

INSPECTION REPORT

GOOD SHEPHERD RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103716

Headteacher: Mr Dominic Collins

Reporting inspector: Mr Andy Bond
17263

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th June 2002

Inspection number: 196198

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spring Road Foleshill Coventry
Postcode:	CV6 7FN
Telephone number:	0247 668 9392
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father John Batthula
Date of previous inspection:	7 th July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17263	Andy Bond	Registered inspector	Geography	What sort of school is it? Results and achievements How well pupils are taught
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How the school works in partnership with parents
7593	John Collier	Team inspector	English Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development English as an additional language
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Science History	Assessment
12172	Wendy Knight	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities Equal opportunities Special educational needs
27369	Carolyn Powell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design	
25771	Peter Sandall	Team inspector	Physical education Mathematics	How well the school is led and managed.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of pupils on roll	331, including nursery children (larger than other primary schools)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	25% (above average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	3.3% (higher than most schools)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	35% (above the national average)

(The majority of these pupils have basic difficulties with their literacy and numeracy skills).

Good Shepherd Roman Catholic Primary School provides education for children from the ages of three to eleven. It largely serves the Coventry wards of Foleshill and Longford, which include some areas of social and economic deprivation. Only a small number of pupils leave or join the school part way through the school year. The vast majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds but a very small percentage have Asian or black backgrounds. There are 11 children for whom English is an additional language; the majority of these are in the Foundation Stage. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Good Shepherd provides pupils with a sound education. Pupils attain below average standards by the end of years 2 and 6 but they are improving. Pupils generally make sound progress. In the nursery and reception classes children make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall but is generally good in the Foundation Stage¹ and infant department. The headteacher provides the school with dedicated leadership. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The fostering of personal development which makes a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The consistently good quality of teaching and learning in the infant classes.
- The good learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage.
- The care arrangements for pupils' welfare.
- The positive involvement of parents in the work of the school.
- The effectiveness of financial planning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The evaluation of school performance, and taking effective action to target identified weaknesses.
- The use of assessment to inform future planning.
- The role of subject co-ordinators.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. Since that time it has made insufficient progress in addressing the areas of weakness identified in the last report. Issues related to the role of the subject co-ordinator, assessment and school development planning have been only partially addressed. Standards have risen steadily in the infants and improvements have been effected in the Foundation Stage but standards have fallen by the end of the junior stage in English, mathematics and science. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards have improved throughout the school, but

¹ Foundation Stage – nursery and reception classes.

in design and technology they have fallen to a low standard. Teaching and learning have improved. There is only a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and good or better teaching has increased.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	E	D	C
Mathematics	C	D	E*	E
Science	C	D	E	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table sets out the Year 6 results in National Curriculum tests for 2001. They show that results were below average in English, well below in science and in the lowest five per cent nationally for mathematics. Compared with similar schools, the results for English were average but in mathematics and science they were well below average.

The standards achieved by the present Year 6 pupils are slightly better than those of last year's group of pupils. In English, mathematics and science they are judged to be below average.

Last year, standards in National Curriculum tests and tasks for Year 2 pupils were well below average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. In teacher assessments science was well below average. The present Year 2 pupils are judged to be attaining below average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Children make generally good progress in nursery and reception, but even so standards are below average for the age-group by the start of Year 1.

Boys and girls achieve fairly similar results in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 but boys' results have been improving faster than girls'. In Year 6, girls achieve higher standards than boys in English, but in mathematics and science results are fairly similar. All pupils generally make sound progress.

Standards are improving steadily in the infants and the school is progressively getting closer to average standards. In the juniors, standards fell quite significantly in 2000 and 2001 to a low level in mathematics and in science. Inspection evidence shows that this trend is being reversed and standards are beginning to improve. In all other subjects, standards are broadly average, except for design and technology, where standards are low and progress is unsatisfactory. In art and design standards are below average by Year 6. There has been a rise in standards in ICT, which is now average by Year 6.

The school has very ambitious targets for pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2002. On the evidence gained from inspection they are unlikely to achieve these high levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are really enthusiastic about the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour at break-times and in lessons is of a high standard. Pupils respect other's points of view.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Relationships are excellent. Pupils care for each other. They use their initiative well when given opportunities.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Sound

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

The quality of teaching and learning is sound throughout the school. It is generally good in the nursery and reception classes and consistently good in the infant classes. Over half of all lessons observed during the inspection were judged good or better. All pupils' needs are met appropriately, including those pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Only a very small number of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory, largely because the teachers did not match work appropriately for pupils and this resulted in pupils making insufficient progress. Teachers manage pupils very well in lessons, ensuring that they concentrate and settle well to the tasks set. Learning support assistants give pupils good support in small group situations by helping to improve their skills and increase their knowledge. Generally pupils work hard because teachers' expectations are high, although some teachers in the juniors set tasks that are not well matched to differing levels of ability within the class. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy and skills in ICT are generally well taught to enable pupils to make progress in their learning. The quality of teachers' marking is variable and could give pupils more direction on how to improve. Mathematics teaching is good and has improved in recent times. English teaching is generally sound but stronger in infant classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound overall. The learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are good. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are also good. There are weaknesses in the design and technology curriculum, which result in failure to meet statutory requirements. The school ensures that all pupils are given equal opportunities to learn and make progress.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound overall. Pupils are properly supported. The school has made appropriate progress in implementing the new Code of Practice.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound overall. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are given good support in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The school fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Moral guidance is excellent.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Assessment procedures have improved but information gained from assessment could be used to better effect.
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Parents have a high opinion of the school. They respect the headteacher and the staff. Good links have been formed with parents and a good number help in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall. The headteacher gives good leadership but needs to focus more on raising standards. He receives good support from the deputy headteacher. Co-ordinators fulfil their roles properly but lack some opportunities to develop their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound overall. Governors are committed to the school. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but they could be involved more in the construction of the school development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school does not evaluate its performance thoroughly enough. Weaknesses, particularly in standards, are not analysed and rectified quickly enough.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial resources are used effectively. The school knows how to get good value for money from expenditure and improve its provision for pupils.

The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff and a good number of learning support assistants. The accommodation is good, although better use could be made of the junior library. Learning resources are generally sound.

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 • The approachability of staff and the way they deal with problems • The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible • The good behaviour of their children in school • The good progress their children make in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more interesting range of activities outside school • A more consistent approach to homework

The inspection team share the very positive views of parents, although pupils' progress is judged to be sound rather than good. A very small percentage of parents who replied to the questionnaire felt that the school could provide a better range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors disagree and judge extra-curricular activities to be good. However, inspectors agree with parents' concerns about homework. The inspectors believe that the school could do more to support pupils' reading at home and increase the level and consistency of homework towards the end of the junior stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1 Children begin their education in the nursery on a part-time basis. They enter with standards that are generally well below average, having had little or no pre-school playgroup experience. Almost all of these children continue, on a full-time basis, into the reception classes the following year. Children generally make good progress because the quality of teaching, although not consistent, is good overall. Even so, by the time children are ready to begin Year 1 the majority have not reached the Early Learning Goals², which indicates generally below average standards.

2 Children in nursery and reception enjoy coming to school and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They behave well, concentrate on activities and work well together. Although children need more opportunities to develop their level of independence, they are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. Standards in communication, language and literacy are below those expected, as are children's levels of mathematical development. The majority of children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area despite some well-focused teaching and good learning. In the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, most children are not expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Again, progress is generally good, although more opportunities for musical and outdoor play experiences would help to develop children's skills more effectively.

3 The National Curriculum test results for 2001 showed that the standards reached at the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics were well below average and in writing they were below average. Teacher assessment in science also showed well below average attainment. Too few pupils reached the higher levels, especially in reading and mathematics, to bring the school performance up to average. However, compared with similar schools, reading and writing were average and mathematics was below average. Evidence from the inspection reveals a slightly better picture because standards are now judged to be below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There is a gradual trend of steady improvement over the last three years and unvalidated test results in 2002 appear to be continuing this trend. The good quality of teaching and learning is having an effect on standards, together with teachers' realisation that they can expect higher levels of performance from their more able pupils. Progress in the infants is generally sound.

4 At the end of Year 6, the National Curriculum tests for 2001 showed that standards in English and science were well below average and for mathematics they were very low, in the lowest five per cent nationally. Over 70 per cent of pupils gained at least average levels in English and science but only 42 per cent reached average levels in mathematics. Few pupils achieved the higher levels. In English 17 per cent reached level 5, compared with the national average of 28 per cent, but in mathematics and science only nine per cent of pupils achieved the higher level. This falls well short of the national percentage of 25 per cent for mathematics and 34 per cent for science. In 1999 test results at the end of Key Stage 2 were average.

5 Compared with schools where pupils are drawn from similar social and economic backgrounds, results were average in English but well below average in mathematics and science. The trend over the last two years has been one of declining standards in mathematics and science, but in English standards have remained fairly consistent.

