

INSPECTION REPORT

OXON C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123502

Headteacher: Mr Mark Rogers

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough
8339

Dates of inspection: 24th – 28th September 2001

Inspection number: 195365

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Racecourse Lane
Bicton Heath
Shrewsbury
Shropshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Kathy Hall

Date of previous inspection: 9th – 12th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8339	Hugh Protherough	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14083	Andy Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20655	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	Areas of learning for the children in the Foundation Stage Art and design	
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History	
19387	Mari Powell	Team Inspector	English Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a primary school of above average size with 348 pupils on roll comprising 172 boys and 174 girls. Although there are generally 60 or so in each year group, the current Year 4 is smaller and this has led to the creation of three mixed age classes. The vast majority of the children are of white ethnicity, although there are sixteen from other backgrounds including Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and White European. Almost all are fluent English speakers. The school serves an area of predominantly owner-occupied housing. Many parents work in professional and managerial roles. Consequently, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals [7%] is well below the national average.

The children start school in the term of their fifth birthday. The teachers' assessments indicate that on entry their levels of attainment cover the full range, but are generally above average. There are two pupils with statements of special educational needs, but overall the proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average.

At the end of last term, both the headteacher and her deputy left to take up new posts in other schools. The acting headteacher due to take over in September was appointed headteacher designate in the last week of the summer term. The school is currently in the process of appointing a new deputy headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school that provides a very good quality of education and helps the hard working and enthusiastic pupils to achieve high standards, especially in English and science. The staff team is a strong one. The teachers exercise a wide range of managerial responsibilities and have responded positively to the arrival of their new headteacher who is rapidly establishing himself as a strong leader with a clear vision of how to take the school forward. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high, especially in English and science.
- The teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good with many lessons setting a brisk pace for learning.
- The children enjoy school, work hard and do their best.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum that is supported by a very good range of sporting and cultural clubs out of school hours.
- The headteacher, governors and staff evaluate the school's performance thoughtfully and have a good understanding of where improvements need to be made.
- The staff and pupils make extremely effective use of the school's very good computer provision.

What could be improved

- The opportunities for child initiated learning in the Foundation Stage.
- The rate of the pupils' progress in mathematics.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in June 1997, the school has made significant improvements. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are higher than those described four years ago. The provision for design and information and communications technologies is much better and standards in these subjects are now at least in line with the expected levels. Clear-sighted leadership has also brought about important improvements in relation to many aspects of the school's management. The subject coordinators have developed a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and play a much fuller part in the strategic management of the school. For instance, better use is made of test and assessment information and the arrangements for teaching the pupils with special educational needs are now very good. The governing body is making fuller and more effective use of their annual delegated budget.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	C	E
mathematics	A	A	C	E
science	A*	B	B	C

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
average above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

By the time the children in the Reception class reach the end of the Foundation Stage most are exceeding the expectations set out for children of this age.

The test results for 2000 were generally lower than those of previous years and depressed the improvement in the school's results to below the national trend. However, this is partly explained by the fact that around a quarter of that group of Year 6 pupils was on the school's register of special educational needs. There was also considerable pupil movement in and out of that cohort, and only a little over a half of the children took both their Year 2 and Year 6 tests at this school. The table above shows that standards in English and mathematics were in line with the national average, but were well below average when compared with those of pupils in similar schools. Standards in science were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. These results were close to the realistic targets set by the school for this cohort of pupils.

In 2001 standards returned to their previous high levels in English and science. The vast majority of the pupils reached the levels expected of eleven-year-olds and a significant number exceeded them. However, although the number of pupils achieving the expected level in mathematics was similar to the national picture, fewer pupils reached the higher levels than in English and science. A significant feature of the results in mathematics over

the past three years has been that the girls have performed consistently less well than the boys. Standards in Year 2 continue to be well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average when compared with the results of similar schools.

The inspection findings generally confirm the impression created by the test results. Standards in all aspects of English and science are well above the national average in Years 2 and 6. However, the pupils' performance in mathematics is less strong. Standards are currently above the national average in Year 6 and broadly average in Year 2. Although the pupils are generally making steady progress in this subject, it could be improved further given a level of challenge that is more consistent and better matched to the range of abilities in each mathematics group. The inspection team could detect no significant difference in the current performance of boys and girls. The standard of the children's work in art and design, music, history, information and communication technology and physical education frequently exceeds the levels expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children concentrate hard in lessons, take delight in learning and show pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The vast majority of pupils are courteous, considerate and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are extremely positive. The pupils adopt eagerly the many good opportunities to accept responsibility from an early age.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Very good	Very 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 school does a good job in ensuring that the vast majority of the pupils leave the school literate, numerate and ready for the next stage of education. The teaching of English is particularly strong because the teachers plan their lessons with care and precision. They ensure that the children acquire the skills of reading and writing in a systematic fashion and in a way that fosters for many a love of literature and pleasure in the craft of writing. The teaching of mathematics is good and helps the pupils make steady progress in the development of the skills of numeracy. However, the level of challenge in lessons is not yet at the consistently high pitch found in the English teaching.

A major strength lies in the teachers' high expectations of the children regardless of either their background or ability. They know the children very well and use this knowledge skilfully in planning lessons that interest and motivate. The very positive relationships within each class support a climate of hard work and enjoyable learning throughout the school.

The teaching in the Reception class is firmly based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, too much of the day is currently taken up with formal lessons. Although these are always relevant and potentially interesting they are not always organized in ways that take sufficient account of how young the children learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum that successfully meets the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good arrangements to support these pupils so that they make rapid progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The teachers successfully ensure that these pupils are fully involved in lessons and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school's code of behaviour emphasises individual worth as well as collective responsibility. The adults have clear values and expectations of the pupils and consistently promote the differences between right and wrong. There are regular opportunities for the children to ponder life's bigger questions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes very good provision for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils.

The very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. The school is making extremely effective use of computers across the full breadth of the curriculum. Although the provision for personal, social and health education has many strong points, the arrangements for sex education lack coherence. There are very good links with the parents, the vast majority of whom work closely with the teachers to the considerable benefit of their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new senior management team has made a very good start. It is supported effectively by the knowledgeable subject coordinators and is well placed to build successfully on the substantial legacy of the previous leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good oversight of the work of the school and carry out their responsibilities in full.

responsibilities	
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The senior management team makes shrewd judgments about both standards and the quality of education on the basis of a good range of first hand evidence collected from around the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes prudent use of its budget in supporting the priorities of the school development plan.

The school is well staffed, especially in terms of the good number of teaching assistants who are effectively deployed throughout the school. The buildings and grounds are attractive and well maintained, although the hall is small for a school of this size. The governing body is making much better use of its delegated budget and has begun to apply the principles of best value to many of its spending decisions. Thus, the levels of educational resources are generally good, and in the case of computers very good indeed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overwhelming majority of the children enjoy coming to school. • The teachers have high expectations so the children work hard and do their best. • Standards at the school are high. The children are well prepared for transfer to secondary education. • The teachers are friendly and approachable and know the children well. • The children behave well and learn to accept responsibility from an early age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider variety of homework. • The depth and range of information provided by the school about the curriculum and the children's progress. • More extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with the many positive views expressed about the school. However, the inspection evidence indicates that there is a good variety of useful homework. Although there are no clubs for the children in Years Reception - 2, the teachers provide a very good range of extra curricular activities for the pupils in Years 3 - 6. The recent improvements to the annual reports provide a much better picture of the progress of individual children, and other curriculum information is readily available from the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children start school with well-developed skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence. This is confirmed by the teachers' early assessments. Analysis of the work completed by the children in last year's Reception classes shows that by the end of the Foundation Stage the vast majority of the pupils are exceeding the early learning goals expected of children of this age. The inspection findings show that the current Reception class is making good progress in the development of the early skills of literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development are satisfactory.
2. For the past three years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results of the tests for 2001 continue this pattern with the exception of mathematics where there has been a slight dip, although they are still better than the average nationally. The inspection findings confirm this positive picture with standards in reading and writing continuing to be high. The standards in mathematics of the current Year 2 are average. However, this is not wholly unexpected as the baseline assessments for this particular group of pupils shows that their mathematical profile was considerably weaker than that of their language skills when they started school three years ago. The analysis of the pupils' work shows that they are making steady progress and achieving appropriately in lessons. The standard of the pupils' work in science is well above average with many in Year 2 exceeding the levels expected for the children of this age. This good start is an important factor in the results achieved in Key Stage 2.
3. In the national tests of 2000, the results achieved by Year 6 were generally lower than those of previous years, and this depressed the improvement in the school's results to below the national trend. However, this is partly explained by the fact that around a quarter of that group of Year 6 pupils was on the school's register for special educational needs. There was also considerable pupil movement in and out of that cohort and only a little over a half of the children took both their Year 2 and Year 6 tests at this school. Although standards in English and mathematics were in line with the national average, the results were well below average when compared with those of pupils from similar schools. Standards in science were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. The results were close to the realistic targets that were set by the school for this cohort of pupils.
4. In 2001, standards returned to their previous high levels in English and science. The vast majority of pupils reached the levels expected of eleven-year-olds and a large number exceeded them. The number of pupils achieving the expected level in mathematics was similar to the national picture, but fewer pupils reached the higher levels than in English and science. A further significant feature of the results in mathematics over the past three years has been that the girls have performed consistently less well than the boys. However, the inspection team could detect no significant difference in the current performance of boys and girls, nor any gender bias within the teaching.

