

INSPECTION REPORT

WOMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Telford

LEA area: The Wrekin

Unique reference number: 123404

Headteacher: Mr John Marcham

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R. Sims

28899

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 195902

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hartshill
Oakengates
Telford
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Martin Young

Date of previous inspection: 23rd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 28899 | G. Sims | Registered inspector | Information and communication technology | Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9075 | J. M. Baxter | 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? |
| 25509 | J. A. Clarke | Team inspector | Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Geography History Religious education | |
| 21687 | H. E. Davies | Team inspector | Mathematics Art and design Design and technology | |
| 2024 | R. Hart | Team inspector | Provision for pupils with special educational needs The work of the special educational needs unit | |
| 14509 | P. J. H. Mann | Team inspector | Science Physical education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 2818 | G. Warner | Team inspector | English Music Equality of opportunity Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Telford. It has 415 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 and is much larger than most primary schools, although the number on roll has fallen since the last inspection. Most pupils live within a mile of the school, but a quarter come from further afield. The socio-economic background of the pupils is generally below average. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or from homes where English is an additional language, and none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. These figures are below the national average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal starting or leaving times is just above the national average. Around a quarter of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The school has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Most are catered for by their teachers and classroom assistants, but 51 pupils receive additional assistance from outside specialists because of a variety of special educational needs, including some pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. Twenty-seven pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. The school houses a special unit, the Group Learning Provision, for pupils with moderate learning difficulties who are referred to the school by the local education authority. Children join the school at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday, most having attended the local Nursery. Their overall level of attainment on entry is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wombridge Primary School provides its pupils with a sound education. A committed headteacher and staff work hard to include many pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties within the school's normal provision. The difficulties experienced by these pupils and the low levels of skill shown by many pupils when they start school affect the school's overall standards, which are well below average in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, standards are improving because of good quality teaching. Pupils learn well in lessons, but many have difficulty retaining what they have learnt. Determined leadership has resulted in a good range of improvements since the last inspection. The school's income is below average and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall quality of the teaching is good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The staff give very good care and attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Pupils achieve good standards in music and religious education.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The way the school deploys its teaching assistants.
- Facilities for children in the Reception classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in June 1997. The school has responded well to the key issues. Much attention has been given to improving pupils' spelling and punctuation, and standards in English are improving. Many more opportunities are given to pupils to learn through investigative work in science, and standards in this subject have risen significantly. The school's management structure has been reviewed; staff

have clearer guidance on their roles and responsibilities, although they need to be allocated more time to undertake them. There have been improvements in curricular planning and assessment procedures, and the school now assesses children's attainment when they start school. Careful analysis of the school's assessment data provides useful information to help teachers with their planning. The school library has been re-sited and now also houses a new computer suite. Although they are still well below the national average, standards at the end of Year 6 have risen steadily. Identified weaknesses in teaching have been rectified.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | D | E | E | D |
| mathematics | E | E | E | E |
| science | E | E | E | E |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

In 2001, the overall standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average and the average for schools in similar contexts. Although the school's results have compared unfavourably with other schools over the last four years, standards have been rising at a similar rate to the national improvement trend in English and mathematics and faster than most schools in science. The school's targets are much lower than the government's targets, but they are rising steadily and are appropriate in the light of pupils' prior levels of attainment and the learning difficulties faced by many. Results at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, they were well below average in reading, below average in mathematics and average in writing. Standards have fallen in reading, and there has been little improvement in mathematics, reflecting declining standards when children join the school. The school's concentration on improving writing has resulted in greater improvement than in most schools.

The skills shown by children when they join the Reception classes are well below average, and there is an increasing proportion of entrants with very poorly developed skills. Progress in the Reception classes is good, although few children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they start Year 1. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English and mathematics are still well below average throughout the school, but pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Standards and progress in science are somewhat better. Progress varies in Years 1 to 4. It is noticeably better when teachers have the support of a teaching assistant, especially in Years 1 and 2. When this support is not available, the behavioural problems exhibited by a few pupils with special educational needs occasionally have a negative impact on the learning of other pupils. In Years 5 and 6, where the teaching is most challenging and pupils are becoming more mature, pupils are making good progress. The overall standards are affected considerably by the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the many pupils who learn well in lessons but have great difficulty in retaining what they have learnt. This means that teachers have to spend a great deal of time and patience retracing and consolidating work that has already been taught. Pupils with special educational needs make good

progress towards their own individual targets. A small proportion of pupils exceed national expectations in English, mathematics and science, and the school ensures that these pupils are always given sufficient challenge. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Although still below average, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are rising now that the school has a computer suite, although progress is still limited as the suite is used as a normal classroom for part of the week. Particular strengths are religious education and music, and standards achieved in these subjects are above average by the end of Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards school. They like their teachers and all the staff who support them. They enjoy most subjects and try hard. A small proportion of pupils are very disaffected with school, but the school's strategies to help them develop positive attitudes are proving effective. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and in and around the school. Even when they are forced to take breaks indoors they show restraint and self-discipline. The small number of pupils who display unacceptable and often very challenging behaviour are well managed by staff, but do occasionally disrupt lessons for well-behaved and well-motivated pupils. |
| Personal development and relationships | Satisfactory. Pupils from Year 6 carry out the responsibilities they are offered, but these could be more challenging for their age and development. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are generally warm and positive, although a small number of pupils come to school with aggressive tendencies. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. The rate of attendance is close to the national average, but the school lacks sufficiently stringent procedures for monitoring attendance. Some parents take their children on holiday during term-time and this has an adverse effect on their children's learning and progress. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Satisfactory | Good |

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

The overall quality of the teaching is good and, as a result, pupils learn well in most lessons. However, many pupils find it hard to retain what they have learnt, and this affects their overall progress adversely. All of the teachers are very conscious of the need to cater for pupils of all abilities, and pupils with special educational needs are given good support to help them make progress towards the targets which are outlined in their individual education plans. Good teaching within the Group Learning Provision enables pupils with particular learning difficulties to make good progress and to integrate into normal school life. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, particularly in Year 6, but pupils' literacy skills are not systematically developed through written work produced in subjects other than English. The teaching of ICT

has improved, and standards are rising now that staff are more confident and resources have improved. However, teachers do not yet make enough use of ICT in their teaching of other subjects. Good teaching in music and religious education enables pupils to achieve higher standards than in other subjects. Various factors impinge on the effectiveness of the teaching and the quality of learning. Accommodation for children in the Reception classes is inadequate and limits the range of activities which the teachers can provide. Many teaching sessions, particularly in the mornings, are too long and some pupils find it hard to maintain their concentration throughout. There are noticeable differences in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons for younger pupils when no teaching assistant is present, as the need to manage the behaviour of a small number of very difficult pupils diverts teachers' attention from the needs of the whole class and restricts the range and type of activities which can be provided. These concerns diminish as pupils become older and more mature. The quality of the teaching in Year 6 is particularly good, and pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations, challenging tasks and good variety of teaching methods. This very good practice is not shared as effectively as it could be with some other classes where the teachers' expectations, the quality of their marking, the effectiveness of their target-setting and the appropriateness of their teaching methods are not as effective.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum meets the statutory requirements. It is generally well balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | This is a socially inclusive school that provides well for pupils with a wide range of special needs. The contribution of teaching assistants to the teaching of these pupils is good. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully through individual learning targets and pupils' individual education plans. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school works hard to develop pupils' social responsibilities and provides clear moral guidance. Pupils have a chance to learn about the customs and faiths of other communities. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides high standards of care for all pupils, who are able to work in a safe and secure environment. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment, for monitoring behaviour and tracking pupils' progress. |
| How well does the school work in partnership with parents | The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Most parents have positive views of the school, particularly those whose children have special educational needs. The quality of information provided for parents is good. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher's good leadership and management have resulted in a good range of improvements since the last inspection. He is supported well by a very capable deputy headteacher and coordinators who are keen to carry out their responsibilities. Most coordinators lead and manage their subjects well. There is an adequate number of teachers for mainstream classes, but an unsatisfactory number to support pupils with |

| | |
|--|---|
| | statements of special educational need. The number of teaching assistants is satisfactory, but they are not always deployed effectively. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors fulfil their statutory obligations satisfactorily. They are deeply committed to the school, but some governors do not yet have a clear enough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory. The school is better at evaluating its own performance than it was. Good procedures have been introduced for monitoring coverage of the curriculum, teachers' planning and pupils' work. Teaching and learning are monitored, helpfully, but not frequently enough, because not enough time is allocated for the deputy headteacher or coordinators to do so. |
| The strategic use of resources | The accommodation and resources for the Reception classes are unsatisfactory. The school's finances and administration are managed efficiently and effectively. Appropriate use is made of specific grants, and income is spent on the purpose for which it is intended, linked to educational priorities in the school development plan. The school does not always ensure that it obtains best value for money. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • The teaching is good and teachers support all pupils well. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school expects children to do their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to develop and become mature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poor behaviour of some children who disrupt lessons for others. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • Closer working relationships between the school and parents. • A wider range of extra-curricular activities. |

The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 20 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 84 parents (21 per cent) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also added their own written comments. Inspectors agree with parents that the poor behaviour of some pupils occasionally has an adverse effect on the learning of other pupils. For most of the time, and in most lessons, pupils' behaviour is good. The quality of information for parents is good and detailed, and they are fully informed about their children's progress. Inspectors do not agree with the views of some parents that the school does not work closely with them and believe that there is little more the school could do to improve this aspect. Inspectors find that the provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 2 for the year 2001, the school's results were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with the results of schools of a similar nature¹, they were well below average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. In all three areas, the spread of attainment was very wide, with a small percentage of pupils still working at a very low level. However, in all three aspects around one in eight pupils achieved the higher than expected Level 3. Although results have fluctuated since the last inspection, they have not improved overall. Standards in reading have reflected the decreasing levels of attainment of children when they start school. In mathematics, standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. However, the school has had a specific focus on improving standards in writing, and standards in this aspect have improved more than in most schools.

2. At the end of Year 6, the National Curriculum assessment test results in the year 2001 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools of a similar nature, the results were below average in English, and well below average in mathematics and science. These pupils made satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 6 in English and science, but unsatisfactory progress in mathematics. Two-thirds of the pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4 in English, and four-fifths achieved this level in science. However, only just over half achieved the expected level in mathematics and very few exceeded this level. Although the overall results have been well below the national average for a number of years, the standards achieved by pupils have improved consistently since the last inspection at a similar rate to the national trend. The school's targets are much lower than the government's targets, but they are rising steadily and are appropriate since pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below average and many have learning difficulties.

3. The school's overall standards are affected considerably by the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils achieve well, making good progress towards achieving the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs make good progress in achieving curricular targets set for them in English and mathematics and in developing basic skills. For example, by Year 5, some of these pupils understand the concept of halves, are improving their understanding of place value, and are confident in adding tens and units. By Year 6, some pupils recognise familiar words in sample texts and are developing their ability to read unfamiliar words. The progress of all pupils with special educational needs is monitored carefully, and teachers and assistants work closely together. Pupils who attend the Group Learning Provision also make good progress because of the support and attention they receive. They are also learning to integrate well by attending normal classes at certain times in the day.

4. Over the last few years, girls have achieved better results than boys in English in Years 2 and 6, reflecting the national trend. The school is aware of this difference and is

¹ The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

working to eliminate it. In mathematics and science, there has been very little difference in the results achieved by boys and girls. The more able pupils are given sufficient challenge to achieve standards which are above those expected for pupils of their age. The school has no pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition.

5. Observations made during the inspection and the school's own assessments show that most children have very low levels of skill in all areas of learning when they join the school. Although the cramped classroom conditions and lack of outdoor facilities restrict the activities which teachers can provide for children in the Reception classes, particularly in the areas of creative and physical development, the children make consistently good progress throughout their time in the Reception, as a result of good teaching. Standards are also affected by the staggered entry into the school which leads to differences in the standards achieved by different groups of children. All children achieve well and a few are likely to reach the expected level of attainment by the time they start Year 1. Most children, however, will not reach this level.

6. The inspection evidence shows that standards in English are well below average throughout the school, although pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, and the school's results over the last five years have shown steady improvement. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average by the end of Year 2 and are below average by the end of Year 6. Teachers generally use whole-class discussions effectively to develop pupils' speaking skills, but the lack of availability of teaching assistants limits the support available for younger pupils to develop their skills in small-group and individual situations. Standards in reading vary considerably, but are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In most year groups, the higher-attaining pupils read with confidence and fluency, but lower-attaining pupils have difficulty reading unfamiliar words. The school has not given enough time to developing pupils' reading skills. Standards in writing are better than in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6 although, because of the high proportion of lower-achieving pupils, they are still well below average. Pupils of all abilities are, nevertheless, making good progress in developing their writing skills because teachers plan a good variety of writing tasks for pupils. By Year 6, there are clear indications that pupils are beginning to raise their standards in writing, as a result of some imaginative teaching and productive written tasks. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their writing skills further through the written work undertaken for other subjects.