² The expected level for children of average attainment to reach by the end of the reception year.

However, the school's unvalidated test results for 2002 suggest that a much higher percentage of Year 6 pupils are reaching average levels.

6 The school is working hard to improve on the poor set of results in 2001, and inspection evidence shows that the present pupils in Year 6 are doing better. Standards in English, mathematics and science are judged to be below average, and this represents a significant improvement, especially in mathematics where a higher percentage of more able pupils are working at a more advanced level. Progress through the junior stage in all three subjects is sound.

7 School analysis of test results has, in the past, been weak. However, there is more awareness of a need to pinpoint weaknesses in pupils' performance and take effective action to remedy areas where pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped. A numeracy consultant has been engaged to give advice to the school and help identify reasons for pupils' low test results in mathematics. This advice is proving effective and teachers are beginning to fine tune their teaching in order to concentrate on identified weaknesses in mathematics provision. One very positive feature is the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics which was judged to be good throughout the school. However, there is still much to be done if standards in Year 6 are to be raised to the national level in English, mathematics and science. Assessment systems, although providing a sound level of information in the core subjects³, are not used effectively to set realistic targets for pupils to increase their achievement levels. In English, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their 'free writing' and in science pupils are not involved in investigative activities frequently enough to gain the deeper understanding necessary to improve standards. The school sets targets for improvement at the end of Year 6 but they are not always based on data which is accurate. Although it was close to its predicted percentage for pupils reaching average levels or better in English in 2001, in mathematics it fell well short of its targets.

8 There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in National Curriculum tests. Boys in Year 2 are doing better than previously in reading and writing; in mathematics, boys do slightly better than girls but this is fairly typical of the national picture. In Year 6, girls do better than boys in English, which fits with the national scene, whereas in mathematics and science there is little difference.

9 In English, pupils' listening skills are sound but speaking skills are generally below average throughout the school. Many pupils are keen to express their views but struggle to find the right words. Standards in reading are also below average, although technically many pupils read competently. Difficulties arise from pupils' lack of understanding of the text. Although higher attaining pupils are good readers, average and below average attaining pupils struggle to explain the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. In writing, standards in both key stages are below average. By Year 2, pupils print in a consistent handwriting style but are not at the stage of joining letters. Most pupils are extending sentences by using 'and' and 'because'. Pupils generally use full stops and capital letters accurately but lower attaining pupils have some difficulty with spelling words, although they make sensible attempts. In the juniors, pupils use punctuation well in written work but their use of imaginative vocabulary is limited. There are too few opportunities to express themselves in free writing. Too much work set by teachers, especially towards the end of the key stage, is tightly controlled by a framework of copying and slotting in single words into the text.

³ Core subjects are English, mathematics and science

10 In mathematics, standards are below average throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils acquire the basic skills of numeracy and gain knowledge but sometimes lack the deeper understanding to apply these to tasks. Teachers are, however, challenging the higher attaining pupils by setting more difficult work in investigations. Improvements in the quality of teaching are gradually making an impact in Key Stage 2, although in Year 6 there are still weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially in investigative work.

11 In science, standards are also generally below average throughout the school. Pupils have a sound body of knowledge but this is often at the expense of understanding and skills of investigation. Work set by the teacher does not always take account of the range of ability in the class and as a result, the higher attaining pupils are not challenged. They record their results in the same way and do not have opportunities to express their own opinions.

12 Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now judged to be average by Years 2 and 6. The progress made by pupils is sound. The provision of a computer suite, learning assistant support, regularly timetabled lessons and an increase in staff expertise has had a positive effect on raising standards.

13 In design and technology, standards have fallen to a low level and pupils now make unsatisfactory progress. There is a weakness in the school's understanding of the technology element and most work completed by pupils is simply design orientated. The school's scheme of work is not detailed enough to enable pupils to make consistent progress throughout the school.

14 In art and design, standards are average by the end of Year 2 but have fallen since the last inspection to below average by Year 6. The skills are not practised regularly enough in Key Stage 2 and work is linked with other subjects to suit the topic being taught rather than art and design as a discrete subject. Progress is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2.

15 Standards in music are broadly average. In this subject the change in National Curriculum requirements has made it more difficult for pupils to achieve above average standards. However, inspectors believe standards are fairly similar to those reported in the last inspection when standards were judged to be above average. In all the other subjects inspected, geography, history and physical education, standards are average and pupils make sound progress. The school has made appropriate progress in developing these subjects since the last inspection.

16 Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as the rest of the pupils because of the good support received in school alongside additional support from a visiting teacher for two sessions per week. Learning support assistants and their class teachers include them fully in the discussions that take place so that they can practise their skills and gain in confidence.

17 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. In those lessons where work is matched to their individual targets they often make good progress, and similarly they make significant progress when the teacher or an learning support assistant gives them specific support. However, in some lessons work is inappropriate – such as copying texts from the board – and limited progress is made. In such lessons pupils are often unable to read the text, do not understand what they are doing and cannot achieve the objectives. They also make little progress when they are not encouraged to be independent, and rely on others to make decisions for them. Nevertheless, there is evidence of pupils' needs being dealt with and slow achievement being accelerated.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18 Good Shepherd's pupils are really enthusiastic about their school. For them it is a happy, secure place where they can learn and play. They enjoy being with their friends and teachers. Ninety-six per cent of the parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire and all of those who spoke to the inspection team agree with this very positive judgement. The school has strengthened this area of its work since the last inspection when it was reported to be good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now judged to be very good and relationships are now excellent.

19 In the nursery and reception classes, children are keen to learn and standards of behaviour are very good. Relationships between children and adults are very good. Children grow in confidence because of the praise and encouragement they receive from the teaching and support staff.

20 Pupils' relationships with each other and with all the adults who work with them are excellent. Pupils refer affectionately to their teachers and the support staff when they talk about their work. Visitors are made welcome. Pupils of all ages are polite. They, for example, hold doors open and are always willing to show newcomers the way around the school. Regular visitors such as the basketball coach confirm that pupils are "great to work with".

21 Pupils know, understand and accept the school's behaviour code. They have confidence in it and believe that it very rarely lets them down. They feel that there is very little bad behaviour and they are confident that bullying, on the rare occasions that it does occur, is quickly sorted out. No bullying or bad behaviour was seen during the course of the inspection. Pupils respect each other's points of view and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are treated no differently from anyone else.

22 Lessons invariably proceed according to plan, without any time being wasted dealing with distractions arising from bad behaviour. Pupils work hard both on their own and in pairs and groups. Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, worked together on a multi-media presentation about Coventry Cathedral. They learned from each other and worked together to solve problems. Year 2 pupils made very good progress in a lesson on ways in which people change as they grow, because they concentrated throughout the session. Sometimes pupils do not seize opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, but this has as much to do with the way that they are taught as it has to do with any lack of initiative on their part. The whole school mass to celebrate the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul was a model of excellent behaviour as pupils reflected, sang and prayed, both together and on their own.

23 Break-times are happy, social occasions with all sorts of games going on. Some pupils play football and basketball whilst others busy themselves with a variety of skipping, running and chasing games or playing Connect Four. A recently introduced rota system ensures that everyone has a chance to use the play equipment. Those who want to be less active enjoy the outdoor space or just sit and chat with each other and their supervisors.

24 Pupils really care for each other. In the playground, for example, anyone who is hurt or upset in any way is immediately taken to an adult for attention. At the end of one day, one pupil in Year 3, without prompting, helped another who had an injured arm to put her chair away and checked that she could cope with her school bag. Years 1 and 2 pupils listened sympathetically and supportively to each other as they suggested events and people that they should remember in their prayers.

25 Pupils enjoy responsibility. They collect attendance registers and every class has a rota of jobs and roles. Everyone helps to keep the school clean and tidy. Older pupils operate equipment during assemblies, serve at masses and distribute playground equipment at break and lunchtimes. Year 6 pupils are pleased to help look after younger pupils during lunchtimes. The house captains take their roles very seriously and there is general agreement that the newly formed school council is a good idea. Some of the older pupils, however, wonder what impact the council will actually have on the running of the school.

26 Pupils enjoy seeing each other succeed. In a Year 3 geography class about the weather in different places around the world, there was spontaneous clapping for a pupil who wrote a particularly interesting holiday postcard "from the Mediterranean". In assemblies everybody warmly applauds those who receive certificates and are praised for their hard work and achievements.