5. The inspection findings generally confirm the impression created by the test results. Standards in all aspects of English and science are well above the national average in Year 6. The pupils' performance in mathematics is less strong, but it is still above the national average. Although the pupils are generally making steady progress in this subject, it could be improved further given a level of challenge that is more consistent and better matched to the range of abilities in each mathematics group. **This is a key issue for action.**
6. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are working hard and achieving well. The quality and standard of their work in art and design, music, history, information and communication technology and physical education is good and frequently exceeds the levels expected of pupils at the end of both Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The pupils' attitudes and relationships within the school, their behaviour and personal development are consistently very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The vast majority of parents believe that behaviour in the school is good and that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.
8. The vast majority of the children in the Foundation Stage are settling happily into the routines of school. Most are eager to get to school each day to meet their teachers, new friends and classmates. They behave politely and work hard. However, it is clear that a few children are still finding the school day long and tiring. During some afternoons, one or two of them occasionally grow irritable and are less co-operative, especially if they have to listen to adults for too long rather than being involved in practical activity.
9. The pupils' enthusiasm and attitudes to school are very good. They clearly enjoy coming to school and there is little or no lateness. The vast majority consistently demonstrates very positive attitudes to their work. They are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They quickly settle down diligently in class and stay on task. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. They concentrate hard, enjoy learning and are proud of the work they complete. The pupils are interested and fully involved in all school activities, including the very good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
10. Standards of behaviour are consistently very good. Almost all of the pupils behave very well and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Their behaviour in the classrooms is consistently very good and at times excellent. On occasions a tiny minority of the children present challenging behaviour, but this is extremely well controlled and managed by the teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, there is little or no disruption to learning caused by inappropriate behaviour. This has a positive effect on the academic standards achieved. The pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is good. There were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual pupils. The children work and play in an environment that is free from oppressive behaviour. There have been no recent exclusions.

11. Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults with whom they come into contact, and also to one another. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. The children of all ages work very well together in the classrooms. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. However, there is some reluctance by boys and girls to work in mixed gender groups in physical education. Although some of the younger children have yet to fully develop their social skills, the vast majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, the pupils are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers.
12. The pupils' personal development is very good. They are learning a very good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. The school supports local and national charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. They take part in a wide range of visits into the community, including a residential experience for the older children. The majority of pupils respond very well when taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms, and in many lessons they were observed working independently and taking the initiative for their own learning. Where opportunities for taking on formal responsibilities around the school are offered, for example as Year 6 prefects, the pupils respond in an extremely mature and sensible manner.
13. Levels of attendance are above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Overall, the high standards consistently maintained in attitudes, behaviour and attendance are strong features of the school and have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and attainment in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of the teaching has improved still further from the positive picture described at the time of the last inspection. On this occasion, almost all of the teaching was at least good with 6% excellent, 37% very good, 39% good and 18% satisfactory.
15. The teaching is strongest in Key Stages 1 and 2. Here the teachers have high expectations for the children regardless of their background or ability and set challenging work, especially in English, science, history, art and design, music and information and communication technology. This clearly motivates the children who respond positively and work very hard in lessons. For instance, in science the pupils are treated as if they are scientists. The teachers use correct technical language and expect the children from an early age to predict the outcomes of experiments and to hypothesise about their findings. For example, by Year 2 the pupils were confident in their discussions about what might happen when three plasticene balls of equal mass are dropped from different heights and they set about their experiment with diligence.
16. The teaching of English is particularly strong because the teachers plan their lessons with care and precision. They ensure that the children acquire the skills of reading and writing in a systematic fashion and in a way that fosters for many a love of literature and pleasure in the craft of writing. Throughout the school, the lesson plans generally identify clearly what the teacher expects the children to learn. In many of the best lessons, these objectives are made clear to the class at the start of the lesson and used as a reference point to check progress as the lesson unfolds. As a result, most lessons have a secure structure, leading to a brisk pace

in the pupils' learning. For example, in an English lesson in Year 6 the simple word game played by the whole class was extremely successful in reinforcing the ways that suffixes and prefixes can be added to root words.

17. The teaching of mathematics is good and helps the pupils make steady progress in the development of the skills of numeracy. However, the level of challenge is not yet at the consistently high pitch found in the English teaching. Various factors are at play here, most of which the school is already in the process of addressing. For instance, the helpful structure of the curriculum framework suggested by the national strategy for teaching numeracy has been overlaid with the school's adoption of a published scheme. Analysis of the teachers' planning suggests that in some cases the lessons may be driven more by what the scheme says rather than by the teachers' own analysis of what the children have learnt and need to do next. Similarly, the setting of targets for individual pupils is not as far advanced as in English. Improving the rate of the pupils' progress in mathematics to match that found in English and science is a realistic and achievable goal. **This is a key issue for action.**
18. Throughout the course of the inspection there were many other significant strengths identified in the lessons observed. At the heart of this lies the very keen sense of teamwork and mutual support that the teachers and teaching assistants provide for each other on a daily basis. There is a strong commitment to open dialogue, professional development and regular attendance at training events that keeps the staff team up-to-date and well informed. The most striking evidence of this lies in the school's very effective use of information and communication technology that permeates virtually every subject of the National Curriculum. At the last inspection, the school was not providing all the elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Since then the members of staff have undergone extensive training, and there has been substantial investment in machines and resources. Consequently, the teaching and use of this subject is now a major strength of the school.
19. A further significant strength lies in the extremely positive relationships between adults and pupils. The teachers are particularly skilful in addressing the needs of all their pupils and making them feel valued and included in the lessons. For instance, when a pupil with special educational needs was late arriving one day, the teacher took great care to explain what had already happened in the lesson to make sure he/she understood and could catch up. In physical education in Years 3 and 6, the teachers ensure that the pupils who lack physical confidence feel secure and can work safely to extend their skills. In English lessons, the pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress as a result of the careful way that the teachers encourage them to read aloud. All these sensitive approaches make a major contribution to the school's positive ethos that supports hard work and successful learning for all groups of pupils.
20. Overall, the teaching in the Reception class is satisfactory. The teacher's planning is based firmly on the Foundation Stage curriculum and the school is working hard to ensure all aspects of the necessary provision are available to the children. The pupils are receiving a good grounding in acquiring the early skills of reading, writing and numeracy. However, too much of the day is currently taken up with formal lessons. Although these are always relevant and potentially interesting they are not always organised in ways that take sufficient account of how young children learn best. For instance, in one literacy lesson the children were kept seated for over half an hour, by the end of which they were losing concentration and becoming restless. A potentially exciting lesson on personal hygiene contained lots of interesting science about the effects of washing hands in soap and water. However, the lesson lost a lot of its impact because the practical work took place in the home corner where it was difficult for everyone to see and only a few got the chance to wash their hands. On other

occasions, for instance when the children use the computer suite, their work rattles along at a much brisker pace because everyone is kept busy. The majority of the children are confident, articulate and willing to show initiative. However, there are currently too few opportunities for them to develop as independent learners by initiating their own activities inside and outside the classroom. **This is a key issue for action.**

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

21. The school's long-term planning is now much more coherent. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Curricular provision for design and technology and for information and communication technology has improved markedly. The earlier inconsistency in the provision for the pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 has now been addressed and ensures that they receive an appropriate programme of work to promote very good progress. Many aspects of the curriculum to support personal, social and health education are strong, but the school recognises the urgent need of a coherent and appropriate programme for sex education that is based on recent national guidance and has the approval of the parents and governors. **This is an additional issue that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.**
22. Most areas of the curriculum have been stringently reviewed in the light of national developments. The planning for the teaching of literacy, for example, has been thoroughly reviewed and is now underpinned by very good programmes of work for speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is a major feature of the school's very successful literacy strategy. The school recognises that the curriculum for fostering numeracy requires further development. Provision is made to teach all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum in order to ensure that the pupils have the grounding necessary to enable them then to meet the demands of the work in Key Stage 1.
23. The strength of the curriculum lies in the teachers' identification of interesting activities that match the needs of all pupils and motivate them to become eager and enquiring learners. The activities designed to promote writing skills, for example, are challenging for pupils of all levels. The science curriculum invites the pupils' curiosity about scientific processes and taxes their problem solving skills. Information and communication technology now provides a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to become proficient in its use in many different circumstances.
24. A good number of extra curricular clubs, both sporting and cultural, provide additional enrichment. They offer valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in events in the wider community. The choir, for example, is currently recording work to be included in the repertoire of a nationally known pop group. Visits outside school usefully support work in geography and history. The pupils have widened the readership for their writing by being invited to exhibit it in public. Visitors such as the local vicar, a local police officer, a visiting storyteller and representatives of the County Music Service play a very valuable part as they contribute their specialist skills and knowledge to enhance the curriculum.

