording data in four quadrants. This is an aspect requiring further development in this subject.
77. Overall, the teaching is far stronger than that described in the previous report partly because there are now appropriate policies and curriculum guidance for all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The teachers use their good subject knowledge in the teaching of basic skills and vocabulary. Their lessons are well planned and the objectives are made clear to the pupils. They make good use of resources to interest and challenge the pupils, and through well targeted questioning they are able to assess the extent of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the pupils work with interest and concentration and the pace of their learning is good; there are clear links between the quality of the teaching and the progress that all groups make during the course of the lesson. In such lessons, pupils respond well to their teachers. They are eager to participate and offer their ideas and opinions freely. Those few lessons where progress is less rapid are characterised by a lack of challenge and the teachers' lower expectations of what the pupils can do, particularly higher-attaining groups. This leads to a lack of concentration and effort on the part of the pupils and slows the pace of their learning.

78. The co-ordinator is confident in the exercise of her wider management responsibilities so the leadership and management of the subject are good. She is one of the main forces behind the drive to improve standards and is giving good support to her colleagues. The procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of the pupils are good and the available assessment data is used well to plan the future curriculum. At present, the resources are satisfactory and are being used well to continue to raise standards. However, better use of information technology could be planned on a more systematic basis to support the teaching and learning in mathematics. This remains an area of development for the school.

## SCIENCE

79. The inspection evidence shows that by the end of both Key Stages standards are broadly in line with the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection, which found standards to be below average at the end of Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils are now achieving appropriately in relation to their prior attainment in science. The improvement in attainment in Key Stage 1 has been helped by use of the new nationally approved guidance to support the teachers' planning. Discussions with the pupils and a scrutiny of their previous work show that all groups of pupils are achieving standards that are broadly in line with the national average. The work seen in lessons also indicates that most pupils are achieving in line with the levels expected nationally.
80. As pupils move through Key Stage 1, they develop a satisfactory body of scientific knowledge and understanding. Scrutiny of their previous work shows they recognise that different living things are found in different habitats and can identify and label correctly the main parts of a plant. They know that a lighting circuit has to include a bulb and that materials can be sorted according to a range of criteria, such as type and texture. Most pupils can identify a range of light and sound sources, but the higher-attaining groups of pupils do not extend this knowledge and understanding. They cannot explain, for example, why certain materials are best suited for particular purposes or say if changes to materials are reversible. Their skills of investigation are developed satisfactorily. This was evident; for example, in a Year 2 lesson when the pupils were testing how far certain elastic bands would be stretched by a given weight. Conversations with different groups of pupils showed that they have a sound understanding of hypothesising and fair testing. The higher-attaining pupils for instance, are able to predict that the thinner elastic bands will stretch farther, but are unable to say why.
81. In a lesson in Year 6, the focus was on revising and consolidating the pupils' knowledge and understanding of solids, liquids and gases. Good use was made of a video to reinforce the learning objectives of the lesson and questioning by the teacher helped the pupils to explain their ideas and opinions. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their previous work show that by the end of the key stage the majority can use simple keys to identify minibeasts and can describe the major organs of the body and their functions. They know, for example, that the heart is a pump that takes oxygen around the body. The higher-attaining pupils can describe methods of separating solids and liquids, such as filtration and evaporation. A good lesson seen in Year 4 extended the pupils' understanding of the conditions for the germination of seeds and Year 3 pupils were genuinely surprised by the way in which the colour of plants is affected by standing them in different coloured liquids. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of forces, magnets, sound and electricity is developed satisfactorily as they progress through the junior classes through the testing of the magnetic properties of metals and the sound insulation properties of different materials.