7. Although standards are well below average in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress. A small proportion of more able pupils achieve standards which are above the expected levels, and the school provides appropriately for a very small number of gifted mathematicians. Overall standards are affected by the large percentage of lower-achieving pupils and those with special educational needs.

8. In science, standards are well below average at the end of Year 2 and are below average at the end of Year 6. However, there has been a significant improvement in the way pupils learn through investigative work and this is causing standards to rise. A small proportion of higher-attaining pupils achieve standards which are above expectations, but the attainment of a large proportion is below the expected standard. Overall, pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6.

9. Standards in ICT are below the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6, but standards are rising as a result of the improvements in resources and the increasing confidence and expertise of the staff. Pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress. Organisational aspects, such as the amount of time allocated to lessons and the fact that the computer suite is unavailable for its intended use for large parts of the day, prevent pupils from making better progress, despite the good progress that is made in some individual lessons. Pupils throughout the school are becoming much more confident in using computers, although lower-attaining pupils still rely quite heavily on additional help from adults.

10. Religious education and music are particular strengths. In these two subjects, standards are average at the end of Year 2 but above average at the end of Year 6. In music, this is a result of good groundwork in Years 1 and 2, and some very good teaching and the wide variety of activities in Years 3 to 6 which extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to make music successfully. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress in Years 3 to 6. In religious education, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. The pupils' success results from the good leadership and clear guidance provided by the subject coordinator and the way in which teachers make the subject interesting and relevant to the pupils.

11. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate standards at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The school provides an inclusive and warm environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Nearly all of them arrive in the mornings eager to start their work. They talk about the subjects they like best with enthusiasm and interest. They have confidence in, and affection for, their teachers. They also make the point that they have made many friends since joining the school. They know the school rules and what is expected of them in terms of appropriate behaviour and, generally, they respond well. Teaching assistants have to work hard to engender positive attitudes in those pupils who have particularly challenging behaviour when they attend mainstream lessons. However, when they are calm and focused in the Group Learning Provision classes, they are positive and interested in what they are doing. Positive attitudes on the part of most pupils make a considerable contribution to their progress.

13. Children in the Reception classes are sometimes not there for very long. The school's well thought-out and thorough admission arrangements for this age group help the children to settle in quickly, and they soon get used to the school's routines and procedures. The children in the Reception classes have good attitudes to their work. They try hard to tackle the tasks that the teachers set them. They begin to understand the need to take turns in answering the teachers' questions and to wait patiently even when they are desperate to contribute. The children develop good relationships with their teachers and they try hard to do as they are asked. Because the teachers have limited opportunities to extend and develop pupils' levels of independence, this aspect of the children's learning is only satisfactory, and is a direct result of a lack of both space and extra adult help in the classrooms.

14. Generally, the standard of behaviour across the school is good and, during the inspection week, it was tranquil and calm during several wet break-times. A number of pupils have severely challenging behaviour due to their learning and emotional difficulties. Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely hard to manage this behaviour but, occasionally, it does disrupt lessons and have an adverse effect on the learning of other pupils. This view was expressed by a number of parents, and the inspection team agrees with their

comments. Nevertheless, the overall standard of behaviour has remained good, as was reported at the previous inspection. Two groups of pupils who were interviewed were clear that bullying does not often occur but, on the occasions when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. In the year before the inspection, there were 13 fixed-term exclusions for inappropriate behaviour. In this current year there has only been one exclusion.

15. The school's attendance rate for the reporting year before the inspection was close to the national average for primary schools and is satisfactory. The school's statistics for the current academic year show a further drop in the rate to well below the national average. However, this can be explained by a few weeks when a virus illness left the school half empty. An increasing number of pupils take holidays during term-time. Apart from a few pupils who are persistently late, most pupils arrive punctually each morning and settle quickly into their classroom routines.

16. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils get on well together and frequently support their peers who find work and study difficult. They clearly value their friendships. They respect their teachers and know to whom they can turn if they are troubled or need help. When required to work in pairs or groups, pupils generally collaborate well together. One of the school's strengths is its commitment to racial harmony and the full inclusion of each and every pupil, whatever their difficulties or their talents. Accordingly, pupils of all backgrounds and ethnicity get on well together throughout the school. The school's philosophy of inclusion has a positive effect on the personal development of pupils with special needs, and their attitudes and values are good. Most of these pupils show an interest in their lessons and are keen to answer questions. They generally behave well and have good relationships with adults and other pupils.

17. Generally, most pupils show good standards of self-discipline, although those with severe learning difficulties sometimes find it impossible to exercise self-control. In the classrooms, most pupils act as monitors and help to keep the rooms tidy. It is mainly pupils in Year 6 who undertake allocated tasks of responsibility. These are usually simple tasks, such as acting as library monitors and looking after younger pupils in the playground. These responsibilities do not necessarily do justice to the maturity of many of the pupils, and they could well undertake more sophisticated jobs around the school to increase their confidence and self-worth. Currently, there is no school council. Pupils are keen to help in the day-to-day running of the school which does not capitalise enough on this enthusiasm and willingness to do more. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop skills of independent learning and research or to make better use of the school and community facilities available to them.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of the teaching is good in the Reception classes and in Years 3 to 6; three-quarters of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better in these classes. The teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although a quarter of the lessons observed in these classes were good. Parents feel that their children are being taught well and that they are making good progress; the inspection team's judgement, that the overall quality of the teaching is good, largely endorses these views. Teaching and learning are strongest in Years 5 and 6, where teachers not only have very good teaching skills, but also benefit from the better behaviour and more purposeful response of the pupils, which teachers in earlier year groups have worked hard to establish. Some of the teaching observed in Year 6 was excellent. In a large school, there are inevitably variations in the quality of teaching from class to class, but there was some good teaching in every class during the inspection. There is some very good expertise within the school, but the school does not yet share this expertise as effectively as it could in order to bring greater consistency to the teaching as a whole.

19. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed during the inspection, much less than before, and there was a much higher proportion of good and very good teaching. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is now good. The strengths mentioned in the previous inspection, including good teaching for pupils with special educational needs, have largely been maintained. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use a good range of teaching methods and match work well to the needs of the pupils. Weekly and termly planning is thorough, and lessons are well organised. Teachers' explanations are clear, and they use questioning skills well. There is good cooperation between teachers and their assistants. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been rectified. Clear lesson objectives provide the starting point for most lessons. Not only does this bring greater clarity of purpose to the lesson, but it helps pupils to understand what they are doing and why. Classroom management skills have improved, although the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils still causes difficulties. Teachers make better use of their time in lessons and there is a clearer and more helpful policy over the setting of homework. Although there is less indiscriminate use of worksheets and some good marking of pupils' work, there is still room for improvement in these aspects. The teaching in the Group Learning Provision remains a strength. The steady improvement in standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 indicates that the teaching is more effective than it was and that pupils are making good progress in their learning. All of the teachers demonstrate great commitment to their work and strive to provide a good learning environment for the pupils.

20. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good. The teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively, but have also adapted the advocated teaching methods to take account of pupils' abilities and needs. Considerable emphasis has been given to developing pupils' writing skills and, although standards are still well below those found in most schools, much progress has been made. The school recognises the need to adjust the emphasis given to teaching different aspects of English and to provide greater focus on the development of reading skills, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Various booster sessions are provided to give additional help to pupils who are struggling in English, and these are proving effective, as is the good teaching provided for pupils attending the Group Learning Provision. Although the skills of writing are taught carefully in English lessons, they are not consolidated as effectively as they could be through written work produced for other subjects. When teachers mark pupils' work, little attention is paid to the quality and accuracy of pupils' written English, with the result that pupils are unaware of their frequent errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, well-paced mental arithmetic sessions at the start of each lesson have helped pupils to improve their ability to carry out calculations quickly and accurately in their head. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed effectively through other subjects, such as science. Analysis of previous test results in both English and mathematics has identified those aspects which pupils undertake less successfully than others, and teachers adjust their planning to help pupils to improve in these areas.

21. Basic skills in other subjects are generally taught well. Pupils learn, for example, the skills of historical and geographical enquiry, and acquire the ability to use different media in art and design. There have been improvements in the teaching of ICT skills, and standards in this subject are rising because the school now has better facilities and teachers are more confident in teaching the subject. Further progress, however, is hampered by the need to use the computer suite as an area for teaching English and mathematics for part of the week, and this limits the use of new technology in other subjects.

22. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of all subjects is satisfactory, with the exception of music, where the teaching is good. In Years

3 to 6, the teaching of science, art and design, music, physical education and religious education is good, and in design and technology, history, geography and ICT it is satisfactory. The teaching of music and religious education are particularly stimulating, as seen in the above average standards achieved by pupils in these subjects by the end of Year 6.

23. The quality of teaching and learning for the children in the Reception classes is consistently good. The teachers and the teaching assistants are committed and skilful, and work hard to help children learn. The development of communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills is promoted effectively through the good use of the national strategies. There is a marked emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills and good provision for children's personal and social development. The teachers plan their lessons well and use teaching assistants effectively. However, the limiting effect of the accommodation and the fact that no teaching assistants are allocated to the Reception classes for part of the day mean that the teachers are limited in the methods they employ to teach the children. For example, the role-play area, which is situated in the corridor, is shared between the two classes, and its use has to be carefully timetabled. Also, because this space is a vital corridor area, great care and attention has to be made to ensure that activities do not pose a health and safety risk. Consequently, the use of water play is impossible and sand play poses considerable problems. As space in the classrooms is tight, the teachers organise resources and equipment for the children and this has a limiting effect on helping the children to become independent and selective as they work. The teachers pay good attention to establishing clear class and school routines and developing the children's confidence in their tasks. Good teaching of social and moral skills, together with high expectations of behaviour, leads to a calm and productive learning environment, which is only occasionally disturbed by a small number of pupils with particular behavioural and emotional difficulties.

24. The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are conscious of the needs of the more able pupils and provide them with sufficient challenge. The school now has a register of gifted and talented pupils and, although there are few names on the register, good additional opportunities are provided, such as in mathematics, where particular talents exist. The teachers differentiate the work which they provide for pupils in most lessons. This is sometimes done very skilfully and unobtrusively. In an ICT lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher gave different tasks to each group of pupils, explaining that she wanted some pupils to find out information about the most common eye colour, hair colour and month of birth from a survey which the pupils had previously conducted. There was a clear difference in the complexity of the information handled by each of the groups and the questions they had to answer, although all pupils perceived that they were working together to find out information for the class. The teaching of pupils with special needs is good and, as a result, they make good progress with their learning. In the best lessons, activities are well matched to pupils' levels of attainment, and teachers produce appropriate support materials. When teaching assistants are available, they make a valuable contribution to the teaching of these pupils by, for example, giving a more detailed explanation of the task. In some lessons, where there are potentially disruptive pupils, the presence of a teaching assistant makes a good contribution to the management of pupils' behaviour. When extra support is not available, the behaviour of some pupils occasionally deteriorates and consequently consumes a significant amount of the teacher's time. In a science lesson in Year 2, for example, following the introduction to the full class, the pupils with special educational needs worked as a group with the teaching assistant. Later in the lesson, when the assistant was not present, the teacher had to use her time to manage the behaviour of a few pupils. The care and attention given by staff to the pupils who attend the Group Learning Provision helps these pupils to make good progress and to become integrated into the daily life of the school, whilst also having the benefit of individual attention for part of the day.

25. Teaching assistants play a very important role throughout the school and contribute significantly to pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers and assistants work well together, either helping identified pupils or working with a particular group. Their intervention frequently helps these pupils to maintain their concentration, and their questioning and discussions with them avoid teachers having to repeat explanations, thus enabling teachers to maintain the momentum of the lesson for other pupils. Their support is particularly valuable with those pupils who present challenging and potentially disruptive behaviour. The school has a large number of teaching assistants and the way they are deployed is particularly complex. In some lessons, a teacher will have the support of a number of assistants, but in other lessons none. In one lesson, for example, four assistants were present, but in many lessons, no additional support is available. Up to and including Year 4, there were noticeable differences in the quality of teaching and learning when teaching assistants were present. When teachers had to manage the class on their own, their energies were frequently diverted into ensuring that pupils with identified behavioural problems did not disrupt the lesson, rather than giving all of their attention to promoting pupils' learning. The presence or absence of a teaching assistant is a significant factor affecting the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2.

26. There is much good teaching practice throughout the school, but the approaches to teaching are not always consistent from class to class. In some classes, pupils learn more effectively because teachers have higher expectations or use more appropriate methods. Some very good use of paired work, for example, was observed in a mathematics lesson in Year 6. The teacher perceived that pupils were volunteering different answers to her question and that they had not all fully understood, so she asked pupils to discuss the question within their small groups in order to clarify their thinking. This method avoided individual pupils being embarrassed at giving a wrong explanation, ensured that all pupils were involved and enhanced their learning. Later in the lesson, once pupils had finished their task, they were asked to work with a partner to check through their answers. Again, this not only promoted collaborative working, but also helped to develop pupils' understanding and the ability to look critically at their own work. In this lesson, pupils' understanding was developed systematically as the lesson progressed. Pupils were given short, manageable tasks, learning was then consolidated as a whole class before moving on to new challenges. Throughout the lesson, the teachers' expectations of what the pupils could and should do were high. This was not always evident in some of the work provided for younger pupils, where some of the tasks, particularly the completion of some worksheets, not only lacked challenge, but did not keep pupils productively occupied for the allotted time.