25. The pupils have also been able to broaden their curricular experiences and consequently enrich their personal development through supporting many good causes. These include a local cancer charity. Environmental issues have their place on the pupils' agenda. The pupils have studied the features of their own locality and been engaged in a tidy up operation around the school. These opportunities are a good reflection of the school's commitment to implementing recent national guidelines about education for citizenship
26. The school places great emphasis upon the fostering of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All these important aspects of the broader curriculum are very well covered. The provision for moral and spiritual development is a particular strength. The adults have clear values and expectations of the pupils and consistently promote an understanding of the differences between right and wrong. This is well supported through the code of behaviour that emphasises individual worth as well as collective responsibility within the school community. A prominent strand of spirituality permeates periods of reflection during school worship and some lessons such as art and design religious education. A thoughtful programme of music for worship, prayers and a reverential atmosphere contribute to a climate where the presence of a higher being might be easily sensed. The prominence of well-executed artwork around the school provides opportunities for pupils to pause and reflect. The pupils' respect for and appreciation of this work is much in evidence as they move along corridors from one area of the school to another.
27. The curriculum contains several valuable cultural strands. Religious education raises the pupils' awareness of customs and lifestyles associated not only with Christianity, but also Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. Well-displayed artefacts, such as those associated with Christian baptism, provide very tangible examples of items that are treasured by adherents of different faiths. Books in classrooms also reflect a variety of cultural settings. Art and musical resources reflect European and some Asian and Australian elements. However, elements that reflect the rich diversity of the many other cultures in this country, although emerging, could yet be more prominent.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The school makes very good provision for the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. All members of staff place a very high priority on pastoral care, and are very approachable and supportive. Although it is still early in the school year, the teachers already know their pupils extremely well. The non-teaching staff are caring, committed and provide very good support for both teachers and pupils. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them consistently and conscientiously. Very good provision is made for medical and first aid requirements and the arrangements for dealing with routine matters such as minor injuries are very good. Conscientious teachers, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils very well at breaks. Experienced and efficient midday supervisors undertake lunchtime supervision, and their standard of care is high.
29. The school makes appropriate use of relevant external support agencies and very good use of its learning support staff. The teaching assistants are deployed effectively and used very well to support both pupils and teachers. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and has a positive impact on their attainment and progress. Child protection procedures are securely in place

and there is a very good awareness of the related issues throughout the school. There are also very good procedures for health and safety. These are well known by all members of staff who consistently demonstrate safe practice in lessons. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously and all the required safety inspections and checks, including risk assessments, are regularly carried out and properly recorded. A couple of potential health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection. This elicited a rapid response and these shortcomings were immediately rectified.

30. The school has effective procedures in place for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. For example, the school's behaviour policy is reinforced by individual class rules, which have been agreed by the pupils. The subject of bullying is well addressed in personal and social education lessons and assemblies. All staff have very high expectations of behaviour, and discipline is administered consistently and well. This has a positive effect on the high standards of conduct that are maintained throughout the school. Good attendance is actively encouraged and absence monitored in a satisfactory manner. However, the monitoring of behaviour and attendance tends to rely on the teachers' individual efforts and lacks a formalised whole school structure.
31. The class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. There are very good procedures for monitoring their academic performance and personal development. This starts in reception where the teacher maintains individual records, including baseline assessments and detailed pre-school profiles on every child. In both key stages, the class teachers maintain comprehensive assessment records to a consistent whole school format. The teachers keep group and individual records, for example, on reading, writing, science and mathematics. The assessment information is used well to guide curriculum planning and set targets for improvement for individual pupils. In classes with two teachers, both make assessment notes on pupils' workbooks to inform their job-share partners and maintain a consistent approach.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Home/school relationships are very good, and the school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents. Many committed parents and governors regularly help in the classrooms, accompany the children on out of school trips and assist with extra curricular activities. Most parents are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home. They support homework and home reading, and consistently enter appropriate comments in the home-school reading books. There is a very active parent- teacher association that organises social and fund raising events for the school. A considerable amount of money has been raised for the school by this means. Some parents gave of their time to help staff to develop the wildlife environmental area. Most consistently expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. The vast majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or complaints. Some would like to see a wider range of homework and more extra-curricular activities. The inspection evidence indicates that there is a good variety of useful homework and the provision of extra curricular activities is very good. However, there are currently no extra curricular activities available to the younger children in the Reception to Year 2 classes.

33. Communication between the school and home is good. The school sends out regular newsletters and frequent letters about specific events and activities. It publishes a comprehensive and informative prospectus that contains detailed information about the curriculum. The class teachers send parents a letter at the start of each term about the curriculum and the topics taught in their classes. These are helpful documents and the teachers are also available to provide further explanation if required. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. Some parents disagreed that they were kept well informed about how their children are getting on. They are given an informative progress report each year and offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The reports clearly indicate what the pupils can and cannot do and the progress they are making. They also set targets for improvement.
34. The headteacher and his staff are very approachable and make themselves available to parents at the start and end of each school day. There are ample opportunities for parents to ask about their children's progress and to seek further curriculum information on an informal basis.
35. Overall, the partnership with parents is a strong feature of the school and has a positive effect on the pupils' learning and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. Since the last inspection, the leadership has brought about significant improvements to the management of the school. As a result, the transition towards a new senior management team is developing remarkably smoothly with minimum disruption to the day-to-day running of the school and the very good quality of education provided for the pupils.
37. One of the main reasons for this lies in the sensible way that the previous headteacher developed the staff team and encouraged the subject coordinators to assume increasing responsibility for managing the curriculum. Each is responsible for the oversight of the curriculum in their subject and for providing advice and support for their colleagues. There is also an appropriate monitoring programme that enables them to check the quality of teaching in lessons. These activities have enhanced still further the climate of open and professional dialogue within the school that was strongly reflected in the teachers' confident conversations with members of the inspection team. The teachers are used to looking at a wide range of evidence, picking out what is going well, what needs to be improved and putting into action an appropriate plan.
38. These processes are a good indicator of the successful way that the school has approached the introduction of Performance Management. Each teacher has a pertinent job description that sets out both general teaching duties and those duties specific to their post. They have been subject to annual review with senior staff for several years, so that the move to setting specific, measurable targets has been accomplished with a minimum of fuss. A further strength of the process is evidenced by the way that the teachers see a clear correlation between their own targets and those of the school development plan.

39. The governing body carries out its duties conscientiously and effectively. For instance, the recent arrangements to secure the leadership of the school when both headteacher and deputy headteacher moved to new posts worked very well. The discussions between governors and the new headteacher have resulted in a clear picture of the qualifications and skills they expect their new deputy headteacher to possess when they interview for the post later in the autumn term.
40. Since the last inspection, the governors have improved considerably the effectiveness with which they use the school's delegated budget. The school development plan sets out a good range of appropriate activity for the each year along with an estimate of how much this is going to cost. The governors keep a careful check on the progress of the plan through the written reports provided by the headteacher, visits to the school and by inviting the subject coordinators to present evaluations of their work to the governing body. A further strength is the way that the governors and staff are making prudent long-term plans for more significant and expensive developments. For instance, the large budget surplus mentioned in the last report was identified in part for the development of a computer suite. This has been in operation for three years now and has led to a substantial improvement in the standards achieved in this subject. Sources of additional new funding have helped augment this very good provision and have been targeted extremely effectively to support the teaching and learning. For instance, the provision of laptop computers for the teachers has considerably reduced some of the burden of curriculum and lesson planning because these documents can now be edited with ease. These machines are also used regularly by the teachers to make presentations to the class using the program Powerpoint, and by the pupils for their own work across the curriculum. The next major project involves the creation of a new library. Plans are well advanced and the questions being asked about cost and quality are positive indicators that the school has made a good start to introducing the principles of best value when deciding how to spend its budget. This prudent approach to budget management has led to a situation where the levels of resources available for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum are generally good in all areas.
41. The many meetings and telephone calls held over the summer between the outgoing and incoming headteachers have contributed strongly to the smooth start to the new school year. It is evident that the new headteacher has learnt a lot about the school in a very short time because he listens carefully to the staff, governors, parents and children. He has a clear vision of what makes an effective school and is synthesising his own previous experience with the rich legacy he has inherited. For instance, his extensive knowledge and skills in mathematics is helping in the making of plans to improve further the standards in this subject.
42. The school is well staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and a good number of teaching assistants who are effectively deployed in all classes to support the teaching and learning. Many of these assistants play a significant role in supporting the pupils with special educational needs. This aspect of the school's provision is particularly strong because the special educational needs coordinator is thorough and meticulous. She does a very good job in supporting the teachers and keeping the parents informed. The individual education plans are expressed clearly and up-to-date and the pupils' targets are sharp and well focused. The rolling programme of review meetings ensures that a very good check is maintained on the progress of individual pupils.