82. The inspection evidence shows that overall the quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in KS 1. The teachers now use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons with objectives that are made clear to the pupils at the outset. Challenging activities not only arouse and sustain the pupils' interest, but also extend their knowledge and understanding. As a result, the children work confidently and the lessons proceed at a good pace.
83. However, the less successful teaching shows inadequate expectations of the pupils, particularly the higher attainers, and a slow pace leading to lack of interest and low levels of concentration.
84. The vast majority of the pupils enjoy school and work hard in their lessons. They particularly enjoy 'finding out' activities that develop their skills of enquiry and extend their knowledge and understanding of how things work.
85. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as are the current procedures for monitoring the attainment and progress of the pupils. However, the new co-ordinators' role in monitoring the teaching and learning lacks a clear focus on what must be done to continue to raise standards. Little use is made at present of information and communication technology to support the teaching and learning in science and this is an aspect requiring further development. The resources have been recently audited and reorganised by the coordinator. They are good in quality and range and are being used well to enhance the teaching of science across the school.

## ART AND DESIGN

86. Standards in art and design are above the national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6, and have been maintained at this level since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able, make good progress. They have a wide range of experiences, including opportunities to work in the styles of well-known artists, and their observational drawing is particularly good.
87. The subject co-ordinators have excellent subject knowledge. Their enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and has contributed to the setting of high standards across the school. They have also led the subject forward by providing training for staff and governors. The scheme of work has been developed in consultation with staff. Care has been taken to evaluate the latest national subject guidelines, and where appropriate have been added to the school's curriculum framework. All the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
88. Each pupil has an art book containing examples of work as they move through the school and their achievements are assessed. In Key Stage 2, the pupils are required to produce two pictures, one from memory and a still life, which are used to ascertain the progression in their knowledge and skills. The books have also been used to refine the curriculum to meet pupils' needs more closely.
89. Portfolios of work for all age groups indicate very good links with other curriculum areas. The pupils take photographs of their work in design technology. Good links are made with English when written descriptions of themselves are translated by the painting of self-portraits. Similarly, portraits, based on the work of Holbein, establish links with the pupils' investigations of life in Tudor times in history lessons. Good cultural and geographical connections are developed when the pupils draw and paint designs based on the culture of India.
90. The breadth of the work in art and design is good. In addition to drawing and painting with a range of media, the pupils have completed interesting work with fabric as part of an investigation of texture. In pottery, using real clay, they have been introduced to the work of Henry Moore.
91. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. The following judgements are, therefore, largely based on discussions with pupils, an examination of their previously completed work and scrutiny of the teachers' planning. The teachers plan their lessons very well and give good attention to developing basic skills. In the one lesson observed with pupils from Year 4, the teaching was very good overall and had some excellent features. The teacher has outstanding classroom management skills, and ensures that all pupils have unobstructed views of any demonstration of techniques. Her description of the techniques involved in printing using paint met the levels of understanding of all pupils and they were left in no doubt about the way to proceed. She weaves subject specific language through her descriptive instructions and in this way the pupils extend their technical vocabulary. While one group of pupils was printing, another group examined textured patterns from India. The multicultural dimension was further extended and the children's learning enhanced when the teacher demonstrated how to wear a sari. She encourages the pupils to evaluate their work and suggest ways in which it could be improved.
92. It is clear from the range of work on display throughout the school that art has a high profile and is linked well to learning across the curriculum. The teachers are developing a respect

for creativity in the pupils. Consequently, they love art and design lessons and it is not uncommon to see them reviewing displays in corridors and talking enthusiastically about their work with any interested child or adult.