27. The management of pupils' behaviour in this school, which seeks to integrate pupils with many difficulties into normal classes, poses particular challenges to all teachers. A typical class may contain a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Needs range from mild learning difficulties and low self-esteem to emotional and behavioural problems, and there is a high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. That teachers manage such a diverse range of needs and establish good behaviour for most of the time is greatly to their credit. Some teachers, however, are more successful than others in controlling pupils' restlessness and ensuring that there is always a productive learning environment. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 5, for example, the pace of the lesson was brisk and the teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject was communicated to the pupils who clearly enjoyed what they were doing. The teacher was firm, but also gave much praise and encouragement. Similar features were noted in the two classes in Year 6, where the teachers had very clearly established procedures, high expectations and clear procedures for dealing with any problems. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the hard work put into promoting pupils' learning from the time they enter the school. However, not all teachers consistently create the right learning environment in every lesson. In one lesson, for example, the teacher commented that there was too much noise, but there was little

response from the pupils and no further action was taken by the teacher. In another lesson, the teacher's tendency to raise her voice and talk over the noise, without waiting for silence, did little to create a calm atmosphere and promote pupils' learning.

28. Perhaps the most significant factor affecting pupils' learning and, consequently, the overall standards achieved by the school, is the fact that many pupils find it very difficult to retain what has been taught well and what they appear to have learnt during a lesson. Some very skilful and well taught lessons were observed, in which it was hard to see how teachers could have improved their teaching or provided any better opportunities for pupils to learn. The pupils' response was enthusiastic, their participation good and tasks were completed. However, the next day, many had already forgotten what had been worked on so painstakingly the day before. The teachers, therefore, have to spend much time consolidating and revising work which has already been covered, and this inevitably reduces the overall progress in pupils' learning.

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

29. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum and meets legal requirements in giving adequate coverage to all subjects of the National Curriculum. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked at providing relevant policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Some schemes are closely related to national guidance materials, but are suitably adapted to meet the needs of its pupils. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are being met effectively. There is a sensitively agreed programme of sex education that is carefully shared with parents so that they can be involved in discussions with pupils on an informed basis.

30. The school ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum are accessible to all pupils. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, but literacy skills are not developed sufficiently through other subjects, such as history and geography. The school has made good strides in ICT since the previous inspection with the establishment of a computer suite. However, it recognises the need to make more comprehensive use of the skills and support that new technology can give to other subjects. Policies and schemes of work have been systematically reviewed and revised. There is only one mixed-age class in the school, which is taught by an experienced teacher who makes careful provision to meet the range of needs in the class. Although the school has been thoughtful in the way that the broad curriculum has been retained, unnecessarily long sessions are devoted to literacy and numeracy which lessen the amount of time which can be devoted to other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are given a great deal of consideration by the school and are able to take part in all of the activities offered by the school.

31. The curriculum provided for children in the Reception classes is satisfactory. The teachers work hard to provide a stimulating and stretching range of activities, although inadequacies in the school's accommodation limit the range of opportunities for pupils' creative and physical development. The most recent, nationally recommended initiatives in planning learning for young children have been implemented by the school. Daily planning is thorough and clearly defines the learning objectives of lessons.

32. The school provides a curriculum which is appropriately inclusive and ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity and access to it. The school tries hard to provide equal opportunity for all. In some cases, it is not as successful as others. For example, in some lessons, the pupils who have special educational needs are given good support and they achieve well. In other lessons, they are not as well supported and consequently do not

achieve as well. Some classroom areas are quite cramped and this means that the teachers are limited in the teaching styles they can employ, and the children lose opportunities for developing their independence. The school works hard at ensuring that all pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in all the work of the school. The inclusive nature of the provision for pupils with special educational needs has a positive effect on pupils' social development and learning. Individual educational plans are good and contain targets for learning and behaviour. The plans ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met, whilst enabling them to have full access to the curriculum. The use of targets drawn from the National Curriculum for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is very good. Special programmes are available, such as the nurture group, for pupils with additional needs. Appropriate additional opportunities are also provided for the small number of pupils who have been identified as having particular talents.

33. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Staff give generously of their time to ensure that many pupils have the opportunity to develop skills and talents in a number of ways. The school also supports pupils' developing skills by the way in which it augments and changes activities in different terms of the school year. The arts are well supported by art club and musical activities. These include the choir, the guitar club and school band. These activities are taken out of school into the heart of the local community at musical and drama festivals and performances in Oakengates. This has a positive impact upon the progress that pupils make in music and art and design. Pupils are keenly involved in all of these activities, as well as sporting activities such as cross-country, football and cricket. There are regular visits to places of interest as part of the extension to the curriculum in an area that is richly endowed for supporting subjects such as history and geography. Local visits are made to places like Ironbridge and, further afield, there is a residential visit for pupils in Year 6 to Arthog, the local authority's study centre in Wales. Further support is given to pupils' wider development through working with visitors to the school. These include visiting specialist music teachers and artists who are closely involved in projects such as the current improvements planned for the school courtyard.

34. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The newly devised scheme of work, provides well for sex and drugs education and is a developing area of the school's work. Lessons in this subject and circle time² sessions are built into the school's timetable to ensure that every class has one lesson a week. Important issues to do with behaviour and being part of a school community are dealt with in these lessons and are beginning to have a positive effect on the life of the school and on pupils' learning.

35. The school is well regarded by the community. Pupils are encouraged to take part in community events, and strong links with the Salvation Army ensure that a number of pupils are involved in presentations at Christmas. Following local Millennium celebrations two years ago, the school now takes part in local Council productions every year. There are good links with two local churches, and the school has become involved with the Oakengates regeneration programme. Pupils are encouraged to raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves, and the National Society for the Protection of Children is one of their chosen charities.

36. The school enjoys a very good relationship with the nursery across the road, from which many pupils join the school. In addition, there are good links with a number of secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. It also enjoys its participation in the local grouping of primary and secondary schools. There is good collaboration between the school and the local Pupil Referral Unit that acts as a support to a small number of Wombridge pupils who have particular problems and needs.

37. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection and represents a clear commitment by the school to encourage the pupils to think about themselves and their relationships with others.

38. The pupils' spiritual development is promoted well. The pupils are encouraged to explore their thoughts and feelings in a number of different ways. For example, they have many opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas in art and design and poetry. The pupils make plaques from pottery, which, when linked, show what can be achieved when everyone works together. In the daily corporate acts of worship, the school has an opportunity to come together as a group to talk, listen and pray. Displays of pupils' work and artefacts encourage the pupils to wonder at the world in which they live. Outside Years 1 and 2, there is a large wooden skeleton of a dinosaur, which provides a clear focus for the pupils to consider and wonder at animals who lived so long ago. The good provision for religious education has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development.

39. There is good provision for pupils' moral development. The pupils have a clear sense of moral awareness. The school runs as an orderly establishment where good behaviour is praised and supported. Those pupils who find it difficult to behave well are encouraged to think about their behaviour and are helped to improve. The pupils know that they are able to express their own ideas and thoughts and will be respected for their views. The secure relationships within the school provide a firm basis for the development of a clear moral understanding. This gives them a good framework for life in the wider world. There is a clear code of conduct within the school, built around the Golden Rules. Pupils know what is acceptable and what is not. The pupils are taught right from wrong, with the very youngest children in the school having a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

² During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

40. The pupils' social development is generally promoted well. Adults encourage pupils to care for and help each other in lessons and at play. The pupils are encouraged to share resources well during lessons and know that they need to take turns and work together. The school gives the pupils opportunities to develop their social and personal development through a residential visit in Year 6, where the pupils are encouraged to work and live together in a very different locality. The school is active in promoting a sense of community and social awareness, as the school and pupils work hard to include all in their work and play. In physical education lessons, teamwork is promoted well by the teachers, and the pupils have many opportunities to play musical instruments together. The inclusion of pupils with statements of special educational needs supports the pupils' social development and promotes very positive attitudes to those who have particular needs. Pupils willingly accept responsibility, for example, for taking the registers to the office, and older pupils help look after the youngest children at playtimes, showing good levels of concern. Some opportunities, however, are missed to provide pupils with greater responsibility and to help them become more independent.

41. Provision for pupils' cultural education is good. The pupils have a very good understanding of their own local community of Oakengates and the wider community, including Telford. The teachers organise many visits in the neighbourhood to help pupils find out more about the area. There are many opportunities to prepare pupils for living in a multi-cultural society. For example, the pupils learn about The Chinese New Year and Mehndi patterns. The pupils learn about other cultures, traditions and religious ideals. In this way, the pupils develop an awareness of the differences and similarities between the people who make up our own society, preparing them to live in a multi-cultural society. The school has good links with a school in South Africa, and supports and helps this school to develop. The pupils raise money through different activities, such as selling cakes, and this money helps this African school to improve its building. The pupils study people who have lived in the distant and recent past and gain a good understanding of the life and times of these people and how their lives were very different to our lives today. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents, and encourages a good range of extra-curricular musical activities. There are also appropriate opportunities for pupils' to develop their cultural awareness in art and design, dance and drama.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Wombridge School provides a warm and secure environment for pupils. Its inclusive philosophy and surroundings provide a safe and caring haven that allows all pupils to flourish and develop. It is particularly supportive of its pupils who have special educational needs and behavioural problems. This aspect of the school's work is particularly good and has been well maintained since the previous inspection.

43. The headteacher is the named officer for child protection. There are appropriate child protection procedures in place, in accordance with local guidance and policy. All staff have been trained and are well aware of these procedures.

44. Serious attention is paid to health, safety and security, and governors are diligent in this aspect of their work. The local authority carries out a health and safety audit annually. One specified governor makes regular visits to the school to do a risk assessment, and details of the resulting helpful report is made available to the headteacher and governing body. These procedures are supported by the extreme vigilance exercised daily by the school's excellent site manager.

45. A number of staff possess certificated training in first aid. Accidents and relevant incidents are properly recorded. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and accidents properly recorded in the relevant documentation. Parents are informed immediately if the school is remotely concerned about their children.

46. Recording and monitoring of attendance is undertaken regularly by use of a computer programme. This is supported by visits twice a term from the educational welfare officer. However, procedures are insufficiently rigorous to promote attendance and give it a more prominent place in the school's targets.

47. The monitoring of pupils' behaviour is very thorough, and a variety of different logs and incident books are used to ensure that there is a very clear picture of incidents of worrying behaviour. These records track incidents in detail and provide information about patterns of behaviour that are helpful when staff need to talk to parents. Personal development is monitored much less formally but, in fact, is often part of the behaviour monitoring.

48. Pupils with special educational needs are supported extremely well in this inclusive and caring school. The teaching assistants care deeply for their charges, and this is a major factor in the good progress they make. The school's procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good and comply with the new Code of Practice. The progress of pupils towards the targets in their individual education plans is reviewed annually. The use of learning targets and the charting of pupils' progress is good. Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. The school has yet to involve all pupils with special needs and their parents fully in the setting of learning objectives.

49. The school has now started a register of pupils it considers to be particularly gifted and talented. Although only very few pupils are on the register, these pupils' special skills are flourishing from the support they receive from staff.

50. One of the main responses when talking to groups of pupils at Wombridge is how happy and secure they feel in the school. Much of this is due to the high standards of pastoral care offered to them. The school's investment in this important aspect of its work reaps rich rewards.

51. The previous inspection left the school with the key issues for action of making an appropriate baseline assessment of its pupils, as well as analysing data in order to inform future developments. The school has made satisfactory progress in this respect. Assessments made when children start school in the Reception classes give the school a clear basis upon which to judge the value that is added to pupils' progress. Comprehensive analysis of all national test results is also carried out, and they are compared carefully with the local and national results.

52. Class teachers use the results of assessments made in Reception classes to plan their work specifically for the children. This enables the school to target areas for individual development. The children who have special educational needs are identified at an early stage, and specific work and support are quickly planned for them. This early intervention enables the school to give good support within the classroom for these children and, consequently, they make good progress.

53. The school has an on-going tracking system that begins when the children enter the Reception classes. Academic progress is being tracked clearly, but the information is not yet being used as fully as it could be by all staff. Records of pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematical skills are kept by all teachers. The school complies with statutory

requirements for testing pupils at the end of Year 6 and uses optional tests in other year groups to check on pupils' progress. The headteacher and senior management team analyse the results of national tests and use the information to set general school targets for improvement. Teachers clearly know their pupils well and show good levels of care. This is nowhere more apparent than in the monitoring of the needs of pupils with special educational needs which are met successfully.