43. The school is outgrowing its accommodation. The Year 6 classes are in demountable buildings and the hall is not big enough for the whole school to gather together for worship. It also limits the ability of the school to welcome parents more frequently for such occasions. The school site is spacious and attractive, but the playgrounds are small and offer little variety in the ways that the children might play at breaks and lunchtimes. Similarly, the lack of a secure play area for the children in the Foundation Stage limits their opportunities for more regular outdoor play.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to improve still further the very good quality of education that the school is presently providing, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:-
- (1) Develop the range of opportunities for child initiated learning in the Foundation Stage.
(Paragraphs 20, 47,
 - (2) Increase the rate of the pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by
 - Ensuring that more of the higher-attaining pupils reach the higher levels;
 - Reviewing approaches to planning and target setting.
 (Paragraphs 5, 17, 62,

In addition to these main issues, the governors should

- ❖ Review current arrangements for sex education and draw up an agreed policy.
(Paragraph 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

83

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	31	32	15	0	0	0
Percentage	6	37	39	18	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YRec – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	348
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YRec – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	62

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence	
	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	
	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	29	29	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	26
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	54	56	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (89)	97 (93)	93 (93)
	National	[] (83)	[] (84)	[] (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	27
	Girls	26	26	25
	Total	52	52	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (96)	90 (93)	90 (98)
	National	[] (84)	[] (88)	[] (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	25	22	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	18	12	19
	Total	39	33	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (76)	74 (67)	91 (87)
	National	[] (75)	[] (72)	[] (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	20	22
	Girls	21	12	21
	Total	42	32	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (68)	68 (68)	89 (77)
	National	[] (70)	[] (72)	[] (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	315
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)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YRec – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7.3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	193

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	621,444
Total expenditure	608,661
Expenditure per pupil	1,677
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,734
Balance carried forward to next year	48,517

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	324
Number of questionnaires returned	110

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	46	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	55	3	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	53	16	5	2
The teaching is good.	45	48	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	44	18	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	46	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	49	18	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	33	49	3	2	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	52	2	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	45	17	7	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR THE CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Analysis of the assessments taken when the children start school shows that they begin the Foundation Stage with above average levels of attainment in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and personal and social development. Discussions with the teachers confirm that the children's social skills are not as well developed in the current intake as they have been in previous years.
46. The inspection evidence shows that by the end of the Foundation Stage, the vast majority of the children are exceeding the early learning goals expected of this age group in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They meet the early learning goals for their physical and creative development.
47. The teaching is satisfactory in all the areas of learning, with good aspects in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The school provides a carefully structured range of relevant and appropriate activities firmly based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on language and mathematics, and the children make good progress in these areas and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's progress in their personal, social, emotional, physical and creative development is sound, but not so rapid. This is because too much of the day is currently taken up with formal lessons during which all the children carry out the same tasks. Although these are usually relevant and potentially interesting, they are not always organised in ways that take proper account of how young children learn. For instance there are currently insufficient opportunities for the children to make their own informed choices from a range of activities or to initiate their own learning. **This is a key issue for action.**

Personal, social and emotional development

48. It is evident from watching the pupils in Year 1 that by the time the children reach the end of the Foundation Stage they have become independent, confident learners, well integrated into the school community and familiar with school rules and routines. Even though it is early in the school year, the new Reception class is settling in well. The children are kind to one another and polite to visitors, following the good examples set by adults. When given the opportunity, they are happy to take on simple responsibilities, such as taking lunch details to the office. They manage their own belongings well when dressing and undressing for physical activity, and know the importance of keeping their hands clean. The children help to tidy equipment at the end of the lessons, often without being asked. The resources and equipment are well organised, so that the children know where things belong. Strategies for encouraging the children to pay attention are soon established and they know the expectations and boundaries for their work and behaviour. The majority of the children are eager to meet the teacher's high expectations. They follow instructions and directions well, maintaining attention for long periods of time and concentrating diligently on their written tasks. However, there are times when the teacher expects too much, for instance, by addressing

the whole class for more than half an hour. This inevitably causes the children become restless.

49. The teaching is most successful when the adults involve themselves alongside the children when they are busy with independent group activities, encouraging them to share and co-operate. They make well-judged interventions to prompt the children to consider the effect of their behaviour on one another. Whilst there are some planned opportunities for the children to choose their own activities, they currently have insufficient scope to initiate their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

50. The children enjoy listening to and joining in with familiar stories, such as 'Goldilocks', and readily respond with exuberant enthusiasm to the teachers' questioning. They are able to retell the story and sequence events in the correct order. The children confidently share news of their families and weekend activities with one another. They listen attentively when the teacher encourages them to ask one another questions, so developing both their speaking and listening skills effectively. The majority are confident and articulate, and express themselves well to adults and one another in extended, well-constructed sentences. They have a wide and varied vocabulary. The teacher, classroom assistant and parent helpers all provide good role models and set high standards, respecting the contributions made by children of all abilities. The children enjoy learning to read and considerably exceed the expectations of the age group. They are keen to take their reading books home to share with their families and very quickly are able to recognise initial sounds and familiar words. The systematic teaching of letter shapes and sounds is most effective in providing a firm foundation for the basic skills of reading and writing. Analysis of last year's work shows that by the end of the Foundation Stage many of the children are independent writers, willing to attempt unfamiliar words using their knowledge of sounds. The most able produce simple stories, using wordbooks effectively to write accurate and interesting sentences. The children develop good pencil control through frequent practice in copying from very good models provided by the teacher. Almost all of them write their names clearly and copy from the teacher's writing accurately with well-formed letters and accurate use of capital and small letters. They illustrate their stories and narratives with lively, imaginative drawings. The teaching provides a wide and relevant range of formal writing tasks and the children make good progress as a result. The children work hard to reach high standards in the basic skills of reading and writing.

Mathematical development

51. The children experience a wide range of interesting number activities and can count, match, sort and order numbers using a variety of small equipment. They spend a lot of lesson time carefully and accurately recording their findings to a high standard in different ways in well presented books. As a result, by the end of the reception class, most children recognise numbers up to ten, and many of them to numbers beyond this. They match groups of objects accurately to symbols and make good progress to reach high standards in counting, sequencing and ordering numbers. The majority are able to combine numbers accurately, throwing dice to aggregate the number of spots, understanding the principles of addition and subtraction well. The children of all levels of ability make a very good transition to the demands of the learning required in the numeracy hour. The teaching

encourages the use of mathematical language most effectively. For instance, the adults emphasise comparative words such as 'more' and 'less', higher and lower, tall and short, during practical activities when the children paste strips of paper in their books according to size. The learning is at its best when the children are given the opportunity to relate their knowledge of mathematical ideas and methods to solve everyday practical problems. For instance, when a small group of children use wooden blocks to construct an imaginary ferry port, they learn to co-operate well with one another using mathematical language to decide where to place the next cuboid or cylinder, and developing their spatial awareness as they do so. They compare heights and sizes of their constructions with good levels of understanding and use their imagination to talk excitedly about what is happening. On another occasion, a classroom assistant made a good contribution during water play to develop the idea of full and empty. When the adults join in the activity to ask questions and make suggestions, the quality of teaching is good, extending and developing the children's learning in a meaningful way.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. The children experience a comprehensive range of opportunities linked to the subjects of the National Curriculum. Through direct teaching and some practical activity, the children build effectively on above average levels of general knowledge, to reach high standards in this area of learning. They develop a good scientific understanding through investigating objects and materials. For instance, the children have identified and named parts of the body and can talk about how they keep healthy. The most able and articulate show they have absorbed and understood information about germs and bacteria when they explain the importance of keeping their hands clean. However, in preparation for history and geography, the children talk about themselves, their families and where they live, many knowing when their birthdays are and their addresses. The most able already have a growing sense of chronology because they have looked at the changing seasons and how people alter from birth to old age. The children develop appropriate skills in information technology and have suitable opportunities to work on computers. They have the skills needed to operate simple programmes independently. For instance they competently move objects around the screen using the mouse to click, drag and drop when they dress a teddy bear. In this lesson the teacher rapidly assessed the strong performance of many children and recognised that her next lesson should offer greater challenge.

Physical development

53. The children enjoy a suitably structured programme of activities based on gymnastics, dance and games. They show good awareness of space when they play out of doors using an adequate range of apparatus. They can run, jump, balance and climb, using their initiative to travel over and through a barrel and go both forwards and backwards down a slide. They pedal and manoeuvre wheeled toys such as a tricycle, a scooter and a car with skill and enthusiasm. Large equipment is sparse, however, in spite of recent acquisitions. The adults try to encourage sharing, but only a very small number of the children get the chance to have a turn during a session. The teaching provides the children with a suitable breadth of opportunities for robust physical activity, stressing the need for safety and discipline throughout. On occasions, the strategies for managing the children, such as the too frequent blowing of the whistle during outdoor play, are unnecessary. Although the adults supervise with vigilance, a more focused

intervention that challenges the children to follow directions or to build sequences of movement would accelerate their learning.