27 Attendance, which is in line with national averages, is satisfactory. Overall punctuality is satisfactory, with any problems which do arise confined to a small group of pupils. Most lessons start and finish on time, although some reception classes finish early in order for the children to wash their hands and prepare for lunch. There have been no exclusions during the last school year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

28 The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is judged to be sound overall. In the Foundation Stage it is generally good and in the infants it is consistently good. In the juniors, teaching is sound, but there are examples of good teaching taking place in many classes. During the inspection period, 54 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better and eight per cent of these were very good. Ninety-seven per cent of lessons were sound or better and just three per cent were judged to be unsatisfactory. In lessons where unsatisfactory teaching and learning were observed, the learning objectives were not clearly defined and were poorly matched to pupils' ability levels. Pupils did not make sufficient progress in their learning because tasks were either too complex or not challenging enough, so they lost interest and did not persevere with the tasks set. In one lesson the pupils were not sure of what was expected of them, whilst in another the pace of the lesson was too slow and little was accomplished in the allotted time.

29 The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Good or better teaching has improved by eight per cent overall and unsatisfactory teaching has fallen by 13 per cent. Teachers work hard to ensure that planning is thorough and is drawn from the school scheme of work for each individual subject. Learning objectives⁴ are usually identified and pupils know what they are required to do. The pace of lessons has improved so that pupils generally accomplish more in the time available. Although the school has made some progress in making marking and homework more consistent throughout the school, there are still variations in individual classes. The teaching of mathematics has improved and is now judged to be good throughout the school. This has become a major factor in improved learning and is helping to lift standards in mathematics, particularly in the junior classes.

30 In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are generally good but there is some variation between the two reception classes. Teachers and support staff manage classes very well and use regular praise and encouragement to build up children's confidence. Children's reasoning skills are being developed well because teachers encourage them to

⁴ The learning that the teacher expects pupils to achieve in the lesson.

investigate and ask questions. Teachers are adept at assessing children's performance regularly and this enables them to set appropriately matched work in most lessons. Weaknesses in teaching lie in over-directed teacher activities and a narrow range of experiences being provided for pupils. Some day-to-day planning is not closely matched enough to the recommended 'stepping stones'⁵ and this results in a mismatch of work for some children in the reception class.

31 In the infant department, teaching and learning are good and this has resulted in a steady improvement of standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Seventy-three per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better, of which 20 per cent were very good. At the beginning of the lesson, teachers often reflect on previous work, especially in English and mathematics. This refreshes pupils' memory before embarking on a new concept. The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are taught well. This was demonstrated in a Year 1 literacy lesson when the teacher introduced letter combinations that make particular sounds. She questioned the pupils closely to ensure that they understood, then provided them with a good range of word game activities to apply their skills and knowledge. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally high and work is matched to each level of ability within the class. In a Year 1/2 numeracy lesson, the work for the higher attaining pupils was challenging. Using coins of different values they were expected to assemble sums of money such as £4.35. They had to draw on their reasoning skills and concentrate carefully on the task in order to arrive at a correct answer. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace, with teachers telling pupils periodically how long they have left to complete their work. Learning resources are generally used effectively. In a Year 2 geography lesson, the teacher began by comparing an aerial photograph with a large scale plan of the same area. Pupils quickly gained an understanding of the differences and similarities between the two representations.

32 Throughout the school the management of pupils is of a high standard. This is, in part, due to the prevailing school atmosphere, which promotes care and consideration, as well as teachers' skills of class management. Teachers expect pupils to listen and concentrate when they are giving instructions at the start of lessons. When tasks have been set, teachers move around the classroom making informal assessment of the quality of work and ensuring that pupils persevere with tasks. They encourage pupils to collaborate and almost invariably this is successful in promoting learning through discussion and sharing ideas. Good teachers are alert to behaviour that might result in some form of disruption within the lesson. In a Year 5 physical education lesson, which focused on rounders' skills, the teacher cautioned two pupils about their lack of application to the task; when the warning failed to make a positive impact, she broke up the pairing and found new partners, so ensuring that a more mature approach would be applied. However, teachers could capitalise more on pupils' very good behaviour and willingness to learn by providing more opportunities for investigation and research. There are few examples of pupils using the library to support their topic work or the Internet being used to further their own knowledge.

33 Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to lessons throughout the school. They are fully involved in lessons, either through direct teaching of groups or helping with the management of the class. They work well with teachers and form good relationships with pupils, especially lower attaining pupils in small group activities. The help and encouragement they give is valuable and enables pupils to remain focused on their learning.

34 The skills of ICT are taught effectively in timetabled lessons in the computer suite but the application of these skills to other subjects is less well developed in the classroom. There are few examples of ICT-generated work in pupils' science and English books.

⁵ The intermediate stages of learning towards the Early Learning Goals in nursery and reception classes.

35 Teachers mark most exercise books conscientiously, although there is some evidence of unmarked and unfinished work. Marking in Year 5 is generally good with some useful evaluative comments. Teachers praise good work but in general the comments do not tell pupils what they have to do next in order to improve. There is a programme for the setting of homework which is followed by most teachers. Parents of older pupils who attended the parents' meeting were of the opinion that their children did not receive enough homework to prepare them for secondary school. Inspectors share their views. Parents are expected to provide their own reading activities for their children at home because the school policy is not to send reading books home. In general, this approach is not popular with parents, although many take their pupils to the local public library and encourage reading at home. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading can be damaged by this approach because the reading of one book to a successful conclusion may well be fragmented over a period of time and result in a loss of interest.

36 In junior lessons, teachers do not always match the work closely enough to the different levels of ability within their classes. There were some good examples during the inspection of well-matched work, for example in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when pupils interpreted data and used a Carroll diagram to record their findings. Tasks were well tailored by the teacher so that each group of pupils had to think carefully about each criterion before placing it into the correct section. However, evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that too many whole-class tasks are set which do not take account of a wide range of abilities. Too many literacy tasks in English, history, science and geography revolve around 'cloze procedure'⁶ activities which stifle pupils' creativity and do not challenge their thinking. Pupils absorb knowledge well and readily recall information learned from previous lessons but the application of skills is less well developed because this is not promoted as well in junior classes.

37 In some classes pupils with special educational needs are set work across the curriculum which is well matched to overcoming their precise difficulties. However, in too many lessons the work is identical for all pupils and those with special educational needs are limited by what they understand of the texts, tasks and explanations provided. Moreover, marking of the work of pupils with special educational needs is often unhelpful either because all errors are identified and pupils are deterred by seeing so many mistakes, or their independence is discouraged by the teacher providing all the corrections. Too little English work in pupils' books promotes independence in terms of recording. Too many worksheets requiring single word answers and too few opportunities to express their ideas freely in their own ways are provided. When reading, although strategies are taught, there is insufficient consolidation to ensure confident application of these to unknown words in other texts. Although classroom strategies are given on individual education plans they are not often precise enough to ensure that pupils' needs are consistently the focus in lessons. Where their improvements are appropriately praised, pupils are encouraged to continue making an effort, but too much unfinished work in exercise books is discouraging and unhelpful to the pupils concerned. Where teachers focus their own support or that of learning support assistants and additional teachers on groups containing pupils with special educational needs better understanding results and pupils often fulfil tasks more successfully. Even so, adults are not always ensuring pupils take responsibility for as much of their learning as they can, and giving them strategies for tackling subsequent work more confidently.

⁶ Cloze procedure – an exercise in which pupils insert missing words periodically into a written text.

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

38 At the time of the last inspection the balance of the curriculum was judged to have many shortcomings, resulting in a key issue requiring revision of provision. The key issue has been partially addressed. All subjects appear on the timetable and there is some guidance on what is to be taught and when. However, there are still anomalies in the provision and guidance in a few subjects is of poor quality.

39 There are good learning opportunities for children in the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum covers all the specified areas of learning through a good range of activities, both indoor and outdoor. Although learning activities are well planned and teachers agree a similar content and approach, the teaching actually delivered to children varies. In one reception class, children are not given sufficient opportunities to investigate and use their creative skills and as a result do not make the same good progress as in the other Foundation Stage classes.

40 Timetabled lessons do meet the recommended time for primary schools, but in practice there are factors which mean that the actual sessions fall short of the recommended minimum. Some classes stop short of the finishing time, in order to get ready for lunchtime. Class assemblies can take up to 20 minutes, so reducing the length of some literacy sessions. A regular monthly mass takes approximately one whole literacy or numeracy lesson in twenty, reducing the total time devoted to English and mathematics over the school year. The school should consider ways of making up this time.

41 All National Curriculum subjects appear on the timetable during the year, but class teachers allocate time to each differently so in practice, even in the core subjects of English and mathematics, actual time spent varies. Although there are plans for art and design and design and technology, they are not sufficiently well structured or detailed to ensure the subjects are covered adequately. Time assigned as design and technology is often actually art and design. Because of a misconception about National Curriculum design and technology the school is failing to meet statutory requirements in this subject. Although senior staff and subject co-ordinators are expected to review provision, irregularities have not been picked up.

42 There is appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs. Additional classroom support and selective short-term withdrawal are used to meet pupils' needs. Arrangements are sufficiently flexible so that changing needs of groups or individuals can be met by altering provision accordingly. Because of the school's very good ethos in valuing individuals, all pupils have equal opportunities within the curriculum irrespective of race or gender.