54. The school has yet to forge the links between assessment, target-setting and marking to ensure that pupils are guided sufficiently in order to improve their work. The marking policy does not give staff sufficient, up-dated guidance on the necessary links to be made between assessment and marking. The growing body of useful information about individual levels of attainment is giving teachers helpful information, although not all teachers are using this information fully to plan future work. Targets are set by most teachers and are agreed with pupils but are not always sufficiently well focused to ensure pupils' progress. They lack consistency in their recording until Years 5 and 6.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school's open-door policy is a strong indication of its wish to work in a close partnership with parents. Since the previous inspection, the number of children with special educational and other learning needs has grown considerably, and this causes some concern among parents, particularly with regard to challenging and inappropriate behaviour on the part of some pupils. They feel it causes disruption in classes and impacts adversely on the learning and progress of other children. The inspection team agrees that there are occasions when these views are valid.

56. Parents are always welcome in the school, and a large number of them come into the school every morning to settle their children into classes. This is particularly effective for parents whose children are in the Reception classes, as it allows them to see what their children are learning and so to become involved in their work. Teachers and teaching assistants are always accessible and willing to help if there are problems or if parents need reassurance.

57. Last summer, the well-established Parent-Teacher Association closed down for a while, but it is now back on track and has plans for fund-raising and social events to take place in the future.

58. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is good. Newsletters are sent regularly to keep parents in touch with events and what is going on in the school. Pupils' annual reports at the end of the school year are detailed, and inform parents what their children know, understand and can do. Two open consultation evenings are held during the school year, in November and at the end of the summer term. Some parents feel the timing of these meetings is wrong and they would prefer there to be a meeting in the spring term, as they feel it is too late to put things right if needs be at the end of the school year. Homework was set on some occasions during the inspection, but there is no consistency of practice across the school. When it is set, homework diaries provide an effective means of communication between parents and the school. A number of subject workshops, such as one in literacy, have been organised for parents to attend, and curriculum maps are provided for all parents at the outset of the school year so they are clear what their children will be studying during the year.

59. The school produces a very detailed and helpful handbook for parents. Parents were involved and consulted in the drawing up of the home-school agreement signed by most of

them. Few parents are in a position to help in classrooms regularly, but they are always welcome to do so.

60. The completed returns of the pre-inspection questionnaire were few in number and the pre-inspection meeting was not well attended by parents. A number of written comments were received. Inspectors feel that the school works closely with parents, that parents are well informed about the progress their children make and they do not agree that there are insufficient extra-curricular activities provided by the school. In fact, the school provides a good number of interesting and stimulating out-of-school interests for its pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The school is led and managed well. The strengths in leadership and management noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, and there has been a good response to the issues for action. The school has reorganised its senior management team and each member of the team now has clearly apportioned roles and responsibilities, which have resulted in better overall management of the school's systems and procedures. The headteacher has been at the helm for many years, but still retains a passionate belief in the importance of inclusive education, the effects of which are seen in the way the school seeks to help many pupils with special educational needs to become integrated members of the school community. Recent training has heightened his awareness of the challenges of leadership and led to a clearer analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a renewed determination to bring further improvement to the school.

62. The headteacher is very well supported by an experienced and very capable deputy headteacher. The school does not make enough use of her ability to disseminate good practice, and her full-time class-teaching commitments limit the amount of time she can devote to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Coordinators for Years 1 and 2 and for Years 3 to 6 fulfil their roles well, maintaining effective oversight in their areas of responsibility. Subject coordinators generally fulfil their roles well, providing good guidance for staff, ensuring that curriculum plans are appropriate and maintaining an effective record of their monitoring of the curriculum, teachers' planning and standards of pupils' work. Information gleaned from their monitoring is shared at staff meetings and is helping to improve the quality of education provided. However, the school does not build in sufficient time for all coordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school on a regular basis. Where coordinators have had the opportunity of carrying out classroom observations, such as in English, mathematics, science and history, the experience has proved beneficial and has helped to improve teaching practice.

63. The governing body is effective in fulfilling its statutory duties, for example, by providing an informative annual report to parents. This has improved since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements. The governing body is made up of committed individuals, some of whom are experienced in their roles and others who are newly appointed members. Governors attend training courses, receive regular monitoring reports and are involved in the school's target-setting processes. They make regular visits to the school to monitor the curriculum and other aspects of its daily work, such as health and safety. An appropriate sub-committee structure supports the work of the main governing body. Governors are active in shaping the role and future direction of the school, but not all governors fully understand the school's overall strengths and weaknesses, for example, the extremely challenging behaviour of some pupils and the difficulties this causes staff. Their role as critical friends to the headteacher and the school is not yet fully developed.

64. The governors have a commitment to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the school life. Although they make visits to the

school to liaise with the special educational needs coordinator, they do not yet have full procedures in place for monitoring the effectiveness of the provision. The special educational needs coordinator offers good leadership but has insufficient non-contact time to carry out her role as effectively as she would like.

65. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own performance and for development planning are satisfactory, but have some good features and have improved since the last inspection. Strengths lie in the way coordinators monitor and maintain records of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and weaknesses in the opportunities available to all coordinators to monitor classroom practice. Targets to improve teachers' performance have been established, and these focus on the school's identified areas for improvement. National test results are analysed carefully and the information is used to identify weaknesses in English and mathematics. The school's system for development planning is comprehensive and involves all staff. Through a process of consultation, the school identifies its strengths and weaknesses and arrives at agreed and appropriate areas for development.

66. The overall effectiveness of the school's leadership and its management procedures is seen in the good range of improvements which have occurred since the last inspection. The school has not only maintained the strengths noted in that inspection, but responded well to the previous key issues. Good attention has been paid to improving the quality of pupils' writing and to the opportunities for pupils to learn through investigative work in science. Both initiatives have led to improvements in standards. There have been improvements in curricular planning and assessment procedures, and the school now assesses children's attainment when they start school. Although they are still well below the national average, standards at the end of Year 6 have risen steadily. Weaknesses in teaching identified by the previous inspection have been rectified. The school, through the leadership of the headteacher and his deputy and with the support of the governors, is committed to further improvement. Staff are hard-working and committed. As such, the inspection team judges the school's capacity for further improvement to be good.

67. Financial planning is satisfactory and linked to identified priorities in the school development plan. All grants, including special grants, are spent appropriately as intended. The school ensures that it obtains best value for money when purchasing goods or service.

68. The school has an adequate number of appropriately qualified teaching staff for normal classroom responsibilities. However, the number of teachers available to see to the needs of the large number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is inadequate. There is a good match of curriculum subject responsibilities and teachers' trained specialisms, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

69. The school has a satisfactory number of teaching assistants but, although much thought has gone into the way assistants are allocated to classes, the way they are currently deployed is unsatisfactory. Most of the assistants are suitably trained, and they enable teachers to progress with their teaching even under difficult conditions when individual pupils become distressed or disruptive. Assistants are moved from class to class and are generally allocated to work with specific pupils at specific times of the day. Their help is frequently effective but is not always needed at the allocated time. The movement of assistants makes it difficult for pupils to form effective relationships with them and makes it harder for effective liaison between teachers and assistants. In some lessons, teachers have a number of assistants at the same time, and in other lessons no assistant is present. Teachers in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2 sometimes have a hard task to deal with the whole class as well as attending to pupils with particular learning or behavioural needs when no assistant is present.

70. The clerical staff deal with the school's administration effectively and the cleaning staff keep the school in a very good state of orderliness and cleanliness. The caretaker is a particularly valuable member of the school team, providing excellent support for all staff within the school.

71. Although the accommodation is satisfactory for Years 3 to 6, it is unsatisfactory for the Reception classes and has some unsatisfactory features for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school hall provides satisfactory accommodation for physical education, but there are restrictions on its use in the morning because of its use as a dining hall. This limited access has a negative impact on pupils' progress in physical education. The school has addressed two key points from the previous inspection by re-siting the library and by providing external fencing for security purposes. The library, which has been moved to a more central area, doubles as the computer suite. It is possible to teach a whole class within this area, but conditions are cramped. The library is adequately stocked and pupils use this resource for independent work. However, access to both the library and the computer suite is restricted because the area is used for teaching English and mathematics for a number of mornings each week. The school has satisfactory outdoor provision.

72. The accommodation for the Reception classes is unsatisfactory. Both of the classrooms are small, and this has a limiting effect on teachers and children. For example, space is so tight in the classrooms that when the children sit at their tables, their resource trays cannot be opened. This means that the class teachers put out the resources for the children to use and so the children's opportunities for independence in their work is limited. There is only a small place for them to sit together and so space for floor equipment, such as the floor robot and large construction kits is very restricted. The role-play areas are attractively displayed with teddies and house equipment, but they are in the corridor outside the classroom and, as teaching assistants' time is very limited, the quality of the children's role-play and painting are constrained by lack of adult support. Sand and water-play are limited as the corridor space is a thoroughfare where water and sand both present a health and safety risk. Although there is a play area for the children to use outside, there is no equipment, nor is there a place to store it. To overcome this deficiency, the teachers plan a session each week at the Nursery school across the road, where the children have the opportunity to use a wide range of large and small outdoor equipment. This enables the children to develop their physical and social skills further.

73. The quality and quantity of learning resources is satisfactory overall. Since the previous inspection, resources for religious education have improved and are now good. Resources for ICT have improved and are now satisfactory. Resources for the Reception classes are unsatisfactory but, throughout the rest of the school, resources are well organised and accessible to all pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- (1) Improve pupils' academic standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by*:
 - sharing existing good practice within the school to ensure that there is greater consistency in the teaching, particularly in:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - providing pupils' with clearer indications as to how they can improve their work and ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes;
 - making more effective use of target-setting;

- ensuring that worksheets are appropriately challenging for pupils' abilities;
 - ensuring that all teachers have adequate support and training to manage pupils with identified behavioural difficulties;
- (Paragraphs: 18, 19, 26, 54, 62, 105, 110, 116, 152)
- giving greater attention to the development of pupils' reading skills*
(Paragraphs: 1, 6, 20, 99, 102)
 - reviewing the way the school day is organised, with particular regard to the length of some lessons and the time allocated to literacy and numeracy sessions;
(Paragraphs: 9, 30)
 - ensuring that all subject coordinators have more frequent opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
(Paragraphs: 62, 65, 106, 112, 122, 126)
- (2) Ensure a greater level of classroom support for teachers by deploying teaching assistants more effectively
(Paragraphs: 6, 14, 23-25, 69, 72, 85, 91, 98, 101, 110, 152)
- (3) Improve facilities for children in the Reception classes by*:
- seeking ways to improve both the internal and external accommodation;
 - improving resources for outdoor education.
(Paragraphs: 23, 31, 71, 72, 85, 91)

** These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.*

In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- Making more efficient use of the computer suite.
(Paragraphs: 9, 21, 71, 106, 138, 141, 142)
- Making better use of new technology to promote pupils' learning in all subjects.
(Paragraphs: 9, 30, 109, 116, 117, 121, 125, 137-143)
- Ensuring better procedures to improve attendance.
(Paragraphs: 15, 46)
- Utilising the skills of the deputy headteacher more effectively.
(Paragraph: 62)
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility.
(Paragraphs: 17, 40)
- Ensuring that the principles of best value are met.
(Paragraph: 67)

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

75. The school operates a special 12-place unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, known as the Group Learning Provision. Ten pupils are referred to the unit by the local authority from other schools and two places are reserved for pupils from Wombridge. Almost all of the pupils attending the Group Learning Provision have statements of special educational needs. In the mornings, pupils are taught English and mathematics within the unit. Most of the pupils are then integrated into normal classes during the afternoons, although some pupils continue to be taught within the unit if this is deemed to be more appropriate to their needs.

76. The school has maintained the high standard identified in the previous report for pupils with special educational needs. The standard of provision in the Group Learning Provision is good. The headteacher and governors perceive the provision for pupils with special educational needs as an important part of the work of the school. The commitment of the staff and the ethos of the school provide an inclusive environment in which pupils' needs are the starting point for the delivery of the curriculum.

77. It would be inappropriate to judge the attainment of the pupils who attend the Group Learning Provision against national standards or norms. These pupils make good progress towards achieving the targets set in their individual education plans and have full access to the National Curriculum. In a mainstream science lesson, for example, pupils from the Group Learning Provision were investigating the effect of varying the distance of an object from a light source on a shadow. They were able to explain what they had learnt and predict the effect of change in distance on the height of the shadow. In literacy and numeracy, pupils make good progress. In English, for example, by the end of Year 5, some pupils' writing is joined and their letters are consistent in size. They are beginning to use short sentences to express meaning. In reading, they recognise familiar words and use their knowledge of letter sounds to decode words. In numeracy, pupils can write and add tens and units and recognise shapes. Some are beginning to understand the concept of fractions, such as a quarter and a half.