54. Under the close direction of an adult, the children enjoy throwing, kicking, rolling and catching balls and beanbags, demonstrating good hand-eye co-ordination and increasing control and accuracy. The supply of small equipment is plentiful. During the daily activities, the children manipulate pencils, scissors and other small tools and equipment with safety and considerable precision. For instance, during sand play, a boy showed particularly fine control, perseverance and dexterity in operating a winding mechanism using a finger and thumb.

Creative development

55. The school provides a suitable variety of experiences and opportunities for the children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings through art, music and role-play. The children use a wide range of materials and media including paints, pastels, paper and textiles to create pictures, shapes and models. They produce finished work of a high standard and contribute to impressive displays. They experiment with colour, texture, form and shape to a limited extent. For example, the children learn what happens when they mix two primary colours together though this is recorded, somewhat inappropriately for the age group, in a sketchbook. Painting activities are not readily accessible for the children to use independently and most of the activities are carried out under close adult supervision and guidance with a finished outcome in mind. For example, the children's self-portraits are all very similar, produced under close adult supervision, thus putting constraints on the children's creativity and imagination. The children enjoy participating in role-play in the home corner, where, for example, they re-create familiar family scenarios. The teaching provides opportunities for the children to respond to music through dance and by experimenting with percussion instruments. They build a repertoire of familiar songs and rhymes and enjoy putting actions to the words. Constrained by the perceived necessity to prepare the children for the formal work of the National Curriculum, there is an element of over-direction, however, that limits the development of their imagination and creativity. The children have limited choice in the selection of materials and resources. Access to painting, sand and water, for example, is not a frequent and regular option.

ENGLISH

56. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the pupils' attainment in English is high. This is borne out by the results of national testing and supported by the standards of work seen during the inspection. The school's literacy policy rigorously addresses all areas of English and provides a clear framework for what is taught. The high quality of the teachers' planning ensures a consistency in the teaching that has a very positive impact on the learning of all pupils.
57. The newest entrants to the school arrive with somewhat above average speaking skills. Many are good listeners especially when activities do not overtax their concentration, but rather provide them with opportunities to engage in a variety of talk with each other. The teachers are alert to the many opportunities for promoting talk, for example, when texts are discussed during the literacy hour or during science activities. Here the pupils in Key Stage 1 are well able to provide clear, logical accounts of their investigations. During a lesson in religious

education in Year 1, many pupils responded very thoughtfully to the story of Yenea, an Ethiopian boy whose daily quest for ingredients for bread making was far removed from their own experiences of supermarket shopping. Older pupils are developing a breadth of vocabulary that they use effectively in discussions. They are very well able to adopt different styles of contribution to fit the topic under consideration. In Year 5, for example, the pupils gave courteous but sharp evaluations of the quality of their classmates' reading. In other lessons, they organise their thoughts well to relate the gist of stories they have read. The adults are alert to opportunities for questioning the pupils in order to extend and develop their talk. The older pupils are acquiring a very good range of technical vocabulary, for example, grammatical terms to describe elements of language. The teaching assistants play a very valuable part in developing the speech of pupils with special educational needs. This results in these pupils making very good progress in developing a repertoire of words and becoming confident in formulating and voicing their opinions.

58. The teachers have a very good knowledge of how to develop reading skills. Standards in reading are, therefore, very high. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are given a firm grounding in phonics (the sounds of letters). They are then well able to apply these basic skills to read more complex words as they encounter more challenging texts. The school has a high commitment to inclusion and ensures that where necessary pupils receive appropriate extra help. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to read both individually and in small groups with others of a similar standard. The younger pupils enjoy sharing the "Big Books" and frequently memorise chunks of text that they chorus together. This was true when a class in Year 1 read "Not Now Bernard" and gleefully called out the core message. Older pupils are unafraid of tackling less familiar polysyllabic words and read fluently and expressively. A group of higher-attaining pupils in Year 4, for example, read an extract from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" with gusto and enjoyment. The pupils show interest in reading and are very happy to discuss books. This is because the range of reading books, especially at Key Stage 2, is broad and interesting. The selection has been made carefully to ensure that the interests of boys and girls are catered for. There is a good range of books for pupils in Key Stage 2 that ensures that pupils remain motivated to read. Book provision is also augmented by the popular book club. However, the school recognises that the time has come to refresh the provision in the Key Stage 1 home reading baskets and to refurbish the library.
59. The teaching of writing is of very good quality and consequently the standards of work are well above average. The higher-attaining pupils make very good progress because the topics for writing are interesting. Sufficient time is made available for pupils to extend and edit their writing. The approach to the teaching of writing during Key Stage 1 is very structured and ensures that the pupils develop an early confidence both in recording their ideas and in mastering some of the basic techniques of spelling and punctuation. The pupils in Year 2 showed an emerging awareness of how to vary their sentence structures. One pupil, writing about "A Magic Thing under the Sea", added "I couldn't believe my eyes! It was so colourful!" The range of writing undertaken by the seven-year-olds very fully reflects the recommendations in the national guidelines for literacy. The consistent approach to the teaching of spelling underpinned by appropriate homework activities ensures that the pupils have a sound grasp of all the high frequency words identified for this stage. Challenging writing tasks covering a range of topics allow the pupils to exercise some flair in their choice of language. They

experiment with stylistic devices such as similes. This was seen in a piece of descriptive writing entitled, "My granddad's smile is as rough as sandpaper". Another pupil, clearly visualising a character wrote "Kitty is bad mannered, a bit rude, quite sarcastic and not bothered." The pupils' persuasive writing is powerful. This is because they have been taught to evaluate a range of different texts, identifying their different characteristics and then applying their critical skills to their own writing. Their handwriting is neat and generally well formed. However, the school has identified improvements they still wish to make and has introduced very regular practice sessions using a published scheme.

60. The teaching of reading and writing is successful because there is a close correlation between the two. The influence of the reading texts on the enrichment of the pupils' vocabulary and appreciation of the structure of different types of writing is easy to discern. For example, the older pupils' awareness of setting for different kinds of narrative has been developed through their reading. The word and sentence level work is carefully integrated with reading and writing tasks. Written activities involving practising letter-strings, homophones and other linguistic features have a clear impact on spelling. The younger pupils benefit greatly from the fact that the teachers model pieces of writing with them. The older pupils receive consistent help as they plan and draft their writing. Strategies for writing are always clearly explained. The reading and writing targets for groups and individuals are incisive. Furthermore, they are reflected in the observations the adults make about the pupils' work.
61. The enthusiasm of the teachers and their assistants for raising standards in literacy reflects well on the leadership of the subject. Through thorough and regular discussion, the teaching team keeps the development of the subject constantly under review. Class priorities have been identified and there is a consistent whole school approach to addressing them. Thus, for instance, the role of information technology in literacy, improving pupils' handwriting and revising the nature of spelling homework have all been appropriately identified as areas of action. Major advances have also been made in devising assessment systems and analysing the outcomes to obtain accurate data about the pupils' progress.

MATHEMATICS

62. The quality of the pupils' work in mathematics is better than at the time of the last inspection. Standards are currently above the national average in Year 6 and broadly average in Year 2. The pupils are well-taught and making steady progress in the development of their numeracy skills as well as the wider mathematics curriculum. Although the girls' performance has consistently lagged behind that of the boys for the past four years, the inspection team could detect no significant difference in the performance of the current groups. Even so, the school has correctly identified that standards in this subject should be even higher. The proposed review of teaching, including an analysis of how lessons are planned, the use of more focused target setting and greater challenge for the higher-attaining pupils are appropriate **key issues for action**.
63. The analysis of infant pupils' work shows that they are making steady progress and achieving appropriately. During the inspection the pupils in Year 1 were observed learning about the value of 1p and 2p and by the end of a successful lesson were able to add combinations of these coins up to 10p. The more able pupils can include a 5p coin in their calculations, whilst the lower attaining pupils

and those with special educational needs receive very good support from a teaching assistant. All groups of pupils are able to make steady progress over the lesson time and develop their knowledge and understanding of money. The same topic was seen in Year 2 classes where the pupils were calculating using all coins for values over £1. Again, the lesson was characterised by well-organised and well-resourced activities that were closely matched to the pupils' differing levels of ability. For example, a group of lower attaining pupils worked with a teaching assistant using a laptop computer on the same topic and were able to make as much, if not, better progress in their learning at their own pace. The teaching overall is well focused on the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy. A notable aspect of teaching is the mental calculating sessions that start each lesson. All groups of pupils thoroughly enjoy them because the teachers are very good at targeting the right questions, at the right level, to the right pupil. This enables all to participate and contribute to the lesson.