43 Pupils whose first language is not English and who are not yet proficient in its use receive good support from a visiting teacher. She spends time each week with the pupils and sometimes withdraws them from class to concentrate on particular needs. With one pupil, for example, she works on the past tenses of English verbs. This helps him to make good progress because, back in class, he is able to cope with the work more confidently. She keeps thorough, analytical records of the work covered and the progress being made.

44 The school has recognised the need to identify gifted and talented pupils. A register has recently been set up from information provided by teachers and a co-ordinator has been appointed but the school has not yet made a decision on the type of provision it hopes to put in place.

45 Provision for personal, health and social education is currently informal, through religious education, assemblies and science lessons. The present arrangements satisfactorily promote personal and social skills, and healthy eating and exercise are suitably taught in science. The school participates in the 'National Fruit Scheme', which encourages children in infant and reception classes to choose fruit for their mid-morning snacks. The school nurse currently provides sex education for Year 6, and drugs awareness is appropriately offered through visiting police officers. The school is part of a diocesan project to introduce a more systematic programme which will become provision for all the local Roman Catholic schools and will include sex education.

46 There are suitable links with the community. Foundation Stage children have participated in projects such as 'Together into Literacy' and the latest group of parent volunteers are preparing story sacks. Effective links with secondary schools ensure smooth transition for Year 6 pupils. Pupils appreciate the bridging units they have done in literacy and numeracy lessons which they will take with them to continue in their new schools. There are also useful curricular links with the adjacent primary school with whom, for example, they share a faith week. Good links have been formed with the University of Warwick and students regularly undertake properly supervised training at the school.

47 Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Junior pupils have the opportunity to take part in choir, steel band, guitar, computer, library, netball, football, athletics, badminton and cross-country clubs. Infant pupils have a separate choir and the chance to do general sport. Pupils in Year 6 like the range of clubs, and most pupils attend at least one. Competitive sport is part of the school's provision, with plenty of opportunities to play in football and netball matches against other schools – the netball team played the neighbouring primary school during inspection week. The school arranges many visits to places of interest and invites visitors to school to support the class topics. Pupils recently enjoyed a 'Science Week', for instance. Year 6 pupils felt they had benefited from the outdoor education residential trip.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

48 As it was at the last inspection, the overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The mission statement sets out clearly the Christian values that underpin all that the school does and there are very many opportunities in classrooms and during assemblies and masses for pupils to pray and reflect on their experiences. Spiritual development is therefore very good. Candles are lit and there is always a quiet, reverential atmosphere during the acts of worship with pupils given time to think about the theme for the week, whether it is the nature of friendship, as in an assembly for the younger pupils, or the religious obligations in 'Following Jesus' in a whole-school gathering. In their class assemblies, pupils often ask for particular prayers. During the inspection, the anniversary of a missing schoolgirl's fourteenth birthday occurred and, in a particularly moving tribute to her, one pupil asked if everyone could include her in their prayers that day.

49 Provision for the pupils' moral development is excellent. Rewards are offered to foster correct behaviour and effort but in a way they are unnecessary, because pupils instinctively know what is right and wrong and what is expected of them. This is because of the very high expectations that permeate the school and the orderly atmosphere in which pupils are allowed to develop. Ninety-two per cent of parents who replied to the questionnaire agreed that behaviour in the school is good and the consensus at the parents' meeting was that the school is an orderly and well-disciplined community. Moral issues are discussed in assemblies and in class lessons. Year 6 pupils, for example, explore what is valuable to them and compare the importance of love, care and freedom with money and

possessions. The needs of others are very well understood and regular collections for charities reinforce pupils' awareness. The support that the school gives to an orphanage in India is particularly significant but local needs are also addressed with harvest gifts being distributed to disadvantaged people, for example.

50 Provision for social development is very good. Ninety-five per cent of parents who replied to the questionnaire thought that the school was enabling children to become mature and responsible. Pupils are given good opportunities to co-operate in lessons, for example when composing music in small groups in Years 5 and 6. They have responsibilities in their classes and older pupils take visitors around the school and have particular jobs that they carry out conscientiously. The oldest pupils take it in turn to set out equipment on the infants' playground and they act as friends to anyone needing help at break-time. There are very many opportunities to socialise outside the classroom, during the out-of-school clubs and in sports matches with other schools, during musical events at neighbouring schools and when visitors come, for example, during 'Book Week', to tell stories. A residential visit to Alton Castle for the oldest pupils offers a particularly good opportunity to develop relationships in a setting away from school. A school council has recently been established but is not fully operational yet, having met just once.

51 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. It has improved since the last inspection because pupils are offered more insight now into the nature of our multi-cultural society. An appreciation of other faiths and traditions is fostered not only through religious education, but also through geography. Year 6 pupils, for example, have come to know some basic facts about Islam and Buddhism through a study of Pakistan. These pupils are also about to share their religious traditions and practices with pupils in a neighbouring school during a 'Faith Week'. When this was tried previously it was very successful, with each school arranging tours of various places of worship. The celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee has given the school an ideal opportunity to explore British cultural traditions and they have embraced it wholeheartedly, to the benefit of the pupils. History and geography also contribute well to an understanding of local culture. A study of 'Coventry during the War', for example, fascinates pupils and they appreciate the horrors of the bombing raids and the scars that have been left in the city, especially around the Cathedral. The last inspection report criticised the lack of opportunities for pupils to experience the literature, music and art from around the world. Provision is better now. In literacy lessons, teachers often use stories from other countries and, in music in Year 4, pupils listened to some African instruments being played and realised that they were similar to guitars. Art and design, however, is a weak subject in Key Stage 2 and pupils' knowledge of famous artists is limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52 The governors and staff of Good Shepherd Primary school take good care of all their pupils. This aspect of school life remains a strength, as it was at the last inspection. They ensure that the school is kept clean, tidy, secure and safe. There are regular health and safety inspections of the whole site. The site manager is particularly vigilant and there are good formal and informal systems for dealing with problems, as and when they arise. Risk assessments are an integral part of planning for school trips. Accident and incident records are comprehensive and up to date. There are two qualified first aiders on site throughout the school day and a number of other staff have basic first aid training. Child protection procedures are good and involve all the appropriate local agencies. All staff have had appropriate training. The school does not yet have a policy for Internet safety.

53 The school's arrangements for monitoring and encouraging attendance are satisfactory. It prides itself on its very good communications with parents and the wider

community. It therefore uses a variety of formal and informal means to deal with any attendance and punctuality problems that occur. When necessary the local education welfare officer, with whom there are close links, is called in to deal with more complex issues.

54 There is a well-established and well-understood whole school approach to discipline and behaviour. In every class there are displays, which spell out what Good Shepherd School expects of all its pupils. Staff constantly and gently encourage their pupils to work and play together in calm and orderly ways. Minor misdemeanours are dealt with promptly and firmly. The result is that behaviour in class is very good and everyone is able to get on with the important business of teaching and learning. There is little waste of time. In a nursery activity about journeys and space, for example, everyone remained busy throughout as they tackled a challenging variety of tasks and activities.

55 Everyone at Good Shepherd knows the pupils well. Teachers and support staff understand their pupils' personal and learning needs and encourage them, whatever their abilities, to do their best. The sign in a Year 2 classroom that reminds pupils always to 'try' typifies this approach. A good example of this very effective approach was a Year 5 ICT lesson, which involved some difficult work on the creation of a spreadsheet and word processing activities. It was designed and delivered in ways that made sure that everyone was able to make progress.

56 Stickers, house points and certificates are used to reward pupils for both effort and achievement in all aspects of school life. Teachers, support staff, the administration and site team and lunchtime supervisors use praise to encourage pupils to work hard and behave. The school has excellent anti-bullying strategies which are applied very effectively. A regular part of whole school assemblies is the recognition of pupils who have done particularly well in demonstrating good habits of work, consistent effort, helping others and displaying social skills such as courtesy and initiative.

57 Assessment procedures are satisfactory. There are a range of assessments, including statutory and non-statutory tests, for finding out what all groups of pupils already know, understand and can do. This information is being brought together into a computer program, along with teacher assessments, to enable the school to track the progress of pupils from year to year more effectively. This is an improvement from the last inspection. However, this only records the broad level within which pupils are working, and does not contain enough information about what aspects of each level pupils know and do not know. This information is passed between teachers at the end of the summer term and is used to form groups for the start of each new class, but does not have sufficient detail about what it is that each group needs to be taught next in order to improve. For example, there is little evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' books of it being used effectively at the start of the autumn term, when all groups of pupils start off by doing the same range of work. A local education authority numeracy consultant has successfully undertaken some analyses of test data in mathematics in order to find out which specific areas need to be addressed in order to raise standards. This is still at a very early stage of development and has not yet been applied to other subjects such as English and science.