78. Not only do pupils attending the Group Learning Provision make progress in their learning, they also make good progress in their personal development. For some pupils, important progress is the ability to manage their own behaviour and respond appropriately to adult guidance. The attitude and behaviour of the pupils is good overall. They show an interest in their work and are keen to answer questions in lessons. Careful planning by their teachers and a brisk pace in lessons maintains the pupils' concentration and interest. For example, in a literacy lesson, after an introduction to the topic by the teacher, the class

divided into four groups. Each group was guided by a teaching assistant and worked on tasks that they were able to complete successfully and which extended their knowledge of the topic of electricity. Some pupils who show challenging behaviour require individual support from a teaching assistant to remain on task. This skilled help is important in assisting the pupils to manage their behaviour.

79. The teaching of pupils in the Group Learning Provision is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils. A characteristic of the good teaching is the careful match between the task and the pupils' present level of attainment. For example, in a literacy lesson, following the introduction by the teacher, pupils worked in three groups. One group was reading from books, another group was matching picture cards to letters and a third group was writing short sentences by adding the correct word to complete a sentence written by the teacher. The work of the teaching assistants makes a valuable contribution to the teaching. The teacher and the assistants work well together and this has a positive effect on the pupils' learning and achievement. In a mainstream lesson, a group of pupils in Year 5 was carrying out a science experiment with the help of a teaching assistant. She was able to offer help, guidance and clarification of what was required. This support ensures the pupils make good progress. In the mainstream class, the good progress is linked to the teacher providing materials that are matched to the pupils' level of understanding. In a science lesson in Year 5, the teacher provided a worksheet that contained the key words relating to the experiment. This then enabled the pupils to complete the task successfully.

80. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum. Special programmes, such as the nurture group, are available when necessary. The individual education plans are good, with both learning and behavioural targets. This ensures that pupils' individual needs are addressed, whilst ensuring full access to the school's curriculum. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have individual curricular targets in mathematics and English. These targets have a positive impact on progress. The school's procedures for identifying pupils with special needs are sound and make full use of a range of support services provided by the authority. The provision specified by pupils' statements are in place, and statements are reviewed annually.

81. Links with parents are satisfactory. The parents of pupils with a statement are invited to annual reviews and have access to the special needs coordinator at other times. The school does not yet have a procedure in place for reviewing individual education plans with parents of pupils with special educational needs who are not protected by a statement.

82. The leadership of the Group Learning Provision is good. There is clear direction to the work of the provision. Monitoring of the provision across the school is unsatisfactory. The special educational needs coordinator does not have sufficient time to carry out this important activity. The accommodation is satisfactory and there are sufficient teaching assistants to meet the needs of pupils on statements. However, the number of teachers for pupils protected by a statement is unsatisfactory. The Group Learning Provision gives good value for money.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 96 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 51 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 10 | 45 | 38 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 10 | 47 | 40 | 1 | 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 | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 415 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 100 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 27 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 123 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 26 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 25 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.4 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |
| 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 | 32 | 36 | 68 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 20 | 23 | 27 |
| | Girls | 29 | 33 | 34 |
| | Total | 49 | 56 | 61 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 72 (68) | 82 (80) | 90 (81) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 22 | 23 | 25 |
| | Girls | 29 | 33 | 34 |
| | Total | 49 | 56 | 61 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 75 (71) | 81 (76) | 84 (73) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 36 | 31 | 67 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 20 | 20 | 31 |
| | Girls | 22 | 17 | 22 |
| | Total | 42 | 37 | 53 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 63 (51) | 55 (52) | 79 (70) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 19 | 22 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 20 |
| | Total | 25 | 33 | 42 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 37 (41) | 49 (49) | 63 (57) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 3 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 368 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 5 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 13 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 17 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24.7 |
| Average class size | 28.2 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 22 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 427 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000/2001 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 798 989 |
| Total expenditure | 801 359 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1 785 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 15 976 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 13 605 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 2.5 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 1.5 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0.5 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 393 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 84 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 39 | 51 | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 42 | 51 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 33 | 44 | 12 | 10 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 31 | 54 | 7 | 7 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 50 | 43 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 26 | 54 | 11 | 8 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51 | 38 | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 50 | 45 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 30 | 43 | 15 | 10 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 40 | 43 | 4 | 11 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 39 | 52 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 27 | 37 | 15 | 10 | 11 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

83. By the time they finish their Reception year, a few children are likely to achieve the nationally agreed standards for their personal, social and emotional development, but most will not. Children make good progress in this area of their work throughout the Reception year, because they receive patient, supportive teaching.

84. Children in both classes try hard to learn the class routines. For example, they sit on the carpet and listen to the teacher and each other as they talk about what they think might be in a mystery parcel. They are learning that they may only speak when they have the microphone in their hands. In numeracy and literacy lessons, the children find it hard to let others speak when they wish to, and they have to be gently reminded to take their turn. They undress themselves for physical education and manage well. The teacher and assistant encourage the children to dress themselves, although some need help with tights, laces and trousers that are inside out. Children are encouraged to tidy their tables at the end of lessons and they manage this well. The children talk to each other and are beginning to form friendships. The children respond well to the staff, who act as good role models to encourage the children's social development. The good routines set in the Reception classes prepare the children well for their work in Years 1 and 2.

85. The teaching of this area of learning is particularly good. The teachers and teaching assistants are patient and consistent with the children, and this enables the children to learn and develop their social awareness. Staff show a great deal of care and concern for the children, as do the children for one another. The children who find it particularly difficult to join in with the class tasks are given good support by the adults in the room and are encouraged and helped to join in. This ensures they make good gains in a secure and calm environment. The children are encouraged to work in sociable groups. All staff promote clear ideas of what is expected of the children, including the difference between right and wrong, and this promotes their moral development well. During the inspection, for example, the children were working very hard at lining up and walking quietly to their destinations. The class teachers are active in their support, as they consistently reward good behaviour. The cramped accommodation and the fact that there are times in the day when no teaching assistant is deployed within Reception classes limit the opportunities for developing children's independence. The patience that the teachers and teaching assistants show the children results in a calm working environment where the children feel happy and confident.

Communication, language and literacy

86. By the time they start Year 1, few children are likely to attain the standards expected for communication, language and literacy. However, the children make good progress as a result of good teaching. Many of the children come into the Reception classes with underdeveloped speaking and listening skills. As a result of supportive and highly focused teaching, the children make good gains in this area of their work.

87. The children enjoy singing nursery and number rhymes. These activities develop not only the children's speaking skills, but also their capacity to memorise songs. The children are engaged by books, and the teachers stimulate this interest by reading interesting and attractive books in very expressive ways. This means that the children find real enjoyment in

this activity and consequently they learn well. The children have reading books that they read at school and home. This creates an effective partnership between home and school.

88. The children handle books well; some of the children read simple texts well by the end of the Reception year. Children learn to look carefully at the pictures to watch for clues about the story. The children are developing this skill well and talk enthusiastically about what is happening in the pictures. They are learning the names and sounds of letters, and they know some initial letters of words. Writing is displayed in all areas of the classes and gives the children a good understanding that descriptive writing is very effective. For example, they learn that words like 'tap', 'blow' and 'strum' can be used to describe how musical instruments can be played. The children register themselves in the morning, finding their name cards and putting them in the correct box, according to whether they are having a school dinner or a packed lunch. Writing skills are being developed effectively, with the children learning to form their letters correctly; most write successfully underneath the teacher's writing. Some of the lower-attaining children find writing hard. Their writing is tentative and, as yet, they demonstrate no real interest in this skill.

89. The teaching of language and literacy is good. The teachers work hard to improve the speaking skills of all the children through discussions about their work and play. This has a very high priority in both the Reception classes. Good speaking habits are encouraged and the staff work hard to develop pupils' listening skills. Reading is promoted in all classes by the careful choice of big books and books which support the reading scheme. For example, the children read the story in which Floppy the dog is chosen from the dogs' home. In this way, the children's learning of the characters in their reading book is developed further. The learning of letter sounds and names is promoted well in both classes. The children discuss their learning with their 'talking partners'. The children are encouraged to write and even those who find this difficult are supported as they write over the teachers' writing. In this way, the children learn in a positive and supportive atmosphere. They enjoy their learning and are particularly enthusiastic about stories.

Mathematical development

90. The quality of teaching for children's mathematical development is good and children of all abilities make good progress in their learning. However, because of the low levels of attainment when children start school, few children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they start Year 1. Most children recognise and count numbers to ten accurately. Higher-attaining children count to twenty. When finding bears in the sand, children count them and know that 11 yellow bears are more than 9 green bears, but they do not know by how many more. A few children are beginning to order numbers correctly from first to third but many find this difficult. They copy number sequences and continue patterns accurately. However, many are unable to develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems.

91. When using the computers, children make number staircases. With help from adults, they move the numbers 1 to 10 to match the stairs correctly. They use the mouse accurately. Children sort fruit using different characteristics, such as colour or shape. Some are beginning to use the vocabulary for addition and subtraction appropriately. Children's use of positional language is underdeveloped. The small classrooms restrict the availability of practical activities that help children to develop their mathematical vocabulary. Sand is available for children, but water activities are difficult to organise and supervise because of lack of suitable space and large stretches of time without the presence of a teaching assistant.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

92. Most children will not manage to reach the standards expected for knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they finish the Reception year. However, good teaching ensures that the children make consistently good progress.

93. The teachers provide a wide range of activities, which are planned to extend early concepts in science, design and technology, history, geography, and ICT. The children enjoyed using the floor robot in their English lessons as they programmed it to choose the next word they needed in their sentence. The children were particularly enthralled by ice cubes as they watched them melt in the bowls of cold and hot water. They develop early mapping skills as they draw the route from the school to the church and note the street furniture they saw on the way. They also use the materials the teachers put on display to sort according to whether they are wood, metal and plastic. The interactive nature of the displays in the classrooms gives the children opportunities to sort and re-sort the materials using different criteria. This supports their learning. The children have the opportunity to use a range of construction kits to create their own models. They experiment with a range of materials and cutting, gluing and sticking.

94. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Staff plan an extensive range of activities so that the children are fully engaged in their learning. Good use of ICT also reinforces children's learning in literacy and numeracy, such as when children used the floor robot to select given words. Various computer programs support the school's reading scheme and also help children to gain confidence in using a computer.

Physical development

95. In physical development, most children will not quite reach the standards expected by the time they reach the end of the Reception year. Good teaching in this area enables the children to make good progress.

96. The children use a range of equipment and materials in their work. Their skills develop well. For example, they use a range of pencils as they draw and write. They use jigsaws and construction toys with appropriate levels of dexterity. The children use the brushes well when they paint their pictures. In physical education lessons, the children practise throwing and catching beanbags and quoits. They display wide ranges of ability, but most find it difficult to throw the beanbags and quoits to each other. The children try hard to improve their work and are encouraged by the teacher to be more accurate. They particularly enjoyed their session in the outdoor area of the neighbouring Nursery school, as they worked with the wheeled toys, footballs and equipment in the large sandpit. The children worked together well and collaborated as they played.

97. The teaching of physical development is good. The staff provide a wide range of activities and good levels of individual support to help the children to extend and develop their skills. They use dance and games sessions, as well as the session in the Nursery school, to extend and develop the children's skills. The children work hard during their physical education lessons and try hard to improve and develop their work as a result of good teaching. The teachers encourage the children to improve their work and show them how this may be achieved.

Creative development

98. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good. Children of all abilities make good progress in their learning and many are likely to achieve the expected standards in this area of learning by the time they start Year 1. Most children draw well. They practise drawing themselves and their families effectively. Children draw detailed and recognisable pictures of people. They take time and effort to produce good quality work. Children use different media, such as combing pencils and pastels, to complete pictures, and they paint effectively. They make collages using different materials to create textures. In music, children make loud and soft sounds using their hands and voices well. They use a variety of instruments effectively and improve their performance significantly. In the shared corridor area, attractive imaginative rôle-play areas, such as a teddy bears' toyshop and a home corner, are set up for children. However, because the teachers have little allocated support from teaching assistants, these areas are not fully exploited.

ENGLISH

99. The results of the 2001 national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 were well below the national average and were below the average for similar schools. However, children enter the school with low levels of skill in communication, language and literacy and the school works hard to raise the level of attainment from this low base. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 have declined in reading, but have improved markedly in writing. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been improving at a similar rate to the national trend.

100. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress, even though standards are still well below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, there is a discernible improvement in the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 as a result of the particularly well-focused teaching, lessons learnt from the monitoring of teaching and learning, and the way the school has adapted the National Literacy Strategy to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs make up an unusually high percentage of pupils on roll, but they make good progress because of the considerable amount of attention and additional help they are given.

101. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average at the end of Year 2 and are below average at the end of Year 6. There are many distractions for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs are very demanding of teachers' time and this restricts the opportunities teachers have to develop these skills for all pupils. Nevertheless, teachers create many chances for pupils to develop speaking skills at the start of their literacy lessons as they discuss and share books together. The teachers frequently encourage the pupils to express themselves clearly. However, this often takes time, and so progress is slow, but satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop their speaking and listening skills most effectively when they are well supported in small groups and one-to-one learning situations. Such organisation is not always possible when class teachers have no assistant to work alongside them or to provide additional help for groups of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, in the good and very good lessons that occur more regularly in Years 5 and 6, teachers create whole-class discussions where pupils' language skills are developed well. They ask questions widely and wisely, so that pupils become involved in open discussions. Throughout Years 3 to 6, tasks are chosen carefully by teachers to stimulate discussions. In Year 4, for example, pupils researched the life-style of Ancient Egyptians and had to convince one another that they were clear in their knowledge and understanding as they reported back verbally.