64. Scrutiny of previous Year 6 work and that of other junior classes shows that attainment was above average for the majority of pupils. The current inspection evidence indicates that standards are being maintained for most pupils in all year groups in the juniors. However, although the vast majority of pupils are generally making steady progress, some groups, such as the higher-attaining pupils, are not achieving as well as might be expected. The school has already identified this as a future target in the school improvement plan and the coordinator and new headteacher have produced an interim action plan to examine the teaching and learning of mathematics across the school.
65. The strength of the teaching lies in the appropriate emphasis placed on pupils being able 'to work things out'. This was seen in an excellent lesson in Year 4 when all groups of pupils were fully involved and responded well to the challenging activities prepared for them. In calculating and recording the total cost of their 'Macdonald bags' they were inventive and imaginative. All pupils make good use of their previous knowledge and understanding, for example, of doubling and halving, to work out the amounts. They are able to explain clearly and accurately their methods of working. This is the result of well-focused teaching that values all pupils' responses and ideas and encourages them to try for themselves. A noticeable feature of all lessons in the junior classes is the emphasis on the use of mathematical language. By Year 6, the more able pupils are using a computer program to further extend their mental calculating skills. They have also used computers in their survey of all classes to find out what they preferred to do at break times. An impressive display of the data in a variety of graphs, all printed out using the computer, forms an attractive and informative display.
66. The lesson plans generally identify clearly what it is that the teachers want the pupils to learn, although this not always made plain to them at the start of the lesson. Where it occurs, the pace of learning is better because the pupils are clear about what they are going to learn, and what is expected of them. This was evident, for instance, in a Year 5 lesson on problem solving and in a Year 6 lesson on fractions. Activities are well resourced which enables pupils to settle quickly to their tasks. In this they are further helped by the way in which the teachers use their own subject knowledge to give good explanations and instructions. However, the level of challenge in these activities is not always sufficiently high for some groups of pupils.

67. In Key Stage 2, the pupils are taught in sets according to their abilities, but there is still a wide range within these sets. The current arrangements mean that not all the junior teachers teach their own year group of pupils. The publisher's mathematics scheme does not fully embrace the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy and limits the scope of the teachers' planning and their expectations of the children. The current steady progress made by the pupils could be accelerated by giving a more consistent level of challenge that is better matched to the range of abilities in each mathematics group. The school is well placed to address this issue with a committed staff, a well-qualified coordinator and a new headteacher who is a specialist in mathematics.
68. The subject coordinator leads and organises the subjects well. The headteacher, who has begun to monitor the teaching and learning of mathematics across the school, supports her. Together they have produced an interim action plan to tackle the relative under-performance of the pupils in mathematics when compared to their attainment in English and science. The current range of resources for the teaching and learning in mathematics is good. They are well organised and available for all staff. This is having a positive impact on the raising of standards across the school.

SCIENCE

69. For the past three years, standards in science have been very high throughout the school and have improved since the previous inspection. Science, particularly investigative work, is now a strength of the school. The pupils make very good progress throughout the school with boys and girls achieving equally well. A major factor contributing to this very good progress is the systematic way the subject is taught.
70. All aspects of science are based on the pupils becoming science investigators and their being encouraged to follow systematic enquiry procedures. Preliminary discussions lead them to pose questions. For example, the pupils in Year 2 were asked, "Does the amount of force affect an object's shape?" Further discussion followed in which they considered ways of testing their hypotheses. They were aware of the need for fair testing and knew that the balls of clay must be the same size, fall from the same height and land on the same surface. Another pupil cautioned the class not to press the balls too hard and thereby modify their shape before testing began! The pupils readily recognised that certain factors would not affect the outcomes of their tests, for example, the colour of the clay balls. On paper, pupils drew pictures of how they thought the balls of clay would appear after being dropped. These pictures, which showed varying degrees of distortion, were evidence of their hypotheses. Testing was carried out very carefully with pupils remembering the advice given to them by their teacher about working together. They worked very cooperatively, sharing tasks politely and gathering information. They took care to record their results accurately on charts. Very good discussions followed as the pupils then evaluated their work. All pupils were fully included in these experiences.
71. Older pupils investigate the human body to help them understand the various functions of its skeletal structure. Through discussion, the pupils build up a profile of bones and remark how they protect, support and move the body. In small groups, they work with X-ray plates to identify the location of bones in the skeleton and note which part of the body they protect and move. A second group identify

bones and their functions using models. When bones are similar in appearance, the pupils match them to their own bodies. One boy reported that, "This bone is too large to be part of the arm and belongs in the leg." Comments such as these generate interesting discussion and extend the learning. A third group use information technology to further their knowledge base. The pupils have a good range of strategies, including recording on charts, graphs and formal text. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4, record data about circuits in diagram form, using conventional symbols. Block graph representation is evident in a range of very good displays throughout the school.

72. Science is closely linked to the pupils' personal, social and health education. Good displays throughout the school indicate the importance of healthy eating and pupils in the infants consider why exercise is important. The strong emphasis on investigative science and the importance of establishing cross-curricular links make a strong impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, their attitudes were very good in nearly three-quarters of lessons observed during the inspection and good in the rest.
73. The pupils work hard and take a personal pride in the way they present their work. Very good marking indicates to the pupils how their work can be improved. They take notice of their teachers' comments because they know their work is valued and that the teachers have high expectations of them.
74. The quality of teaching was very good in over half the lessons observed and good in the remainder. The teachers have created very good conditions for learning by stimulating the children' interest through challenging lessons that encourage them to develop their own strategies for learning. The way the teachers plan their lessons and their good subject knowledge enable the pupils to achieve well. An important feature of the planning is that activities are timed, thus promoting good pace and maintaining the pupils' interest. This has a significant impact on the quality of learning. The teachers, even at the beginning of the school year, know the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils very well. Work is closely matched to the differing needs of the pupils in the class, and the support given to pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teaching assistants ensure that the pupils maintain a consistent approach to scientific enquiry and are not held back because they have to struggle with writing and spelling. In most lessons, the teacher tells the pupils what they will learn. At the end of the lesson, the pupils decide whether or not they have achieved the lesson objectives. In every classroom, reference books at the appropriate levels are available for the pupils to use for further research.
75. The assessment arrangements, which were criticised at the previous inspection, make a significant contribution to raising standards in science. During the early part of the school year, classes complete a science investigation and the work is reviewed by the coordinator. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and the subsequent teaching is modified to meet the needs of pupils. The school has an agreed format for investigational work that allows the pupils to refine their research skills as they increase their experiences. The teaching of scientific knowledge remains very important and is reflected in the quality of the investigative work. At the end of every term, the pupils' knowledge is tested. A programme of revision prepares them for the national tests.

76. The coordinator for science provides a very good role model. She is a very good teacher and has made a significant contribution to raising standards in the subject. Her subject knowledge is very good and she has encouraged her colleagues to work as a team to meet the pupils' needs and prepare them for the next stage in their education. Consequently, the pupils receive a very good scientific education, made relevant by very effective links with other subjects and environmental and social education.

ART AND DESIGN

77. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 and 6 is above that expected for their age. Pupils have good opportunities to experience investigating and making using a wide and exciting range of materials and media. The youngest pupils, in Key Stage 1, illustrate their written work with imaginative, detailed drawings, full of character. Year 1 pupils co-operate well with one another when they work as a group to create the effect of water using thick paint in huge swirls of blue and green. In Year 2, pupils make rich use of paper, paint, sand and glue to produce creatures such as a dolphin and a snail, mounted and displayed most effectively. They make good progress in learning the skills of colour mixing and paper sculpture, showing excitement when the teacher demonstrates the art of paper curling. A well-structured and resourced lesson in Year 3, leads to high standards of design and individuality. Pupils use their imaginations to create fish with strong, well-drawn shapes, full of interesting detail and patterns. Some individuals with learning difficulties in other areas of the curriculum achieve particularly well and are justifiably proud of their efforts, gaining confidence and self esteem to a good extent. Pupils experiment with smudging and shading pastels, creating rich and textured effects. In an excellent lesson in a Year 4 and 5 class, for example, pupils use these materials along with water colours and collage to recreate a sunset inspired by a photograph. In Year 6, pupils enjoy the process of sgraffito, when they scrape away coloured ink from a waxed picture to reveal glowing colours to emulate the effect created by Van Gogh in a project on light and colour. Pupils use clay and natural materials to make tiles and lizards inspired by Aboriginal art.
78. Pupils effectively gain knowledge and understanding alongside their investigative and practical work. A good programme of work ensures that pupils systematically learn drawing and painting skills and techniques, recorded in their sketchbooks. They combine these techniques to contribute to impressive displays of work around the school, linked to a particular theme or topic, such as 'Water' or 'Animals'. Tudor portraits to support work in history, are full of life and character and show expert application of line drawing and subsequently, good mixing of paint. They are very well proportioned because pupils have been taught drawing skills early. Although pupils in Key Stage 1 have difficulty recalling the names of particular artists, they are introduced to a wide variety of artists and are aware of a range of different styles. Pupils in Year 2 were inspired by the work of Rousseau and Franz Marc. They produced vibrant and colourful pictures on a jungle theme, using drawing skills and a wax resist technique. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils recognise a painting by Van Gogh 'because he does dashes when he paints'. In a Year 3 class one pupil, in recalling an artist, speaks of 'the one who painted the lady that got stolen' and suddenly remembers the name of Leonardo Da Vinci, with great delight.

79. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers are guided by the coordinator's good planning, providing a framework that has led to increasing confidence. This effectively promotes high standards and good progression in the skills and techniques pupils learn. In the best lessons, a wide and stimulating range of resources are well prepared and organised. Lessons are very well structured with confident and inspiring introductions that motivate pupils well. Teachers provide challenging tasks and very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work, encouraging positive and constructive comments. Teaching is particularly well supported by classroom assistants and parent helpers who provide additional expertise that makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about their artwork and eager to discuss their finished pictures with understanding of the techniques involved. They effectively learn from one another and build on and improve their efforts.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Standards in design and technology are better than at the time of the last inspection. They are average in both Years 2 and 6.
81. Pupils in the infants show good awareness of the design process. They use appropriate vocabulary, for example, supports, axles, ropes and handles to describe their work exploring winding mechanisms. They make detail drawings from different elevations. All major parts are identified and clearly labelled. They compile a list of materials needed to make the winding mechanism. In another project, pupils made a coat for Joseph. They drew plans of the coat with instructions for joining parts together. One pupil observed that, "I must learn to sew" in order to complete the task. There was a range of very good finished model coats. There is clear evidence of pupils working purposefully in a systematic way. Pupils evaluate the work on completion and make suggestions how their work could be improved. Pupils use information technology skills to support their planning and to help them choose the colours for the coat.
82. Designing and making skills are developed further in the juniors. In a project to make containers, pupils describe how the containers are made and give details of their use and contents. They differentiate materials used for the main body of the container and those which protect the contents. They experiment with lids, showing an awareness that different contents need different degrees of security to avoid spillage.
83. Pupils design the investigation which is broadly based on their experience in their science investigations. Their work is very well presented. Handwriting is neat and sketches are carefully drawn. An evaluation of work on shelters emphasise design. Pupils display information in charts under appropriate headings, for example, function and materials used. Pupils use the Internet to access further information and print examples to add to their investigation. There are good links with design and technology across the curriculum. For example, models of vehicles driven by electric motors extend pupils' learning in science. The school has a good range of building kits to enable pupils to trial ideas and translate them into practice.
84. The quality of teaching is good. Very good classroom relationships contribute to a good climate for learning. Pupils are confident to express their opinions and know that their suggestions will be respected. Teachers are very careful to encourage

pupils and use language that promotes the building of confidence. Lessons are well planned, with plentiful supplies of good quality resources. Activities are timed and this ensures good pace to teaching which maintains pupils' interest and on task behaviour. Discussions evaluating work are enjoyed by pupils and provide a very good opportunity to extend learning. Pupils are encouraged to review their work to seek improvement. Assessment arrangements are informal but the school is aware that this is an area which needs further consideration to improve continuity and progression in learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy design and technology and look forward to learning through doing. They work very well together, sharing materials and tools. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

85. The curriculum has developed through using data cards and the latest national guidance. Design and technology is blocked in units of time, often using afternoons during a specific week. This enables teachers and pupils to follow tasks through and develop skills systematically. Parents offer good quality classroom support to teachers.

GEOGRAPHY

86. The previous report judged standards to be above average by the end of Year 6 and in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. A scrutiny of previous work shows that by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with expectations and progress is as expected. It was not possible during the present inspection to see any lessons in the infant classes due to the way the subject is 'blocked' termly with history. However, scrutiny of previous work shows that the attainment of the majority of pupils in years 1 and 2 was in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age.
87. Three lessons were seen in the juniors, two in Year 6 and one in Year 3. In all lessons seen teaching is satisfactory as it was in the last report. Inspection evidence confirms standards found by the scrutiny. All lessons have an emphasis on the development of mapping skills. In the lesson in Year 3 the pupils were following up their previous work, which had involved a walk around the neighbourhood. They are able to refine the ways in which they represent features on a map of their walk and learn how to use a key. The majority of pupils are able to show physical and human features such as paths, streams and buildings using appropriate symbols, but were not encouraged to think in terms of north, south, east or west. In both Year 6 lessons, pupils are able to relate an aerial view of Shrewsbury with the features from a tourist information map. This was an exercise that interested and enthused them and both lessons developed an excited 'buzz' of conversation among pupils. All lessons are well resourced and organised so that pupils are able to settle quickly to their tasks and develop their mapping skills satisfactorily.
88. Scrutiny of previous work and of teachers' plans shows that the pupils cover an appropriate range of topics as they move through the school that meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils' mapping skills start in Year 1 when pupils identify places around the school from a series of photographs. Younger pupils also compare Shrewsbury with Eastbourne, looking at the similarities and differences between them. By the end of Year 2 they can identify and name correctly the countries of the British Isles and have looked at life in an Indian village and contrasted it with their own. For example, they compare houses

and their journeys to school. Farming and a study of the River Severn are part of the geography curriculum for junior pupils. They have studied other rivers in Britain and Europe and compared a farm in Bicton Heath with one in Wales. Both infants and juniors enhance their knowledge and understanding of their geography work with visits to such places as Carding Mill Valley and a residential visit to Arthog.

89. The subject is well led by the coordinator, who has helped to raise the profile of the subject across the school. She monitors teachers' planning and pupils' books are collected termly to monitor their progress. The overall use of resources is good. Internet sites that support the topics have been identified and computers are being used increasingly to support the teaching and learning in the subject. Of particular pride to the school is the award won recently for a 'wildlife area', created in the school grounds by staff, parents and pupils.

HISTORY

90. Scrutiny of previous work and current inspection evidence shows that standards are high and pupils are making good progress because they are well taught. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when standards and progress were judged to be satisfactory and teaching was sound.
91. All groups of pupils are interested in, and excited by, the ways in which their teachers bring history alive for them. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on Tudor life, realistic and high quality costumes enabled pupils to gain a real sense of how it felt to be important and powerful. This was only one activity of a well-planned and well resourced lesson that enabled pupils to develop their ideas and opinions on what life was like in Tudor times. Similar excitement was evident in a Year 2 lesson on the life of our own Queen Elizabeth when pupils watched a video of the Coronation. Many pupils showed real pleasure when they realised the answers to the questions that had been set beforehand and could hardly wait to begin their task of recording what they had seen in the form of a newspaper article. In both lessons the pupils produced work of good quality because the teaching had a clear focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past. Throughout both infants and juniors, pupils develop a good sense of time by studying different periods in our history and some of the great events and famous people. Pupils in a mixed Year 4/5 class had to make a 'Who am I?' quiz based on the six wives of Henry VIII. Scrutiny of previous work shows that infants have learned about Christopher Columbus, studied toys and photographs as evidence of the past, and worked on a number of topic areas. Similar scrutiny of previous work by juniors shows that the school is meeting all the requirements of the National Curriculum. They study different periods of history such as the Romans, Ancient Greece, Egypt and Tudors and Victorians. All topic areas are covered in depth and are well supported by a range of external visits. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils have visited Blist's Hill Museum (Victorians), and Year 3 pupils have visited Rowley House Museum (Romans).
92. All the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are able to develop their skills of enquiry and investigation through a series of well-planned and well-resourced activities that enthuse them. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and plan a wide range of exciting and interesting activities for their pupils. All groups of pupils respond with enthusiasm and are well motivated in their work. They work

hard and with concentration leading to high standards and good progress as they move through the school.

93. The subject is well led by the new coordinator, who is already planning the development of assessment of pupils' work and monitoring how well they are doing. Resources are good. For example, there is a list of relevant and suitable internet sites for all topic areas and many pupils now undertake work at home to support their history topics. Resources are being well used to support teaching and learning in the subject and their effective use has had a notable impact on raising standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. The school's provision for the teaching of information and communications technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. As a result the pupils now receive the full range of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the standard of their work at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 exceeds the expected levels.
95. One of the major reasons for these improvements has been the sensible use made by governors and staff of both the school's finances and the funds provided through the National Grid for Learning in developing a computer suite. This is a very well equipped room. Besides holding sufficient computers for every pupil in the class to be able work either independently or with a partner, the recent purchase of a projector to magnify the screen image, now enables the teachers to make effective demonstration of the key skills and techniques that they want to teach during each lesson. A further strength lies in the wholehearted way that the school is attempting to harness the potential of new technologies to reduce bureaucracy and make more efficient use of teachers' time. The staff has clearly benefited from the additional training provided through the government's New Opportunities Fund. However, this was only a starting point, and as a result of more wise investment in laptops for each class, the teachers are now developing further their own skills and knowledge by devising their curriculum frameworks on the computer, planning lessons and recording pupil assessment data. This has resulted in a teaching team that is increasingly confident and knowledgeable in many of the fundamentals of the information and communications technology curriculum. For instance, the teaching of many lessons is enhanced by the visually effective and mentally stimulating use of power point presentations.
96. Against this background it is therefore unsurprising that the teaching of information and communications technology is frequently very good throughout the school. Teachers make extremely effective use of the resources at their disposal and have high expectations of what the children can achieve. For instance, even at this early stage of the school year the Year 6 classes are creating their own simple presentations using hyperlinks. They manage this because the teacher plans carefully and provides clear and effective demonstration of each stage of the process, from the designing of individual "cards" to the creation of "buttons" to link them together. The pupils relish the challenge of this work and the few higher attainers remain motivated because the teacher encourages them to employ their more advanced knowledge by letting them incorporate additional features such as animations and sound effects.