93. There is a good range of resources, including good quality library books that are used well to support the teaching of art and design.
94. However, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support the pupils' artistic development. For example, the Internet is not used sufficiently to broaden the pupils' awareness of art in other cultures.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in design and technology are in line with those expected of seven and eleven-year-olds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. In Year 4, their progress is good because they take part in imaginative projects that are linked to art and design. The school has improved its standards in this subject of the curriculum since the previous inspection when they were judged to be unsatisfactory at the end of both key stages. The improvement is due to the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of the subject coordinator who has been responsible for the subject for only two terms
96. No lessons were observed in design and technology during the period of the inspection and the following judgements are based on discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of their previously completed work, an examination of the teachers' planning, and a detailed portfolio of work compiled by the subject co-ordinator.
97. In Year 1, the pupils build on their very good progress in the reception year. They learn about designing processes and plan and make houses from cardboard and building kits. They choose the materials they use, discuss their plans and consider improvements. They cut with scissors, fold card to make corners of boxes and with assistance use hole punches. A very good display of hand puppets in Year 2 also demonstrates the pupils' abilities to make finished articles using simple sewing techniques such as running stitch. They investigate a range of ways to join materials, using glue, sticky tape and split pins. They also worked on developing a winding mechanism that was linked to the nursery rhyme 'Jack and Jill'. By the age of seven, the pupils are beginning to build up knowledge of the vocabulary associated with designing and making. The coordinator has discussed work in design and technology with teachers in Key Stage 2. The children's speaking and listening skills are frequently enhanced such as the occasion when Year 3 pupils researched and discussed their preferences before making sandwiches. They learned to cut safely using knives and breadboards and the importance of the appearance of food to make it more attractive and tempting. In Year 4, the pupils made very good containers for holding money. This developed very good links with English and art as they labelled their plans and chose colours and patterns for their finished containers. At the end of the junior stage pupils become more active in examining the design process by dismantling and reassembling musical instruments and then designing and making their own. They also planned and made reinforced frames to which they fixed simple motors to provide power for model vehicles.
98. The school follows the recent guidelines for design and technology. The importance of assessing work is recognised by the teachers and pupils alike. After each project, the teachers discuss with the pupils the strengths and weaknesses of their work which are then

recorded on an evaluation sheet. In the process, the pupils identify ways in which their work could be improved further.

99. The pupils enjoy explaining carefully the way in which they plan their work. They talk enthusiastically about future projects and it is to the credit of the coordinator that the subject has improved considerably in a short period. The coordinator has conducted an audit of the present resources and identified where additional items are needed to enable the school to meet the National Curriculum requirements.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

100. By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils are achieving standards that are in line with those expected of pupils aged seven and eleven. At both key stages, standards in history have declined since the previous inspection. In geography standards have improved at Key Stage 1 and have been maintained at Key Stage 2. Only one lesson in history and two in geography were observed and, therefore, the following judgements are supplemented by discussions with the pupils, an examination of their previous work, discussions with the teachers and scrutiny of their planning. The time allocated for the teaching of these two subjects is below the recommended level and this has adversely affected the range of the work. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
101. Within the time constraints noted above, the planning for these subjects is adequate. The curriculum includes the most recent national guidance and is supplemented by satisfactory levels of educational resources. The subjects are taught in blocks of time and this hampers continuity and progression. The long gaps between topics result in the pupils forgetting much of what they have learned and previous work has to be revised before they can move on to new areas of learning. Furthermore, insufficient attention is given to the quality of marking. For instance, there are few examples of comments by teachers to indicate ways in which the pupils can improve their work, and in some classes there is evidence of unmarked work. The assessment arrangements are informal. The pupils' levels of attainment are assessed and the information is passed on to their new teacher. It is the school's intention to establish a portfolio of work in history.
102. In history, the pupils build up awareness of chronology, and by the end of Year 6 they place events with increasing accuracy along a time line. In Year 2, the pupils empathise with Londoners in regard to the difficulties that they endured at the time of the Great Fire. In a very good lesson, the teacher skilfully used the knowledge and expertise of the community fire officer to give an account of that notable occasion. The officer has independently researched the events of 1666 and his enthusiasm was infectious. This had a very good effect upon the quality of learning as the pupils sat engrossed and listened to an expert give a vivid description of the events. An added attraction of the lesson was the appearance of a fire tender to compare fire-fighting procedures today with those of the seventeenth century. In Year 5, the pupils have benefited from a very good programme of work based on the Victorians. Moreover, good links with other subjects, such as art, have involved the pupils in drawing Tudor portraits in the style of Holbein. The teachers enrich the work by planning visits to places of historical interest that are linked to the topics pupils study. For example, the pupils in Year 3 visited the old Roman fortress at Caerleon and experienced the atmosphere of its well-preserved amphitheatre.
103. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a good understanding of rivers. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe the course and features of a river, for example, meander, erosion and estuary. The River Severn has been their main source of study and the pupils can name places that the river flows through and give accounts of the difficulties caused when it bursts

its banks. The work is extended when they investigate rivers in Europe and this encourages them to develop their skills in using atlases to find a range of information. The pupils compare life in Hereford with that in other parts of the world. For example, the pupils in Year 4 used video material to further their understanding of village life in India. This work was extended in Year 5 with pupils finding out about the uses of water in Ethiopia. In a good lesson, the teacher dealt with the different access that communities have to supplies of water. The pupils compared their own "on tap" supply in Hereford with the provision in Ethiopia where water is often carried for long distances in a container. To illustrate the differences further, when the pupils tried to lift 20 litres of water they were shocked at the weight of the precious liquid.