102. Standards in reading vary considerably, but are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In most year groups, the higher-attaining pupils read with confidence and fluency. By the end of Year 2, the higher-attaining pupils lack accuracy in their reading. Even though they are reasonably fluent readers, they make few attempts at self-correcting, but quickly gloss over difficult words. Pupils of average ability read with some expression, but still read mechanically. Although lower-attaining readers can sequence a storybook, they pay too little attention to picture clues and opportunities to build words up by their sounds. In Year 3, pupils read with stilted expression. However, when mistakes are made and pupils are asked to correct themselves, they begin to build words with more accuracy. There is some lack of confidence in reading in Years 3 and 4. By Year 6, the lower-attaining pupils do not pay enough attention to the flow of a passage because they are still building the more difficult words that they come across. The higher-attaining pupils read fluently, confidently and with expression, and they give appropriate attention to punctuation.

103. Standards in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6 are better than in reading although, because of the high proportion of less able pupils, they are still well below average. Pupils of all abilities are, nevertheless, making good progress in developing their writing skills. Teachers plan a good variety of writing tasks for pupils. In Year 1, pupils begin to find their way around a dictionary as they find words with similar sounds after having a word presented to them. They know that 'crash' has the same ending as 'splash'. They give one another mutual support after their teacher has clearly introduced them to a task where they are expected to use these words in their writing. They show confidence in using the computer in their classroom before moving into the computer suite to use a CD-ROM that will help them to find new words. By Year 2, they sequence stories with well-chosen resources, such as 'Mr Wolf's Week' that takes them through happenings on different days of the week. Their task is then to change the things that happen, but in the same sequence. Most are able to do this successfully. They find out about the correct use of verbs and adjectives in this year, as they model work on books such as 'A is for Africa' and poetry such as 'Snowman'. In Year 3, the focus is on the correct grammatical use of nouns and adjectives in writing. In Year 4, pupils begin to use their knowledge more independently as they research the lives of Ancient Egyptians. As they are working in ability sets, some pupils in the higher set are able to make faster progress. Pupils in the other set receive high levels of support. In Year 5, pupils tackle explanatory writing with enthusiasm and a reasonable degree of skill. They are supported well by good teaching that helps them to focus clearly. The benefit of this better focus to learning is seen clearly in Year 6 where pupils write for a range of purposes in different styles. They compose persuasive writing after debating the issue of people walking dogs through a nearby park. The debate helps them to clarify their thinking before committing their thoughts to paper. Writing is made more meaningful to them and hence a better level of work is produced. There are clear indications that pupils are beginning to raise their standards in writing by Year 6 as a result of some imaginative teaching.

104. The National Literacy Strategy is securely in place. Teachers are beginning to have the confidence to adapt its methods and content to meet pupils' needs, without ignoring any of its requirements. Pupils regularly practise their handwriting skills according to a systematic scheme of work. Pupils' are slowly improving the presentation of their work. Spelling lists are taken home each week by pupils, and they are tested on these on a regular basis. There is not enough opportunity for pupils to apply their literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

105. Pupils work hard and produce good quantities of work in Years 3 to 6, whilst in Years 1 and 2 their efforts are improving. Most do their best to please their teachers, but a small number of pupils find it very difficult to concentrate for sustained periods of time. A few teachers lower their expectations of what pupils can achieve as a result of this. Nevertheless, teachers plan conscientiously. There is increasing evidence of teachers making tasks more

imaginative so that pupils' attention is caught and maintained. Teaching is always at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although teachers have to devote considerable efforts to managing pupils' behaviour and ensuring they concentrate on their work. These efforts pay dividends, as the quality of the teaching is often better in Years 3 to 6, where the teachers have to devote less time to managing behaviour. This allows teachers to vary their teaching methods whilst continuing to teach the basic skills of English more effectively. They set time limits particularly effectively in Years 5 and 6, and these limits help pupils to concentrate well and work hard. Teachers consistently remind pupils of what is to be achieved during the lesson. Activities are reviewed at the end of each lesson, although, sometimes, not enough time is left to consolidate the pupils' learning. There are some good examples of marking where guidance is given to pupils. However, in many cases, there is insufficient guidance to show pupils how they might improve their work. Targets are given inconsistent emphasis and are not sharp enough because they are not usually linked to the marking.

106. The leadership of the subject is given to a teacher in the infant section who works hard at the task. Another infant teacher supports her in developing reading skills across the school. Both of these teachers rely upon the knowledge of the deputy headteacher to support them in the junior section. This division of responsibility means that, overall, there is an insufficiently coherent approach to the leadership to raise standards systematically, although some helpful monitoring of teaching and learning has been carried out. Procedures for assessing pupils in English are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of resources and the library has improved since the previous inspection. However, the library is not always available, as it is used as a teaching area for much of the time, as well as doubling as the computer suite. Computers are beginning to be used as a resource in English, but the school recognises that this is an area for future development.

MATHEMATICS

107. The results of the National Curriculum assessment tests in 2001 were well below the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including the very high percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, has a significant impact on the school's overall results. However, standards have improved since the last inspection, at a rate similar to the national trend. Appropriate whole-school targets are set that realistically reflect pupils' levels of attainment. The inspection findings show that pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, although standards of attainment are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, there is no doubt that improvement has occurred in teaching, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly established. Children with special educational needs are fully included and supported well. All attainment targets are covered appropriately.

108. By the end of Year 2, pupils apply their knowledge of doubling to questions such as $20 + 20$, but find it more difficult to add $24 + 24$. They have a sound understanding of symmetry and are making satisfactory progress in learning how to solve problems. Some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn appropriately from the classroom to work in small groups with a support teacher each morning, and these arrangements help them to make good progress. In Year 3, higher-attaining pupils work with a 'hundred square' to practise their times tables, while lower-attaining pupils recall number pairs to 20 accurately. Pupils in Year 4 continue to develop numerical skills in using a 'hundred square'. Lower-attaining pupils practise their 5 and 10 times tables, while higher-attaining pupils look at patterns created by multiplication and continue the 9 times table up to 20×9 accurately. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 5 calculate addition of three-digit numbers using a range of strategies, including rounding up or down. Lower-attaining pupils subtract and multiply in tens correctly. By the end of Year 6, pupils' work ranges from higher-attaining pupils adding to

three decimal places accurately, to the lower-attaining pupils working out with difficulty the difference between 4.5 and 5. A few pupils in the higher-attaining group are likely to achieve standards that are above the national average, but the standards achieved by four out of ten pupils are below the expected level. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are gifted in mathematics and meets their needs well.

109. Numeracy skills are developed appropriately across the curriculum. In design and technology, for example, pupils develop their understanding of measurement as they design and plan a variety of tasks. In ICT, pupils develop mathematical concepts as they use spreadsheets, but the use of ICT as a tool for developing pupils' numeracy skills is still under-developed.

110. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The difference in quality is due in part to the higher level of support provided for pupils in numeracy lessons, to more effective teaching methods and to higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are set according to their prior attainment into two groups in Years 3 to 5 and three groups in Year 6. This enables teachers to meet the needs of pupils more accurately and for teaching assistants to work with the groups that need most support. In a lower-attaining group in Year 5, for example, the teacher and three teaching assistants supported pupils well and this enabled them to achieve the targets set. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were clear about the learning objectives and understood exactly what was required of them in terms of behaviour and learning. In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not have as many teaching assistants for numeracy lessons and, although they work hard, their teaching is not as effective and expectations are not so high.

111. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. Pupils in Year 6 said how much they enjoy the subject because the teachers make learning fun. 'They show us ways to work out the answer easily'. They particularly enjoy mathematical games that make them recall facts quickly and test their mental agility. In Years 5 and 6, where the teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good, teachers challenge pupils to achieve their best and learning is accelerated for many pupils. All teachers work hard and are committed to raising standards for their pupils in a positive and encouraging learning environment.

112. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator is new to the school and has not had time yet to monitor teaching and learning in all classes. She has continued the very good coordinator's monitoring book that records the quality of planning, and identifies action to be taken. This comprehensive document is used effectively to record and audit provision in the school. Assessment procedures are sound. The school carries out statutory and optional assessment tests appropriately. Pupils' achievement is assessed and recorded regularly by teachers. Although accommodation is satisfactory overall, some of the classrooms in Years 1 and 2 are small which impacts on pupils' learning, especially in practical activities.

SCIENCE

113. The results of the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well below the national average. The National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. However, since the previous inspection, results have been improving at a rate similar to the national trend. The inspection findings show that standards are still well below average by the end of Year 2, but that they are below average by the end of Year 6. There has been a significant improvement in the way pupils learn through investigative work. Pupils throughout the school now carry out regular investigations; good progress is made with these, and this is causing standards to

rise. The school has set realistic targets for the end of Year 6, based on assessments carried out regularly throughout the year.

114. By the end of Year 2, many pupils achieve appropriate standards in science because of the increased emphasis on investigative work, but standards are still well below average because of the large proportion of pupils who struggle to retain what they have learnt in lessons. Overall, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Most pupils can sort a collection of materials into categories of 'natural' and 'man-made'. Many record the changes made in the ingredients when baking a cake and correctly label diagrams. They learn to make predictions, 'What I think will happen', and to draw illustrations of their activities. One investigation in Year 2 was to find out the warmest place in the classroom by observing how quickly ice cubes melted. Pupils' results were recorded carefully in a table and their conclusions recorded accurately. They are making good use of scientific terminology in the form of key words, and learning to record observations in their own words. They also are beginning to write their own conclusions to their findings, such as which surface is best on which to push a model car as part of a study on friction, although lower-attaining pupils find this very difficult. Other pupils were involved in learning about the safety of electrical appliances. They watched a video that demonstrated vividly the dangers associated with electricity. The pupils then produced their own safety brochures, using a variety of formats, which all included important safety features. Most were able to draw appropriate illustrations, but found the labelling and descriptions of the dangers quite difficult.

115. Progress is satisfactory through Years 3 and 4 and regular investigations are carried out. The previous inspection criticised the contexts within which investigations were being carried out, but the school has been successful in addressing this problem. In Year 5, pupils are using their measurements to plot graphs and to draw conclusions from these results. They are familiar with what makes a fair test and can organise their investigations so that conditions for fair testing apply. One such investigation was to determine whether air had weight. One pupil concluded that 'air does have weight but it is not very heavy.' By the end of Year 6, progress in science investigations is good. Many pupils achieve appropriate standards in science, but a significant minority are still working below the expected level because they find it difficult to retain what has been taught in lessons. Most pupils use the correct layout and organisation for their work, using illustrations that are clearly labelled and neatly produced, although the work of lower-attaining pupils is not produced to the same standard. Higher-attaining pupils produce some very good illustrations. During the inspection, pupils investigated the conditions that affect seed growth. They conferred in groups and organised how they would carry out their test, showing good understanding of how to change one variable and keep others constant to ensure a fair test.

116. The teaching of science is good overall. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of science content and the concepts to be taught. They use key words and usually have these displayed to help their pupils. Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in science are good overall. These improve as pupils move on through the school. Where there is less dependence on worksheets, pupils are given better opportunities at organising their writing. However, when marking pupils' work, many teachers only concentrate on the scientific content and do not show pupils how they can improve the quality of the writing. The improved regularity of investigations enables pupils to develop skills in taking measurements, recording the data and illustrating the data as a graph. Cooperative working also enables pupils to develop their social skills and to learn to reach and carry out group decisions. Teachers' planning is generally good; there is a consistent whole-school approach which enables year groups to plan more easily together. Overall, teachers have good expectations of pupils' work, and teaching methods are effective. Teachers plan for their classes to write up a large proportion of their investigation first, thus giving an established context to the drawing of conclusions. This increases pupils' motivation and

improves their productivity. Teachers use science resources effectively. A good selection of magnets in Year 3 enabled good progress to be made in their investigation of attraction and repulsion. Pupils in Year 6 had access to very good resources for their investigation into growth. Pupils enjoy using such resources and they impact positively on their learning. However, ICT is used insufficiently to support learning in the subject. Through their targeted support, classroom assistants enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress overall. The assessment of science is good throughout. Regular tests at the end of each work unit enable teachers to keep accurate records of pupils' progress and to offer science booster classes to pupils who need extra support.