58 Currently the use of assessment data is unsatisfactory because it is not used to determine appropriate starting points for pupils of differing levels of ability, particularly higher ability groups across the school. Useful systems of assessment, for example in science, geography and history, are being set up, but at present co-ordinators have limited information to identify developments that they need in order to raise standards. Target setting for individuals or groups of pupils is not sufficiently well established across the school to raise their awareness of what they must do in order to improve, or to identify what

teaching needs to focus on next to improve learning. Ongoing assessment through the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Most teachers give support and praise for pupils' efforts but there is little evaluation of how well they have done or what they need to do next in order to improve. These remain areas of improvement for the school.

59 There is a sound level of care for pupils with special educational needs. All staff know pupils well and take an active interest in them as individuals so their self-esteem is high and they are confident about overcoming their difficulties. Assessment arrangements correctly identify pupils who are underachieving and have recently been adjusted so that pupils' less rapid progress is considered at an earlier stage and Records of Concern are produced sooner. This has resulted in a higher number of pupils on the register of special educational needs but greater intervention to enable pupils to catch up at an earlier stage. However, the quality of the individual education plans and their resultant usefulness are variable. At best, targets are precise, short term, achievable and can be regularly tackled in lessons. Some, though, are too vague or broad to be useful, or they specify something of doubtful value, such as recognising the words required by a certain set of published books.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60 Good Shepherd's parents have great respect for the headteacher and the rest of the staff. They believe that the school is looked after by a devoted team of professionals who have the very best interests of their children at heart. They are confident that the school is helping their children to learn and develop. There is a home-school agreement to which everyone is committed. The school has maintained its strong partnership with parents since the last inspection.

61 The previous inspection team criticised the prospectus and governors' annual reports to parents because they did not meet legal requirements. The very latest editions of these official documents, completed during the inspection week, are well produced and contain all that they should do. A weekly newsletter keeps everyone up to date with what is going on in school. There are also notice boards around the school. Letters home ensure that parents get all the information they need about one-off events such as school trips and the Key Stage 2 and leavers' disco. At the beginning of every term, parents are sent an outline of what their children will be doing in school.

62 New parents and pupils are introduced to the school through a comprehensive programme of visits and briefing sessions. The school goes out of its way to ensure that newcomers settle into the community as quickly and happily as possible. The school is sensitive to the needs of ethnic minority families and works hard to ensure that they are fully involved in the school community.

63 Formal information about pupils' progress comes via two consultation meetings – the first in the autumn term and the second in the spring term – and an end of year report. The meetings are very well attended and the school makes special arrangements to see parents who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to get there. The reports give detailed, clear and personalised information about progress, particularly in numeracy, literacy and science, but they do not give clear advice on what pupils need to do in order to improve. There are no references to targets and national standards.

64 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their child throughout the period when the pupil is on the school's register of special educational needs. From the point when needs are identified, a pamphlet is provided giving clear information on who is involved in provision and what will be done for the child. Regular meetings are held with the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teacher and

parents are actively involved in assisting their child to make progress. The school is well informed about outside agencies which can help pupils and provides contacts when necessary. Any arrangements made take account of parents' wishes as well as educational principles.

65 Governors and staff are totally committed to working together with parents to ensure that pupils are happy and secure and get the best possible educational experiences from their time at Good Shepherd. The school works with the local authority to involve parents through schemes such as 'Together into Numeracy' and 'Together into Computing'. These schemes are well supported. They help parents to understand how their children learn and subsequently to help them help their children at home and in school. The 'Story Sack' initiative very successfully involves nursery and reception class parents in their children's earliest attempts to read.

66 There is an 'open door' policy, which means that parents are welcome in the school at almost any time. Teachers are always available to talk at the end of the school day and parents greatly appreciate the emphasis on informal contact. Ninety-nine per cent of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire feel comfortable about approaching the school. Parents confirm that problems ranging from their children's particular learning needs to very occasional bullying are dealt with quickly and sympathetically.

67 Parents are encouraged to support their children with homework tasks and their reading development. Although homework is set regularly, not all parents are content with the amount and range that is set, particularly those with children who are about to move on to secondary school. They also dislike the current arrangements whereby pupils are not allowed to bring books home from the school library. The inspection team agree with both these criticisms.

68 The school has, as yet, no formal means of canvassing parents' opinions on, for example, school developments. The school instead relies upon its extensive system of informal contacts and general communication through the parish community to keep in close contact with parents' points of view. The headteacher does, however, recognise the value of more formal methods such as surveys and is intending to introduce them in the near future.

69 A small number of parents are employed as support staff and around a dozen others regularly come into school to provide voluntary help in classrooms and around the school. They listen to pupils reading and help out in classrooms. Many other parents support with one-off events such as trips and sports days and early starts to watch England playing in the World Cup. They also attend major events such as whole school masses.

70 There is a very active and successful parents' and friends' association, which raises funds for extra equipment and provides practical help with work on, for example, the redevelopment of the nursery playground.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71 The school continues to be well led by the headteacher, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. He knows what he wants the school to achieve and all the staff share in these intentions and work hard in the interests of the pupils. He gives a positive lead on the pastoral and social ethos of the school, which is catholic in the widest sense. He is very successful in this area, being well supported by everyone connected with the school. However, the key priority of high standards is not strongly underlined in documentation. The aims of the school are laudable and are generally well met, but they do not focus sufficiently

on academic rigour. The quality of vision is commendable, but not enough attention is paid to the structures put in place to achieve it.

72 Governors are clearly committed to the school and are very supportive of the headteacher and his staff, appreciating their hard work and commitment. They are involved in the life and work of the school and rightly value its strengths, which are the very positive ethos and good relationships. They have taken reasoned decisions in an effort to improve standards, such as employing extra permanent staff to avoid the need to use occasional supply teachers. While they are aware that this has been successful in reducing expenditure and maintaining continuity for pupils, they do not know whether it has been effective in improving standards in mathematics in Year 6 through targeted support. They know that standards in mathematics in Year 6 are a concern, but think the target set this year will be reached, even though the staff are uncertain. The school meets all statutory requirements, with the exception of the design and technology curriculum. It has adopted the local education authority policy on race equality and inclusion.

73 The linking of individual governors to a curriculum subject is a positive move intended to give the governing body a better picture of the school's strengths and needs. There is some comparison of the school's results with those of comparable schools, but this is done by individual governors, rather than as an official audit of standards to see whether the school is giving good value educationally. While the governors approve the school development plan, they have little input into its construction. There is a tendency to believe that because the school has no problem maintaining its numbers it is therefore successful. While this is a good indicator, it is only one of many.

74 The school development plan now has success criteria so that improvements can be assessed. This was an area for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, these do not include an expectation of improving results in core subjects, even though this is a major challenge for the school. Areas for development are identified, but not the detailed strategies through which standards may be raised. There are no target percentages, for example at level 3 and level 5, to challenge higher attaining pupils.

75 The deputy headteacher has clear responsibilities and is involved well in school management. Her main task currently is to develop subject leadership, which is another key issue from the previous inspection. She is both enthusiastic and informed, and realises that subject action plans need to have a clearer focus on specific actions aimed at raising standards. The headteacher, deputy and senior management team meet regularly to discuss issues affecting all areas of the school, as each phase is represented, ensuring that all staff have a voice. The delegation of responsibilities to subject co-ordinators lacks defined outcomes, and there is currently insufficient understanding in some subjects of what needs doing to create improvement.

76 The headteacher mainly carries out the monitoring of teaching and learning; subject co-ordinators have limited opportunities to observe this directly. There are regular observations of teachers, with some perceptive feedback, although the comments focus on strengths rather than possible areas for development. Targets are, however, set through performance management. There are shortcomings in the systems to monitor the school's performance, to evaluate its strengths and in the follow-up action taken to ensure improvement. Where there has been monitoring, such as in mathematics, the outcomes have been used to make changes in the curriculum and teaching, and improvement is evident. Where there has not been the same input, for example in design and technology, the status of the subject has declined and standards have fallen. The recognition of strengths is also affected and so the sharing of good practice is not as efficient as it might be. Individually, senior managers and subject co-ordinators are committed to improvement,

but management systems do not build effectively enough on the hard work and goodwill of individual teachers.

77 Special educational needs are soundly managed. Since taking on the role, the teacher in charge has successfully administered the change over to the new Code of Practice, including providing relevant training for staff. She has made many useful contacts which enable her to make informed decisions about suitable provision and is steadily increasing her own knowledge of different needs.