104. There is a satisfactory range of resources to support the teaching of history and geography, including a reasonable supply of books in the library for the pupils to develop their knowledge through independent learning. However, there is insufficient evidence of the pupils using information technology to gain further information about topics that they are studying.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. By the end of Years 2 and 6 the standards in information and communication technology are below those expected of seven and eleven year olds and also lower than those found at the time of the last inspection.
106. Very little direct teaching of information and communication technology was observed during the current inspection. Although the number of computers has increased, there are still too few and there was little evidence of their use during the inspection. All classes have their 'computer corner', but often the computers were not switched on and there were often no planned activities. All classes have 'listening centres', but again there was no evidence of their use during the inspection. Calculators are used appropriately in mathematics lessons to enable the pupils to check their calculations. The use of information and communication technology across the full breadth of curriculum is limited and does not appear to be planned in a systematic way.
107. Discussions with the pupils in Year 2 shows that they have some skills in word processing and in using an art package, such as 'Dazzle', to produce freehand drawings. For example, they have produced the covers for Christmas cards with simple greeting messages. They are familiar with the keyboard for typing and know the functions of the main keys such as ENTER, SPACE BAR, BACKSPACE AND CAPS LOCK. A very good lesson was seen in Year 2 when the pupils were introduced to data handling. Very good use was made of the pupils' previous knowledge of recording information on graphs in order to demonstrate how yes/no questions can be used to sort data. However, the class has access to only one computer, which the teacher uses for demonstration purposes, so the pupils can only apply what they have learned by taking turns over the next few days. This hinders the reinforcement and consolidation of skills and hinders the pupils' progress.
108. A lesson in Year 6 followed a similar pattern of teacher demonstration but lack of time for the pupils to have the hands-on experience to consolidate and extend their skills. Discussions with the pupils in Year 6 shows that many have skills learnt at home that the school is unable to use effectively because of the inadequacy of its equipment. For example, the school currently has only one computer linked to the Internet. This valuable research facility is situated in the library and is not readily available to support work in other subjects, such as history, science and geography. The school has some CD-ROM's that are used, for



example in history and religious education, but there was little evidence of their use at the time of the inspection. A scrutiny of the software resources shows that the range is inadequate.

109. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The teachers' curriculum and lesson planning has improved through the adoption of the national guidance. The teachers' skills and confidence are also being enhanced through recent training, although this is not yet complete. However, important aspects of the coordinator's role lack definition. For example, there is neither systematic, rigorous monitoring of the pupils' attainment and progress in this subject, nor a clear vision about what must be done to improve standards across the school. This has occurred partly because the co-ordinator is responsible for several other significant aspects of the school's provision.
110. The school should review its provision for the teaching of the skills, knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology and harness its potential to support the teaching and learning across the full breadth of the National Curriculum. **This is a key issue for action.**