97. In Year 2 the pupils are widening their knowledge of the design program "Dazzle." The teachers are steadily building the level of challenge in a variety of interesting ways. For instance, as soon as the children have mastered how to use and control the rectangle function in addition to their previous learning about the "line," "brush" and "flood fill" tools, the teacher pauses to show the children some of the work of the artist Mondrian. The pupils are interested because they recognise that many of the pictures are based upon rectangular designs. In no time at all they are hard at work creating their own pictures in the style of the artist.
98. A significant strength of the work in this subject is the logical way that the teaching builds systematically on the children's previous learning. A telling example of this is evident in Year 3. During Key Stage 1 the children become familiar with word-processing [The "Textease" program] and drawing and design using "Dazzle." Early in Year 3 the children are taught how to combine text and image by importing a picture they have drawn in "Dazzle" into a blank document in "Textease." In the course of one lesson the brisk and knowledgeable teacher ensured that the vast majority of the pupils had successfully attempted their first "merged" document in the form of a simple birthday card.
99. The analysis of the folders of the pupils' past work provides many other examples of their rapidly developing skills, including those involving the use of technology as a means of monitoring or control. For example the Year 6 have tested the strength of the whistles of different pupils and printed out the graph of the volume recorded over time. They have also created commands that control the sequence of a set of Christmas tree lights.
100. The subject coordinator provides effective leadership because she has successfully supported the very good progress made in improving the teaching of this subject. She now plans to review the school's curriculum framework in order that the programme of study includes work that will reflect the higher levels of attainment at the top end of the school that would not have been conceivable four years ago. The use of information and communication technology is now a major strength of the school.

MUSIC

101. The good standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection because the teaching is effective in encouraging the pupils to work hard and improve their knowledge and skills. The impact of a specialist music coordinator is also very positive as she provides very good support for her colleagues and sets high expectations for the quality of the pupils' performance.
102. The pupils in Year 2 can describe high and low sounds and are developing a vocabulary to describe different sounds which they produce by scraping guiros, tinkling Indian bells or hitting wood blocks. They are learning to control their voices well and recognise that expressive singing reflects the mood of different songs. The pupils show considerable enjoyment and enthusiasm for singing as the repertoire is interesting and lively. They compose simple pieces using a range of untuned percussion instruments. They are learning to listen to and evaluate each other's work. The work is of good quality when pupils organise themselves to ensure that each member of a composition group participates.

103. By the end of Year 6 the pupils are developing a range of musical skills, building on the good foundation laid in Key Stage 1. Their composition work is made more challenging by opportunities to compose simple lyrics to accompany a melody. They listen to music that has somewhat different rhythms from those common in European music. These experiences are enhanced by the variety of music selected to introduce school worship. The range of instruments played by older pupils is wide and includes xylophones, recorders, woodwind, strings and others which make the experience of playing together more challenging and enjoyable. The County music service makes a valuable contribution to the repertoire of instruments which pupils can learn. The pace of lessons in Key Stage 2 is often very good. Activities are varied and well organised so that progress in singing and in playing instruments is rapid. The enjoyment of singing is palpable in lessons, during worship and during the extra curricular choir practice. The school seeks every opportunity to contribute musically to the local community such as the local church and hospice.
104. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the coordinator are key factors resulting in the higher quality of music in the school. She is very well supported by all the class teachers who teach music. Resources are generally good. The range and quality of instruments is above average. The coordinator now has plans to broaden the cultural range of music that is available for listening.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. During the period of inspection the physical education programme was games. The curriculum is based upon recent national guidelines and all aspects are taught. Judgements about standards have been supplemented by discussions with teachers and pupils and a review of planning. Standards have improved for pupils aged seven since the previous inspection when they were described as average. Eleven-year-old pupils have maintained above average standards and their achievements are similar to those at the previous inspection.
106. Pupils in the infant classes change quickly and independently and are soon ready to start work. All lessons begin with warming up exercises. These exercises are designed to challenge pupils and prepare them for more demanding physical activities later in their lessons. Pupils understand the importance of preparing their bodies for hard work. They move around the hard play area, taking care not to interfere with the activities of other members of their class. Teachers encourage pupils to be aware of safety issues and how their behaviour affects other people. Pupils develop good ball control. They move the ball around their bodies and recognise the care required not to drop the ball. They know that they need to think about their actions if they want to improve their skills. Pupils learn different techniques to throw and catch a ball, such as over and under arm. At first, these skills are erratic but, with practice, signs of improvement emerge and this provides additional enjoyment.
107. The skills of passing and receiving a ball are developed further with younger juniors. They practise throwing from the shoulder, from the chest and using a bouncing pass. They know the most effective time to use each pass. They work very well together and encourage their partners to improve their performances. The addition of a third person to intercept the ball introduces a new dimension to control and how it is related to movement, to ensure successful passing is maintained. Pupils respond very well by timing their passes carefully and getting

into a favourable position for the pass to be successful. In this way teamwork strategies are promoted in response to challenge. Older pupils learn the skills of short tennis. They build on previously learned skills. They grip their rackets effectively, and learn to serve and return a ball. Pupils choose and assemble equipment to improve the accuracy of their services. This resulted in an interesting and effective range of activities designed to improve technique and enjoyment of the game. Most pupils made very good progress.

108. The quality of teaching is never less than good. Teachers are dressed appropriately for teaching the subject. Their enthusiasm motivates the pupils and this sets the scene for good quality learning through the acquisition of skills, awareness of rules and the enjoyment of sharing games activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Lessons are planned systematically and ensure that there is progression in learning. An important feature of planning is that teachers recognise the importance of timing activities to gain pupils' maximum effort without needless repetition. Pupils are aware that they are making good progress and this further promotes good quality learning.
109. Pupils look forward to physical education. They enjoy the challenges which their teachers plan for them. While pupils work well together there is a healthy competitive attitude that promotes learning. All pupils demonstrate good attitudes to winning and losing and respect the rules of games.
110. The school has a good reputation for swimming and uses the facilities of the Quarry Pool in Shrewsbury. Almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres unaided by the age of eleven and this enables the school to achieve the National Curriculum benchmark.
111. The subject is very well led by a well-qualified coordinator who has provided demonstration lessons for staff. He monitors planning and offers advice to staff. The school benefits from hard play areas marked for a range of games and skill practice. Additionally, the school field enables good opportunities for team games. The trophy cabinet reflects the school's success in competitions with other schools and a good range of after school clubs support the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. The quality of the pupils' work is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It is overall similar to that seen at the time of the previous inspection. However, improvements are beginning to be reflected in the pupils' understanding of how belief affects the lives of members of various faith groups. The work of pupils in Year 6 often reflects a growing awareness of the spiritual dimension of religion. For example, one pupil, linking Easter with the concept of re-birth, wrote "We think re-birth is either a new life or life after death which is an everlasting life in heaven".
113. The pupils in Key Stage 1 have a satisfactory knowledge of stories from the Bible. By the end of Year 2, many understand that the stories Jesus told were used by him to teach people. The pupils remember these stories well because the teachers are developing an increasingly imaginative repertoire of activities appropriate to the different age groups. For example, the pupils in Year 1 were interested and demonstrated a considerable empathy with a boy in an Ethiopian story. They sympathised greatly with the hardship he endured in his quest for

bread. This was brought about in part by the skilful use of story flash cards and illustrations but further brought alive through an opportunity to engage in role-play. A class book on "Special Thoughts and Feelings" reflects the increasing links that are being made between topics taught in lessons on personal and social development and those taught during discrete lessons in religious education. The school is increasingly recognising that there is scope for using material from the religious education syllabus to enhance what is taught in lessons in personal and social development.

114. The pupils' thinking skills are developed during Key Stage 2 where an interesting range of topics encourages them to ask questions of a religious nature. They also begin to see parallels between observances in different faiths, for example, between Christmas and Diwali or between harvest and Sukkot. They recognise that pilgrimage is both a Christian and Islamic tradition. The work of Key Stage 2 has been enhanced through the link with a local church. Pupils of different ages have used the church as a resource, for example, to see how the phases of the church calendar are represented by different colours. Artefacts linked to baptism, loaned by parents and the local church have enriched the older pupils' understanding of the importance of baptism and also provided a basis for their developing recognition of rites of passage in other faiths. As the teachers' knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths develops, so their questioning of pupils as well as their responses to the pupils' own questions acquire greater depth.
115. The planning of work for religious education is becoming increasingly thorough and ensures that there is an appropriate balance between teaching and learning about Christianity as well as about other world faiths. At times, in Key Stage 2, greater use could be made of books and pictorial material which the pupils themselves could use for discussion and from which they could extract and collate information.
116. The co-ordination of religious education has recently changed but the continuity in the development of the subject remains. This is because the previous and current coordinators have collaborated to review the policy and scheme of work. New resources are being acquired and considerable effort goes into celebrating events such as One World Week. A former relief worker who has worked in the Horn of Africa, together with a local vicar and free-church representative provide further interesting resources to support learning.