117. The management of science is good. The coordinator has carried out extensive monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' workbooks. She has helped to address the key issue from the previous report by setting up a rigorous approach to investigations throughout the school and by introducing regular assessment procedures. This keeps teachers informed and allows them opportunities to revisit any area of weakness within the curriculum. There has been improvement in science display areas in classrooms. These have helped to widen pupils' understanding and make science activities an accepted part of classroom culture. As well as the weekly booster classes, two science clubs for higher achievers have been introduced. These meet weekly and offer pupils very good opportunities to carry out a variety of investigations to extend their experience within the context of the science curriculum and help to raise standards further. The science action plan has outlined a number of appropriate areas for further development, including the raising of standards, the use of ICT within the subject and greater use of the environmental area within the school grounds.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Observations during the inspection indicate that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that are expected for their age. This is not quite as good as the judgement made at the previous inspection, but curricular requirements have changed since that time. Some work of good standard was observed; for example, pupils have produced good three-dimensional clay work using different techniques, inspired by a visit to the Coalport Museum.

119. By the end of Year 2, pupils show a satisfactory range of skills as they explore ideas in sketches and drawings. They investigate and use a variety of materials and processes to communicate their ideas. They design and make images and artefacts, for example, drawings in the style of Mondrian and clay faces to illustrate a poem about mirrors. Pupils comment on differences in others' work and suggest ways of improving it. They have studied the work of different artists; they clearly described the work of William Morris and knew that he used birds, flowers and plants as illustrations in his work. Pupils' observational drawings of seashells in their sketchbooks are detailed. Their interest and curiosity are stimulated well by a variety of attractive resources.

120. By the end of Year 6, pupils explore ideas and collect visual and other information to help them develop their work. They use their knowledge and understanding of materials and processes to communicate ideas and meanings. They make images and artefacts, combining and organising visual and tactile qualities, for example, in their carefully drawn sketches and paintings of different bones in the body. They compare and comment on ideas, methods and approaches used in their own and others' work. The after-school art club has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This term, pupils are using black and white film to record life in the school. They have looked at historic photographs and compared them with life in school today.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and they manage and organise classes well. The school has adopted and adapted the new government guidelines and, by following them, teachers ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding are taught effectively. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy their art and design lessons. They behave well and concentrate effectively. Good links are made with other subjects. In literacy, for example, a fairytale and holiday display was illustrated well using drawings and collage. In history, drawings of Greek urns showed careful observation, while in science illustrative work on plants and skeletons was effective. Pupils' work could be improved even more by using ICT to investigate art and design in a variety of genres, styles and traditions on the Internet.

122. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator is committed to the provision of good-quality experiences for pupils. She has organised effective in-service training for staff. She monitors the outcomes of pupils' work by observing displays in the school. The coordinator maintains a very good monitoring book that records the quality of planning, and identifies areas for action. This comprehensive document is used effectively to record and audit provision in the school. However, she does not as yet have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms. Art and design are given an appropriate profile in the school. The coordinator ensures that pupils' work is valued through interesting and varied displays and that the work of other artists is displayed attractively so that pupils learn in an interesting and stimulating environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection. However, evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays and from discussions with teachers and pupils indicates that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve the nationally expected standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, although the design element of pupils' work has improved. Skills and processes are being taught and learnt effectively.

124. By the end of Year 2, pupils generate ideas and plan what to do next, based on their experience of working with materials and components. They use models, pictures and words to describe their designs. They select appropriate tools, techniques and materials. They show a satisfactory range of skills as they use tools and assemble, join and combine materials in a variety of ways, for example, to make felt bags in the style of Mondrian.

125. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed their skills to an appropriate level and have a sound understanding of the whole design and making process. They take the users' views into account and produce step-by-step plans. They communicate ideas using words, labelled sketches and models, showing that they are aware of constraints. They work with a variety of materials and components, paying attention to quality of finish and to function. Following a visit to Attingham Park, for example, they carefully designed and then made samples of curtains. Pupils work with a range of tools and equipment and reflect on their designs. They identify what works well and what could be improved. There is insufficient use of ICT, such as graphics or computer-aided design software, to help pupils improve their standards of work in the subject.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although teachers follow government guidelines, they make inventive adaptations to suit the needs and interests of their pupils. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator is enthusiastic and energetic. She supports development in the subject well. The school has developed an effective long-term planning grid that ensures appropriate coverage of the

curriculum for all pupils. The coordinator maintains a very good monitoring book in which she records the quality of planning and identifies areas for action. This comprehensive document is used effectively to record and audit provision in the school. However, she does not as yet have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Standards in geography are at the levels expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection. The standards achieved by the pupils reflect the teachers' careful planning throughout the school and the opportunities available to them. The teachers place a clear emphasis on developing the pupils' mapping skills and extending the use of correct geographical terms.

128. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of places and are developing a satisfactory range of skills and the ability to carry out geographical enquiry. The teachers achieve this through the use of effective strategies. They use a teddy bear, Barnaby Bear, to enable pupils to learn about other countries and places. The bear travels with pupils and other adults on holiday, creating a sense of personal involvement for the pupils. In this way, pupils have learnt about different geographical characteristics, recognising, for example, that the clothes Barnaby would take to a seaside holiday in Cornwall would be very different from the clothes he would need on a walking holiday in Snowdonia. The pupils develop satisfactory map-making skills, through work associated with the stories of Katie Morag who lives on an imaginary island home in Scotland. They learn geographical vocabulary, understanding, for example, the term 'bay' and recognising that the bay would shelter the ferry boat from the sea as it unloads its cargo. They are starting to develop an appropriate knowledge and understanding of patterns and processes, as they make observations about where things are located. For example, they carefully considered the best location for a jetty and identified which bay would be the best. Pupils' knowledge of places is also developed effectively through looking at maps of the British Isles and identifying places of particular interest.

129. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have broadened their range of skills and developed a good understanding of maps. The teachers achieve this by providing a wide range of maps for pupils to study. For example, pupils use maps of the world to locate mountain ranges and individual mountains and have studied a wide range of maps showing very different environments. A themed study of the mountain environment helps pupils to develop appropriate skills in using a range of different sources of information and presenting their findings in different ways. In one lesson, for example, the pupils were working in small groups to create a poster, pamphlet, booklet or a PowerPoint presentation about different mountains. The pupils chose their own locations and worked together to consider where they might find relevant information. Good use was made of ICT, as some pupils used the Internet to find information about the mountain they had chosen.

130. The overall quality of teaching and learning in geography is satisfactory, and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Skills, knowledge and understanding are taught effectively through different themes. In Year 5, for example, pupils were studying the importance of water in our lives, its sources and its use in the home. Imaginative use of the school environment, as pupils mapped the water points in the school, helped them to understand the importance of water in their community. Items of topical interest are used appropriately. Pupils in another class were looking at the recent high rainfalls and discussing the impact that this had had upon the countryside. They learnt about the effects of the rivers overflowing and the devastation that happens when countryside and homes flood. Teachers make effective use of the locality to help pupils recognise and understand human and physical processes. Pupils in Year 3, for example, considered what impact building a leisure

centre would have upon the immediate locality. They thought that it would have a profound impact because of the increase in traffic and noise and the need for more car parking facilities, although they recognised the benefits from encouraging more people to take exercise. In a good lesson in Year 3, energetic and enthusiastic teaching resulted in motivated pupils who were keen and enthusiastic to learn and develop ideas. They listened to each other's suggestions and worked together effectively. Good levels of praise and tasks well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils ensured that they made good gains in their learning.

131. The coordinator is enthusiastic and is keen to promote the subject throughout the school. ICT is beginning to be used effectively to support the subject.

HISTORY

132. Standards in history at the end of Years 2 and 6 are at the levels expected of pupils of their age. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection. However, the progress the pupils make in developing their historical enquiry skills is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The standards the pupils achieve reflect the interesting and stimulating curriculum available to the pupils and satisfactory teaching.

133. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of famous people in the past, of how they lived and how their lives affected other people in their time. For example, the pupils learn about Grace Darling, considering what the different people thought about on that storm-tossed night and recognising that they would all have had different points of view about Grace's brave actions. In this way, the pupils are beginning to understand the impact people in the past had upon other people's lives. Good use of artefacts and rôle-play are helping pupils to develop satisfactory skills of enquiry. For example, in their study of washday in the past, the pupils look at dolly tubs, posers and how mothers in those days did the family washing. In this way, the pupils learn about the past and how our lives today are very different from those in the past.

134. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a good knowledge of different periods of British history and how people lived in very ancient cultures. This knowledge is built up effectively as pupils in each year group study different periods of history. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learn to use different sources of information to discover the effect that the Romans had upon the lives of people in Britain at that time. They realise that they had learnt a lot about Queen Boudicca from writings of the Romans and use this information to draw together a picture of this striking queen. In Year 4, the pupils discover that there are significant links between historical events in the past and our life today. As they study the life and times of King Henry VIII, for example, they recognise that he brought about significant changes to the way people worshipped during his reign and that these changes still affect us today. Their study of this era also helps them to develop an understanding of health and hygiene as they discover the effect that depositing sewage and rotting materials had upon people's health and recognise that the plague was spread by fleas that lived on the backs of rats. Studies within the locality help pupils to understand their own heritage and to learn how to use primary source materials. In a good lesson in Year 5, for example, pupils used primary source materials to consider how the industrial base in the area and the village of Oakengates expanded with the coming of the railways and what effect this had on the lives of people. Good quality worksheets and a knowledgeable teacher enabled the pupils to achieve well in a well-presented lesson.

135. The teaching throughout the school is effective and rooted in historical enquiry. Pupils learn well through using artefacts from the past or gaining ideas of life in the past by close observation of documents from the relevant periods. The teachers have an appropriate understanding of the subject and organise their lessons systematically. History provides opportunities for the teachers to support and improve the pupils' literacy and extended writing skills. For example, the pupils in Year 6 wrote a diary of the daily life of a Spartan girl. However, not enough use is made of these opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills by showing them how they could improve their writing. Mathematics is also used effectively by the teachers to show the passage of time through the use of timelines. The teachers are beginning to use ICT appropriate to support the history curriculum.

136. The subject coordinator is enthusiastic and has good ideas for the further development of the subject throughout the school. He has monitored the teaching of history in the school, and has a clear view of the standards of work the pupils achieve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. The school's provision for, and standards achieved in, ICT have improved since the last inspection, although standards are still below the expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress.

138. The recent installation of a computer suite has had a significant impact on the way the subject is taught, although the use of the area in which the suite is located for teaching English and mathematics has made it inaccessible for much of the day. This has adversely affected the amount of time available to teach the subject and has inhibited the wider use of new technology in the teaching of other subjects. All classes now have a weekly lesson to teach ICT skills. Pupils make good progress during these sessions, but the time allocated to most classes is too short to enable pupils to consolidate their skills and this affects the progress they are able to make over time.

139. By the end of Year 2, higher-attaining pupils achieve the national expectations in all aspects of the curriculum, but a significant number of other pupils still require much adult support and are working below the expected level. Pupils are developing a satisfactory range of skills to enable them to exchange and share information. They type short pieces of text using a word processor, and the higher-attaining pupils know how to alter the colour, size and appearance of the text. Most pupils show satisfactory technical competence in producing graphic work, although lower-attaining pupils still need reminding how to select and use different tools. All pupils are learning how computer programs can be used to find things out. They know, for example, that CD-ROMs can be used to store vast amounts of information, although they do not, as yet, have much opportunity to use CD-ROMs to find out information, or data-handling programs to collate information and answer questions. Higher-attaining pupils have some understanding of how computers can help them to review and modify their work. They know, for example, how to correct what they have typed. Other pupils have yet to appreciate how computers can help them to improve their work, but there are few opportunities at present for pupils to produce initial drafts of their work and then go back to improve them after discussion with others or with the teacher. Most pupils have mastered some important essential skills, such as logging on to the computer, locating programs and starting new pieces of work. Some pupils still have difficulty logging on because they make simple mistakes when typing their name or password. Most pupils know how to print their work.

140. By the end of Year 6, pupils have caught up much of the lost ground caused by the school's previously inadequate provision for the subject. Higher-attaining pupils are achieving

the nationally expected standard in most aspects of the curriculum, but other pupils still need considerable support from adults and are working below the expected level. Pupils are discovering different ways in which new technology can be used to find things out, for example, through the Internet, but this aspect is still a relative weakness, as pupils do not have a great deal of opportunity to use CD-ROMs or the Internet on a regular basis. The weakest aspect of pupils' work is their understanding of how computers can be used to control or monitor events; the school has identified this as an area for further development. The strongest aspect of pupils' work is their ability to exchange and share information. Pupils are, for example, having some success in putting together a short presentation on the computer using text, graphics and different effects. Their ability to set out text attractively, and with due consideration for their audience, has improved markedly. They are beginning to understand how they can present numerical information using a spreadsheet. During the inspection, for example, pupils set up a three-column spreadsheet and used the data to present a chart depicting the heights of all of the pupils in the class. Pupils in Year 3 have learnt how to send emails, but this facility is not used frequently.

141. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, and some good lessons were observed during the inspection. The teachers' confidence and expertise have improved considerably as a result of a significant amount of in-service training and the guidance given by the subject coordinator. The teachers acknowledge that further training is required, but all staff show a willingness to learn, which is helping them to become much better equipped to teach the subject. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, matching tasks well to pupils' needs and stages of development. They give careful and clear explanations so that pupils know what they are expected to do. Teachers and teaching assistants use their time profitably by providing support for pupils experiencing difficulties. Most teachers make clear to pupils how long they have in which to accomplish their work and ensure that pupils remain on task. All of these features have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, other factors impinge upon pupils' learning and counteract effective features of the teaching. In most lessons, teachers bring a whole class into the computer suite. The space is very small for 30 pupils and not ideally suited to teaching a whole class. This makes it difficult for teachers to gather the class round or to provide a focal point for teaching. In some classes, it also exacerbates any behavioural problems. Under these arrangements, pupils are required to work in pairs. At times, this is effective, as in two lessons for pupils in Year 6 where one pupil read out data for the partner to type into the computer. At other times, however, half of the class is not actively engaged as they wait for their turn to use the keyboard. Time constraints on the use of the computer suite result in many lessons being too short, which makes it difficult for teachers and pupils to accomplish all that is planned for the lesson. However, in most classes, pupils enjoy using the computers and show good motivation to learn. The older pupils work well with each other, taking turns when sharing a computer, and offering constructive help and advice to their partners.

142. The curriculum for ICT is sound. The school follows a recommended scheme of work which ensures that all aspects of the prescribed curriculum are covered. Skills are generally taught within a meaningful context, although some units of work are not linked as effectively as they could be to other areas of the curriculum. In one class, for example, pupils learnt how to cut, copy and paste in order to produce repeating patterns. The task could have been more effective if, for example, it had been linked into a study of repeating patterns in art and design. Most subjects are beginning to benefit from the use of ICT, but this is still an area for further development, which is impeded at present by lack of access to the computer suite. Opportunities are missed to help pupils' develop their own writing skills. In one class, pupils learnt how to use the spell-checker, but all were given a set text to spell-check which had little relevance to any other work they were doing. The skill could have been taught much more effectively within the context of pupils' own writing and would have helped them to appreciate how a computer can be used to help them modify their own work. In another class, pupils

had completed a piece of writing on the plague, but the writing contained elementary errors which could easily have been corrected and a more accurate copy printed out for future reference. The provision of an exercise book in which to gather together the work produced in ICT is a helpful feature, but little attention is paid to the quality of pupils' writing in these books. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to enhance their numeracy skills through the use of computer software, such as spreadsheets, data-handling programs and some software dedicated to practising number work. Through the homework club and on two lunchtimes a week, pupils have further opportunities to practise their skills, and these occasions are proving valuable in helping to develop pupils' confidence in using computers.

143. The subject is led and managed well, and the coordinator has guided the school through the many complexities and difficulties of establishing the computer suite. Considerable problems have been encountered in obtaining appropriate software, and the system for managing the school's network has proved to be far less flexible than the school was originally led to believe. This has led to frustrations and slower progress than anticipated in establishing the suite as an essential tool for pupils' learning. However, both the coordinator and the staff have shown great perseverance and there has been a noticeable improvement in pupils' skills since the suite opened. Assistance from a parent has also proved invaluable in sorting out technical problems, but the school does not yet have sufficient technical support to sort out day-to-day difficulties with the computers. The next phase in the development of the subject is to devise better methods for assessing pupils' attainment. Although teachers assess pupils' achievements in relation to the objectives set for each lesson, the system is insufficiently thorough to provide measurable information about the standards pupils are achieving, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. This does not, at present, hinder pupils' learning as nearly all pupils are being challenged sufficiently by the planned curriculum but will be needed as pupils' levels of skill increase.

MUSIC

144. Standards in music by the end of Year 2 match national expectation, but those at the end of Year 6 are above it. This maintains the standards found at the time of the last inspection. The standards reflect the good levels of progress made all pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the very good progress in Years 3 to 6. In turn, the pupils' progress reflects the good teaching throughout the school and the very good features in some teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning because music lessons are often enjoyable and exciting for them.

145. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build upon the firm foundations that have been encouraged in the Reception classes, where children have already begun to discover the difference between loud and soft sounds made by using their bodies as instruments and an actual variety of percussion instruments. These skills are developed further through listening carefully to music for the different sounds. This links pupils' work in a creative way to other subjects, such as science, whilst also giving much needed opportunity to developing listening skills. Pupils name instruments accurately and perform for one another creditably. Their listening skills are enhanced through listening to an appropriate variety of music. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, they listened to a piece of music by Villa Lobos, and identified how changes in speed and pitch created different effects.

146. The benefit of the good groundwork up to the end of Year 2 is securely reaped in Years 3 to 6. The very good variety of the activities in Years 3 to 6 extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to make music successfully. In Year 3, for example, pupils extend their work on rhythm by producing their own effective compositions. They use correct musical notation language as they combine crotchets and quavers in slow and fast echo rhythms. They interact with one another admirably in pairs and small groups to make up their

compositions, and they share instruments sensibly. In Year 5, exciting drumming patterns of African music help them to learn about different types of composition. They listen, compose and perform with enthusiasm and skill for one another. The momentum of learning is kept up by the teacher's close monitoring of achievements. Where learning is best in this year group, pupils listen with acute levels of hearing and they are quickly able to identify specific rhythms accurately. The very careful use of resources by teachers aids learning well. In Year 6, much of this learning is brought together extremely well. In a focus on composing, pupils demonstrate high-quality knowledge of duration, dynamics, timbre and tone in their music making. They are able to compose to a theme of 'A winter's journey' by working together as a number of teams before becoming a whole-class team. They express themselves joyfully in performing their composition. This results from the high quality of the teaching that ensures very good progress being made and overall standards being achieved that are above what could normally be expected at the end of Year 6.

147. The quality of music throughout the school is much enhanced by the range of extra-curricular activities. Guitar club, band and choir are just a few of the activities that pupils can enjoy. There is also specialist teaching of a range of instruments, such as flute, clarinet and saxophone, as well as cello and violin. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic and well-informed coordinator. She resources the subject to a good level as she controls the budget for the subject carefully by establishing agreed priorities with colleagues. She takes music out into the local community which gives pupils pleasure. The subject remains a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards in physical education found during the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Year 2, are achieving in line with national expectations. Only one lesson was observed in Year 6, and here the pupils were achieving above national expectations in gymnastics. Progress is good throughout Years 3 to 6, and pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

149. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning to express themselves in creative movement during their dance sessions. They are developing an increasing control over their movements and are learning to coordinate and develop simple, rhythmic sequences well. In gymnastics, they participate in warm-up activities with a sense of fun and are learning to be aware of how their bodies react to exercise. They work hard independently at maintaining different balanced positions. They are learning to work cooperatively and can carry out sequenced activities in pairs. In a very good dance lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the theme was Incy Wincy Spider. To the accompaniment of different percussion instruments, pupils explored spider-like movements, first with their hands then with their bodies. Throughout the lesson, most pupils demonstrated good control and were creative and unselfconscious in their interpretations. They worked in pairs, mirroring web-building actions and then put a longer sequence together. This activity was then carried out to a piece of African music. Most pupils kept time with the rhythm and maintained their sequence of moves. Their attitudes and behaviour were good throughout and they wanted to carry on at the end of the lesson.

150. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have developed a good awareness of health and safety and deploy and stack the large apparatus with care. They move around the hall with increased awareness of space, demonstrating good control over their movements and actions. Their cooperative skills have progressed well. In gymnastics, they work effectively in pairs or small groups, creating sequences of moves at different levels. They demonstrate their awareness of each other through the completion of sequences together. They refine their movements and look critically at others in order to improve their own techniques. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, pupils demonstrated their skills effectively, showing good control during the warm-up activity, and the ability to jump and hold balanced positions with confidence. They worked cooperatively, devising balancing and bridging sequences and adapting them for the different pieces of apparatus around the hall. By listening carefully to the teacher's instructions, they were able to improve their sequences, ensuring their final move was a controlled landing on the mat. Throughout the lesson, the teaching assistant provided very good support for a pupil with special educational needs.

151. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a more balanced scheme of work for physical education. The planning for the subject is comprehensive in its coverage. Greater attention has been paid to dance, and better use is made of outdoor activities. These sessions are planned to involve pupils in invasion games, field and strike activities and net and wall activities. Additionally, pupils in Years 4 and 6 have swimming lessons at a local pool. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils achieve their 25-metre certificate.

152. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which has been improved through training provided under the auspices of a national scheme. As a result, teachers have developed increased confidence in the teaching of gymnastics and standards have improved. Where teaching is good, expectations of performance and behaviour are high. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 2, however, where expectations were low and learning outcomes unclear, pupils' progress was only just satisfactory. Most teachers have developed good teaching methods and ensure that lessons have pace and that pupils build on learned skills. All teachers pay appropriate attention to health and safety issues

during physical education lessons. The teachers have high expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour and manage them well. This helps to engender a sense of responsibility within pupils and helps them to develop social skills as they work together. Teachers use their assistants effectively. In several lessons, the general progress would not have been so good had it not been for the skills of the teaching assistants. Their ability to observe and intervene where necessary allows teachers to concentrate on their class and to deliver uninterrupted lessons.

153. The leadership and management of physical education are good, and appropriate issues for development are identified within the subject's development plan. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities offers pupils further opportunities to develop their skills. The accommodation for physical education is satisfactory, although the use of the hall after morning play is restricted because of arrangements for school lunches and this restricts the number of occasions on which the hall can be used to develop physical education skills. An outside hard-play area and, in the summer, a grassed field offer adequate facilities for games and athletics, but their use is governed by weather conditions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. By the end of Year 2, standards in religious education are in line with the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above those expected. The school has maintained the strengths noted in the previous inspection, and progress has improved in Years 3 to 6.

155. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the special nature of religious objects and people. Teachers develop these concepts through well-planned activities, such as a visit from the local priest who talked about his job in connection with 'special people' to pupils in Year 1. In Year 2, pupils develop an understanding of special books and their importance to people of different faiths. In one lesson, for example, pupils were learning about the Sikh Holy Book of Guru Granth Sahib and the Sikh belief that all are equal. Pupils know that the Bible has two main sections and that the New Testament contains stories about Jesus in it. Pupils in Year 2 have good opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding in a variety of religious contexts and also to develop their writing skills whilst recording findings on, for example, the parable of the wise and foolish man, the Psalms and the Ten Commandments. They have a satisfactory understanding of stories from the Bible, including the Christmas story, Moses crossing the Red Sea, and Jonah and the whale. They are beginning to develop an understanding of other faiths, such as Sikhism, Islam and Judaism.

156. By the end of Year 6, pupils are knowledgeable about the main events in the life of Jesus. They know the Easter story and can explain the symbolism of the Last Supper and the crucifix. They understand that significant events have been recorded from different standpoints. So, for example, pupils have identified differences in the accounts of the Christmas story as it occurs in the Gospels of St Luke and St Matthew. They have a good understanding of religious ceremonies. During the inspection, pupils were learning about the Holy Communion. They understood the routine of the service and the appropriate terminology such as 'pall', 'corporal', 'altar', 'paten' and 'chalice'. There was a good level of interest as two pupils in the class had been confirmed and could talk about their own experiences. Pupils wanted to know about confirmation in other churches and comparisons were made by others who attended the Salvation Army Church. Work was neatly carried out in the form of sketches of the altar and the use of key words to help in their descriptions of the service. Work in religious education is linked effectively to work undertaken in art and design, history, geography, music, and design and technology. For example, pupils made good progress in

both art and design and religious education as they designed their own Rangoli and Mehndi patterns as part of their work on routines and patterns connected with the theme of 'exploring'.

157. The overall quality of the teaching is good and pupils learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, helped by their own commitment and belief, are able to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. There are good opportunities for the development of literacy skills within religious education. Planning is good throughout, and the school has a good scheme of work developed from the locally agreed syllabus. Expectations are good overall, teachers make learning outcomes clear and make use of key words to support their pupils' written work. The coordinator has organised useful resources, books, pictures and artefacts to support learning. Knowledge and understanding are enhanced through visits out of school and visitors coming in to school. Last term, for example, pupils in Year 6 attended the Open Door Project at Lichfield Cathedral, and they have also visited the local Sikh Temple. Younger pupils also learn well through visits and visitors. They attend a Christingle service and local ministers from the Salvation Army and the United Reformed and Methodist churches are regular visitors to the school. The teachers are good at helping pupils to see the relevance of what they are learning. In a good lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils had to compare the parable of the Good Samaritan with a similar one in a modern setting. They understood the context well and were able to describe the feelings and fears associated with the characters involved. Many pupils had comments to make when comparing the two stories and were also able to make sensible suggestions for the ending. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. A portfolio of pupils' annotated work provides a good resource to support assessment.

158. The management of religious education is good. The coordinator is involved at a local level in the production of teaching materials and also supports teachers in local schools. The scheme of work provides a comprehensive coverage and the coordinator has identified appropriate areas of development to address through the school development plan.