## MUSIC

111. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in music are above those expected of seven- and eleven-year-olds. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, take a full part in all the musical activities and achieve very well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were described as meeting the national expectation.
112. The teaching of music is particularly good because it inspires and imbues the pupils with a love of singing and performance. All pupils in the juniors are offered recorder lessons. An impressive feature of morning assemblies is the high quality of the recorder accompaniment as the rest of the school sings sweetly and in tune. This not only adds to an atmosphere of reverence and spirituality, but also raises the pupils' self-esteem and improves their confidence. The pupils experience a range of music when they are taken to live performances, when the Cathedral School music groups visit the school and when professional musicians are invited to organise workshops for the pupils. For example, a percussionist played instruments from many parts of the world, thrilling the pupils and extending their cultural awareness. The school also shares music days with the local high school when they play and sing together. These experiences encourage a substantial number of pupils to extend their musical knowledge and skills and learn to play an additional instrument, for example, the flute, clarinet or violin.
113. The teaching is very good because it is firmly based on the teachers' excellent subject knowledge and thorough planning. From class to class, pupils' musical vocabulary, skills and understanding are developed consistently. The programme of work extends the pupils' technical knowledge through listening and appraising the work of a variety of composers, and the skills of composing and performing are also fully represented. The pupils recognise the instruments in orchestral works and are taught to identify features in a range of music. In Year 1, for instance, the pupils responded very well to the music of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. They knew that various passages represent different parts of the story and understood the teacher's comment that "the dynamics were really loud and the tempo was fast". In Year 5, the pupils were thrilled when challenged to compose a short piece of music to describe aspects of a river. This led to much discussion, careful consideration and a real

sense of achievement. In Year 6, the pupils explained how composers achieve changes of mood, by increasing the tempo and dynamics of their compositions.

114. The pupils look forward to their music lessons, whether in the classroom or in less formal settings, because they are conducted with humour and are enjoyable. For instance, breathing exercises caused some amusement when the school choir rehearsed for a performance to be given in the adjacent church. The children know that the work will be challenging and interesting and that they will have practical activities to increase their knowledge and improve their skills. Individual performance is encouraged and celebrated, and the pupils are pleased to perform for an audience. This was clearly demonstrated by a boy in Year 5 who was urged to share his talent in playing the piano. His performance was enjoyed by the adults, and perhaps more importantly, was cheered by his peers.
115. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the contribution that music makes to the education of young people. Her infectious enthusiasm inspires the pupils. She has a very good overview of the pupils' achievements in this subject. The school has an adequate number and a satisfactory range of musical instruments and is developing a library of resources to enhance the pupils' learning. However, the opportunities for the pupils to use information and communication technology in music are too limited and this is an aspect of the work that the school has identified as a priority for further development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

116. The inspection evidence shows that most pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve standards above those expected nationally. The teaching has improved and the planning for the subject now benefits from guidance that covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The resources have been improved, and the subject is well led by the coordinator. All these factors have contributed to the raising of standards since the last inspection.
117. All aspects of the subject are taught, and by the time they leave school, most pupils can swim the required 25 metres. Gymnastics is taught well throughout the school. In a particularly good lesson in Year 2, all pupils developed their skills of movement and balance as they devised a sequence with a partner. They responded with enthusiasm and imagination to the very good teaching that encouraged and supported all groups of pupils so that they are all able to achieve well.
118. The pupils also benefit from the specialist teaching of visiting coaches, for example, in a cricket skills session for Year 4. This is a well-paced and challenging session that enables all groups of pupils to develop their skills of catching and throwing very effectively. A similar lesson led by the coordinator also was well planned with a range of challenging activities. Good use of resources enabled all pupils to contribute to the lesson and improve their performance.
119. The pupils' behaviour during lessons is good and the teachers plan activities well to match the levels of interest and skills of pupils so that enthusiasm and commitment are maintained. The pupils show a good awareness of safety, both in lessons in the hall and outside on the playing field. Most lessons start and end with appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities and the pupils are aware of the importance of these sessions. The teachers have sound knowledge of the subject, which they use well to support the pupils. They give examples of what they are trying to achieve, which helps lower-attaining groups of pupils by providing a model, and

gives other groups a starting point for their own experiments. The teachers also take every opportunity to encourage the pupils to assess their work. As a result, the pupils respond with sensible criticism and suggestions about how to improve their performance. This was evident, for instance, in a Year 2 lesson on movement and balance.

120. The range of extra-curricular activities is particularly strong and includes good variety of sporting clubs, such as skipping, soccer and netball. These are well supported and enhance the curriculum for considerable numbers of pupils. For example, the skipping club has given demonstrations both locally and regionally and taken part most successfully in numerous competitions. The Year 6 pupils also benefit from a residential visit to an outdoor centre.
121. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop systems to monitor the pupils' acquisition and performance of skills in physical education, and this is included in the current targets for future development of the subject. The resources have recently been upgraded, and are being used well.