78 Although the school has maintained high standards in areas such as pupils' personal development, partnership with parents, pupils' welfare and attitudes to school, it has not addressed the key issues from the last inspection thoroughly enough and is judged to have made insufficient progress. Issues relating to the development of the role of subject co-ordinators and assessment procedures have only been partially completed and more work is required to make these areas effective. At the beginning of the inspection the governors' annual report for parents did not meet the statutory requirements. This was addressed during the inspection week in preparation for the 2002 meeting scheduled for the following week. Key issues related to the building have been addressed successfully. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Unsatisfactory teaching has fallen to a very low level and good or better teaching has increased throughout the school. This augurs well for the school in the future.

79 The school has sound strategies in place for appraisal and the performance management of teachers. All teachers have three agreed priorities for development, linked to their subject area responsibility, raising the standards of pupils' work and improving their own teaching expertise. During the present school year teachers have focused successfully on improving their own skills in ICT and this has enabled the school to raise standards in the subject. The school, in its school development plan, has identified appropriate areas for improvement. Literacy, numeracy, science and ICT have been the key areas of focus with the expressed intention to raise standards. The Foundation Stage has been re-organised and further plans have been made to improve outdoor play provision. Personal, social and health education have been targeted and the site and environment facilities have been upgraded through a rolling maintenance programme. Financial and human resources are properly apportioned to priorities in an effort to continually improve school performance and the school is meeting with some success. However, the lack of a rigorous analytical review programme and of the setting of specific measurable targets has lessened the effectiveness of overall school improvement.

80 There is a good team spirit in the school. Teachers work hard and there is a strong commitment to school improvement. Teachers have accepted the recent advice given by the local authority numeracy consultant readily and their ability to change and try new approaches has been commendable. The analytical skills of the senior management team and co-ordinators need further development in order to channel this staff commitment into improved performance.

81 The deputy headteacher is a good role model for new teachers and gives effective advice and support which enhances classroom practice. New teachers are given good opportunities for training. Their performance is monitored closely and appropriate release time is offered as part of the induction process.

82 The school employs a bursar who has considerable expertise and experience of financial matters, both in education and in the business world. In consultation with the headteacher he ensures that the school makes the best use of its financial resources. Recent initiatives, such as the employment of additional teachers to cover absence and in-

service training and the allocation of a new grounds maintenance programme, have not only brought considerable savings to the school budget but have resulted in improved provision, which ultimately has a positive impact on the quality of education in school. Specific grants are used very effectively and in a creative way so that additional resources boost school initiatives. A good example is the employment of an increased number of learning support assistants, who make a valuable contribution in lessons by supporting pupils, specifically those of lower attainment or those with special educational needs. The sum carried forward from year to year is kept to a reasonable level so that pupils currently in school benefit from financial resources.

83 Administrative procedures are good. The school office operates effectively and efficiently. The recommendations of the last audit report have all been met and are in place, and new technology is used well to monitor financial matters and communicate with parents, staff and contractors. The computer suite has been a good investment for the school because it has enabled pupils to reach higher standards than those reported at the time of the last inspection.

84 The school has a good understanding of the principles of best value. It ensures that it gets good value from expenditure. It is beginning to compare its performance with other similar schools and thinks about the services it offers. Although there is a good level of consultation with governors, staff and more recently pupils, parents' views could be sought more widely as part of the process. Overall, this aspect of the school has improved since the last inspection.

85 The level of staffing is satisfactory. Recent teaching and non-teaching appointments have proved successful in enhancing school development. However, there are some weaknesses in co-ordinators' subject knowledge and a mismatch of expertise in particular age-groups.

86 The accommodation and site facilities are good. The school has two halls which are used effectively, adequate playground space and a large playing field. The school building is in good condition and is tidily kept by an efficient and helpful site manager. The school has developed a junior library within the dining area space since the last inspection. Although it is attractive and well ordered, it is not used sufficiently by pupils to make a significant impact on their learning.

87 Learning resources are adequate and support the curriculum properly. In the Foundation Stage there has been a good deal of investment in recent years and this is paying dividends by the generally good level of progress being made by children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88 To improve standards in the school the headteacher, staff and governors should:

Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.

(See 'Areas for development' in paragraphs 122, 129 and 134)

(Paragraphs 5-7, 9-11, 34-37, 67, 71, 86, 113, 115-119, 122, 123, 125, 126, 129-132, 134, 137, 144, 146, 151, 158)

Improve the systems of school self-analysis so that weaknesses are identified and effective action is taken to secure improvement by:

(Paragraphs 58, 74, 76, 80, 85, 121, 122, 123, 127-129, 134)

- Analysing test results and identifying areas of weakness in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding;
- Setting precise, measurable targets in school development planning which clearly describe the levels of performance to be attained by pupils, stating exactly how this will be achieved;
- Using the information from the monitoring of teaching and learning to identify how teachers can improve their own teaching;
- Analysing teachers' strengths, in terms of expertise and interests, and matching these more closely to subject areas and the age groups which they teach.

Improve the use of assessment information to:

(Paragraphs 7, 17, 35-37, 57-59, 63, 78, 79, 120-122, 124, 127-129, 134, 142)

- Plan work that exactly meets the needs of groups of pupils with differing abilities;
- Provide measurable targets for pupils, which are reviewed periodically to check levels of progress;
- Make more effective use of marking to indicate to pupils what they need to do next in order to improve;
- Ensure pupils with special educational needs have precise, short-term, measurable targets in their individual education plans so that these form the basis of planned work.

Develop the role of the subject co-ordinators by:

(Paragraphs 58, 74 -76, 78, 85, 122, 128, 129, 133, 135, 142, 149, 154, 165, 172)

- Using information from their reviews of planning and scrutiny of pupils' work more effectively to target the improvement of standards;
- Increasing opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects by working alongside colleagues in the classroom;
- Evaluating overall standards and the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and reporting their findings back to staff.

89 In addition to the above issues the following less important matter should be considered for inclusion in the school action plan:

Raise standards in design and technology throughout the school and art and design in Key Stage 2. (See 'Areas for development' in paragraphs 143, 139)

(Paragraphs 13, 14, 41, 51, 76, 135-137, 139, 140-143)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	28	26	2	0	0
Percentage	0	8	46	43	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	301
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	114

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.12
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	20	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	32	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (74)	78 (77)	80 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	18
	Girls	16	17	16
	Total	35	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (79)	85 (85)	83 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	2	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	12	22
	Girls	20	11	18
	Total	38	23	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (66)	43 (68)	74 (81)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	23
	Girls	20	16	14
	Total	34	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (60)	57 (74)	69 (79)
	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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	291
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	25.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	787,883
Total expenditure	783,753
Expenditure per pupil	2,376
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,433
Balance carried forward to next year	40,563

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	145
Percentage of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	33	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	35	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	36	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	68	29	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	30	6	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	27	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	50	43	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	59	34	2	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	37	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	38	10	2	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

90 Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the education provided for nursery and reception children nationally. The established Foundation Stage curriculum, for children in the nursery and reception classes, replaces the previous curriculum for the early years. The recent inspection differs from the previous one as only the nursery was evaluated in the corresponding section of the last report. The reception classrooms are now sited nearer to the nursery. This, together with an established curriculum and assessment process, ensures that most children make good progress. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

91 At the time of the inspection there were 58 children in the nursery on a part-time basis and 41 children in the two reception classes, attending full time. Very few children benefit from playgroup experience before entering the nursery. The environment for children in the nursery is attractive and welcoming. Children are admitted in the year in which they are four and almost all transfer to the reception class the following year. A gradual introduction to the nursery through meetings and visits, together with helpful information given to parents, ensures children make a good start. Most parents bring their children to school on time and are confident that they are happy and well cared for. Parents benefit from a number of educational initiatives, focusing for example on mathematics or literacy, and parents voluntarily give support in lessons and work together to provide story sacks to illustrate children's story sessions.

92 Children enter the nursery with well below average levels of attainment. Overall they make good progress, although this is inconsistent between the reception classes. By the end of the reception year most children still have to achieve the Early Learning Goals and are below the levels of attainment expected for their age. A small minority of children achieve above this level and reach the standards expected. Most children achieve the expected levels in aspects of personal, social and emotional development, but in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development, although making good progress, these levels are still to be reached.

93 The curriculum provided for these children is good, in that it provides for all areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage, giving appropriate attention to the intermediate stages of learning known as 'stepping stones'. However, these are not used sufficiently to identify specifically what the children need to learn in both focused teaching and 'free choice' activities in order to progress. This has been acknowledged and is being dealt with by the school. The nursery and reception staff plan a curriculum which encourages children to learn both indoors and outdoors, covering all areas of learning through a good range of planned activities based upon a half-termly theme. However, planned teaching does not take place and activities are substituted by others which are not taught at an appropriate level. Some aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum are over-directed and controlled. For some reception children there are too few opportunities to use resources in order to develop their investigative and creative skills or allow them to make choices in their learning, for example in daily painting activities. This results in some reception children having more learning opportunities than others and slows the learning of other children as they receive a narrow and sometimes inappropriate curriculum. There are a small number of children for whom English is an additional language. These children receive a good range of learning experiences, which help them to develop their communication skills well in English.

94 Reception children do not have the same access to outdoor play facilities as the nursery children. Efforts are made to provide a good range of activities but they are insufficient in aspects of climbing and balancing and in personal, social and emotional development. However, the school has plans to organise and resource an appropriate area for both nursery and reception children, when funds become available.

95 The teaching is good overall but inconsistent between classes. Teaching in the nursery is nearly always good, but teaching in the reception classes varies. The quality of teaching for half of the reception children is mostly good or very good, providing a broad range of experiences that are well matched to the needs of each child. The teaching for the other half is nearly always satisfactory. On the rare occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, activities are less well focused and children receive an over-directed and limited range of learning opportunities. In this reception class, work that is planned for the half term is not taught as part of the weekly planning. Planned work is sometimes substituted by work that is either too easy or too hard for the children, without attention being paid to the developmental stages of learning, based upon accurate assessments. Day-to-day planning is not linked closely enough to the stepping stones to ensure that lessons and activities are pitched at the right level. Most of the children make just sufficient progress in the areas of learning, although some make good progress within a narrow range of experiences. The formal style of the curriculum for these children inhibits the development of their independence and responsibility in this reception class.

96 Most teachers use good, accurate assessments, in the form of individual profiles, throughout the Foundation Stage to monitor children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Children's competencies are tested at the beginning of the nursery year using informal but thorough assessments. Formal assessments are completed at the beginning of the reception year and most teacher assessments are used to make sure that work planned is taught at the right level for the children's abilities, but this is not the case for all children in the reception classes. Most teachers make good use of ongoing daily assessments, and in the better lessons this good practice ensures that children's work is consistently well matched to their ability.

97 The teachers and support staff manage the children very well and use praise and encouragement to build their confidence. As a result, relationships between children and adults are very good. The children are keen to learn and standards of behaviour are very good. The staff encourage children to think about what they are doing and mostly ask questions which extend children's learning. The support team make a good contribution to children's learning. They work effectively with groups or individual children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They make a significant contribution to the children's learning, playing a prominent role in the good progress made by most Foundation Stage children. The learning environment for children in the nursery and reception classes is bright and attractive, particularly where children's work is displayed.

Personal, social and emotional development

98 Many children enter the nursery class with well below average skills in personal, social and emotional development. As a result of good teaching overall, most children make good progress. By the end of the reception year children achieve most of the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. The development of children's independence is below average.

99 Although nursery children are encouraged to take responsibility in the way they choose their name card on arrival and select construction resources, less emphasis is placed on the development of independence in children's learning. Throughout the key stage there are missed opportunities to develop a good level of independence within the classrooms in terms of planning and in the selection of resources in activities. Classrooms are well prepared for this aspect of learning in the way the rooms are organised and resources arranged. Discussions have taken place concerning the development of children's independence. For one group of reception children, however, this aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum is lacking.

100 Children enjoy coming to school and are keen and interested at the beginning of the sessions. All children behave very well and most are clear about what is expected of them. They stop to listen to the teacher when asked and work together very well, caring about their friends and showing concern if there are disagreements. They concentrate well, particularly when the activities are relevant and even when they are not. Where children are interested and motivated, they work hard.

Communication, language and literacy

101 The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good overall, within a range of satisfactory to very good. Standards are well below average on entry but through mostly good teaching children make good progress. By the end of the reception year many are still to achieve the expected levels of attainment with a small number of children achieving within this level.

Speaking and listening

102 In the nursery, good opportunities are provided to develop children's listening and spoken language, particularly as they share their 'news' in the nursery and play in the 'Space Control Centre'. Family group sessions promote children's language well because groups are small and the themes to develop spoken language are specific, relevant and well focused. Reception children develop their communication skills, 'pretending' in the 'hospital' and 'beach shop'. The nursery and reception children enjoy stories. Younger children listen and join in with discussions in small groups. Older children listen enthralled, especially when the teacher skilfully chooses exciting stories which fire their imagination.

Reading

103 Children in the nursery show an interest in books, in both the print and illustrations as they 'read' with an adult or on their own in the library area. By the end of the reception year children make good progress in their enjoyment of books. They share books with their teachers and take them home on a regular basis. Children recognise most initial sounds and some can recognise familiar words. However, even the more able children do not attempt to blend sounds together, or try to use them in their reading. All children take books home on a regular basis and receive good parental support, which is evident in their 'diaries'.

Writing

104 In the nursery, children have opportunities to practise their 'writing' using the writing area and the 'Space Control Centre'. In the reception classes children practise writing in a variety of planned activities but for some children too many worksheets are used in lessons. Here, there are fewer opportunities for some children to practise their writing informally, such as through compiling lists and writing notes, especially when lessons are too structured. Most children form letters of the alphabet correctly and some children use their

knowledge of phonics in their spellings. Children confidently operate the computer and tape recorder as they practise their listening and reading skills.

Mathematical development

105 By the end of the reception year some children reach the expected levels in their mathematical development but the majority are still to reach the average level, starting from standards that are below average. Most children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage as a result of mostly good, well-focused teaching.

106 In the nursery they use everyday situations to compare numbers as they count, for example the 'countdown' in space control and the number of children attending the nursery during registration. Most mathematical activities extend children's learning but in lessons where the activities are inappropriately planned, children do not make the progress they should. Here, assessments are not used to identify each child's level of attainment in order to plan for the next step in mathematics. These children need to experience mathematics in a less formal way that includes more purposeful opportunities for structured learning, based on accurate assessments of children's performance in order to promote and develop a wide range of mathematical experiences successfully. Other reception children explore and consolidate their knowledge of solid and flat shapes, benefiting from a good range of well-focused activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

107 Although making good progress overall, many children are still to achieve the expected levels by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good overall. In the nursery children explore and investigate their natural surroundings through the bugs and butterflies they observe in the nursery garden. They test ideas in the water tray asking, "Do you think it will float? It is heavy". They operate simple equipment such as a torch in order to see the effect of light on iridescent stars, understanding that the best result is when the stars are in the dark. Nursery children operate the computer with confidence, selecting their own programs from a menu.

108 Reception children receive an inconsistent range of experiences in this area of learning. Some children enjoy the experience of the 'Good Shepherd hospital' as they find out about their environment and show an interest in the world in which they live. This is well supported by the visit of a community nurse. Children in both reception classes listen and share their ideas, experimenting with all the fascinating items the nurse provided. Some children design a glove puppet called 'mood monster', selecting from materials and deciding on the techniques they need to shape and assemble the puppet. In the wet sand they explore and investigate, deciding that wet sand is the best for building as it sticks together and is 'goeey'. The other class of reception children receive a narrow range of experiences. The beach shop serves as an attractive focus but many of the items are stored on high shelves and children are unable to reach them. Sand and water are available for use but activities are not structured in order to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Construction resources are plentiful and of a good quality for children to construct a model and achieve a pleasing final product. Children have a good understanding of their own beliefs and are gaining an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others through celebrations and festivals such as the Chinese New Year.

Physical development

109 Children's progress is good in their physical development. By the end of the reception year most children use small equipment with appropriate control and confidence.

The outside area gives nursery children opportunities to control their bikes and wheeled toys. Children move freely and with confidence in activities in the nursery garden as they pretend to be angry monsters. Children use tools, such as scissors, with care and developing control, but for some reception children there are insufficient opportunities to refine and consolidate these skills. By the end of the reception year, standards remain below average and children are still to reach the levels expected for their age. The children do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their climbing and balancing skills either indoors or outdoors.

Creative development

110 Although progress is good for most children, for a significant minority it is only satisfactory. Children achieve levels that are below expectations by the end of the reception year and for one group of reception children attainment is well below average. Teaching overall is good although inconsistent between classes.

111 In the nursery, children experience a good range of activities in painting and dance and they describe what they are trying to do. Resources are prepared and planned well in the nursery and the opportunity to operate independently is a natural development. Some reception children, however, have fewer opportunities to investigate creative materials independently, due to the organisation and range of experiences offered. For example, children 'screw and glue' tissue on to pre-drawn shapes to create a frieze entitled 'Temper, temper' but this activity is adult-directed and the fun of experimentation is missed. There are too few examples of children's own work displayed in this class. Children take pride in their finished work, but they are not involved enough in the selection of resources, encouraged to try their own ideas or given the opportunity to try out tools they may need. Other reception children are developing their imagination as they work creatively on a large and small scale and explore texture asking, "How does it feel?" All children are confident in the use of computers and tape recorders, which effectively supports their learning. Children recall recent events in their news and talk about their birthdays as special events. All children learn about Christmas and Easter as part of their own culture and learn about the cultures of others through enriched experiences, such as those related to Chinese food and dance.

112 The children's musical development is satisfactory. Children sing songs or rhymes in the nursery and reception classes and use instruments in a planned way in lessons, some to a good level. However, musical instruments are not available for them to experiment with on a regular basis.

ENGLISH

113 The pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 are currently achieving standards that are below the national average. This reflects the standards achieved in the national tests in 2001, except that reading in Year 2 has improved slightly. This is because more pupils this year are likely to reach the higher level of attainment (level 3). The last inspection report judged that standards were average, but the results of national tests that year were below average in Year 6. In Year 2, writing results were below average, whilst reading was above.

114 Standards in speaking are below those normally found in schools for pupils in Years 2 and 6, although listening skills are generally satisfactory. Throughout the school, there are pupils who are reluctant to speak. Some, in Year 2, had to be continually prompted to talk about their reading books to an inspector and a girl in a Year 6 lesson declined to read her poem to her classmates. Some teachers skilfully encourage 'quiet' pupils to contribute during class discussions by directly asking them a question even though they do not have their hands up to answer. Many pupils struggle to find the right words to express their

opinions. In Year 6, answers are often littered with extraneous phrases: “I think, you know, that she was, like, in the war.” It is a struggle for some pupils to find exactly the right word. One boy just cannot remember the word ‘pilot’ when composing his war poem and a girl has difficulty with grammar: “they was being bullied,” she says when analysing a section of *The Little House in the Big Woods*. The majority of pupils, however, are keen to express their opinions and manage to do so effectively, albeit using unsophisticated vocabulary.

115 Standards of reading are below average by Year 2 and by Year 6 although, technically, many pupils read competently. Problems arise because significant words in a sentence are not understood, making it difficult to understand the progress of a story. An above average girl in Year 2, for example, does not know the meaning of ‘widow’ in the story of *Jack and the Magic Lamp*. Nevertheless, she, along with other higher attaining pupils, reads fluently and with expression. These pupils display their interest in reading by talking sensibly about their favourite books. The average readers have a reasonable repertoire of words that they recognise by sight and they are usually accurate readers. One boy reacts to the humour in his story but is reluctant to talk about the books he reads at home. The fluency of the below average readers is affected by the need to pause over unknown words and work out what they say. Most know the sounds of individual letters. One boy, for example, knows that ‘brushes’ begins with ‘b’ and, by using the illustration as well, he eventually reads the word. Later, he has to be told ‘shouted’ because it proves too difficult to work out. Because pupils enter school with below average skills in reading, progress in the infants is satisfactory. Letter sounds are taught appropriately and average pupils in Year 1 build simple, unknown words successfully, although the below average pupils only recognise the first sound. These pupils have learnt, however, to use pictures as an aid to understanding.

116 The wide range of ability displayed in the infants is less evident by Year 6 but the below average readers still struggle to display fluency because of the need to work out unknown words and understand what they mean. One boy reads ‘cul-de-sac’ correctly but cannot explain its meaning. Similarly, an average reader struggles to explain ‘grapple’ even though she reads it correctly. This is why reading standards are below average overall. The higher attaining pupils, however, are very competent readers to the extent that one boy self-corrects himself after reading a sentence because he realises he has put the wrong inflection on one word. He talks knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the *Harry Potter* books that are his current favourites and an average reader quotes Jacqueline Wilson as her favourite author. Progress through the juniors is satisfactory. Teachers throughout the school use group reading times⁷ appropriately as the main vehicle for practising skills and checking on the progress that pupils make. There is a good supply of books for these sessions. Many of them are new and are therefore of good quality.

117 The school has introduced an unusual policy about sending books home. In broad terms, only those pupils who are struggling with reading and those children in the Foundation Stage are provided with books to share with parents. The policy was not endorsed by all parents at the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors. Some felt that they lacked the expertise to match books correctly to their child’s reading level where previously the school had helped them by providing an appropriately graded book. Pupils too expressed dissatisfaction. In Year 4, they complained that the policy saps their interest when they are heavily involved in an exciting story and cannot finish it by taking it home. Many pupils belong to a library outside school but some say that the choice of books is limited and this discourages them from frequent visits. Teachers require pupils to write periodic book reviews and keep lists of the books that they read as a way of checking that reading outside school is happening. However, a few of those who read to the inspectors

⁷ Formal reading occasions when a group of pupils sit with the teacher, each having a copy of the same book so that every pupil can read a passage while the others follow.

say that they do not read books at home. Many junior pupils borrow books from the school library but, again, these are not allowed home and pupils in Year 6 say, "We do not use the library for school work." They cannot explain the classification system for finding a non-fiction book and can only visit the library once a fortnight at lunchtime to change books, each class having its allotted day. This is not a good use of the library. Even though it has only just opened, the policy is restricting the opportunities for pupils to conduct their own research in small groups and develop independent study skills using the good quality books that are available.

118 Standards of writing in Years 2 and 6 are below average. The infants write in a variety of forms with regular accounts of their news. This is helping them to make steady progress over time considering that they enter school with below average skills. By Year 2, most have a consistent handwriting style, printing their letters rather than joining them. Some above average pupils extend their sentences by using 'and', 'but' and 'because' and they try to use speech marks correctly. Occasionally, their use of vocabulary catches the eye: "Sky rockets look blue, go bang. They shout in the air." Average writers demarcate sentences correctly and know the structure that a story should have. However, spelling is difficult for some, though words like 'jumpt' and 'freids' (friends) illustrate a sensible attempt. The work of below average pupils often requires interpretation and a phrase like 'a ghost hed defn' is not understandable. Nevertheless, these pupils too know how to structure a story beginning 'Once upon a time' and most understand the need for a capital letter and a full stop in a sentence.

119 Through the juniors, most pupils make satisfactory progress but the work in books at the end of Key Stage 2 is sometimes unfinished and there are very few examples of completely unaided written pieces of work, especially creative stories. Pupils are often provided with examples of writing that they copy, inserting their own words into the blank spaces left by the teacher. When they are given free rein, as in a lesson writing war poems, the above average show an ability to use imaginative vocabulary: "the moaning and groaning of the planes above". In contrast, the below average pupils struggle to find out-of-the-ordinary adjectives to describe a plane or a story ending that is other than conventional, such as, "Everyone was happy". Average pupils also lack variety in the words they choose, particularly in using verbs other than 'got' and 'went.' Punctuation, however, presents fewer problems. Writing is sometimes planned. Year 3 pupils, for example, plan their ideas for a story opening using a worksheet that gives guidance about the setting and the characters. However, there is little evidence of re-drafting and the word-processor is only occasionally used for this purpose and for presenting work neatly. Some impressive work came from a Year 4 lesson where pupils composed letters on the computer arguing for and against the freeing of birds from 'Birdland'. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to use ICT more widely to practise literacy skills. Work in other subjects, however, satisfactorily supports the development of these skills. In geography, for example, Year 3 pupils write a postcard home from another part of the world, describing the weather.

120 Teaching overall is satisfactory but there is some good teaching, particularly in the infants. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 pay good attention to the teaching of basic skills, such as the understanding of letter sounds and their lessons move at a brisk pace. Teachers throughout the school manage their classes very well and prepare lessons thoroughly with appropriate resources. In Year 2, for example, the text chosen for the story was highlighted to focus the pupils on the words that started each question. Pupils knew already that a question mark denoted a special sort of sentence but realised quickly that many starting words began with 'wh'. Teachers use the structure of the literacy hour correctly to present a mixture of class instruction and group activity and the strategy is promoting satisfactory learning. However, the task for all groups is often the same despite the different needs of the pupils. Where a classroom assistant or a support teacher is available, they usually help

the below average pupils, some of whom have special educational needs. This occurred in a Year 6 lesson where these pupils were kept busy by the support teacher, enabling them to make sound progress in writing a group poem. Teachers themselves often work with these pupils when there is no other adult available and this too promotes sound learning for these pupils but not enough attention is paid to the specific targets on the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Not all teachers use the plenary⁸ session to take learning forward effectively. When each group is required to report back on the work they have completed, this does not promote the learning of everyone. If it is used as a speaking activity, as in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher required pupils to, “stand up, speak clearly and remember your audience,” this is acceptable. Some teachers use the session to assess whether the learning intention or target has been achieved. Most teachers help pupils to focus on their learning in the lesson by explaining these targets and this is helpful. In their marking, most teachers write remarks that explain the next step forward, though this is not consistent across the school. In the best example, in Year 5, the pupils write the learning intention before they begin work and the teacher indicates afterwards whether it has been achieved, sometimes adding advice such as, “Make sure all your sentences begin with a capital letter.” Homework, too, supports work in school. In Year 3, pupils have spellings to learn and are encouraged to look for small words within the larger ones to help them achieve success.

121 Teachers are beginning to track pupils’ progress through regular testing at the end of each year, including reading tests. They also periodically evaluate pieces of unaided writing and grade the work against the levels of attainment set out in the National Curriculum. This represents sound practice but the results are not yet analysed closely enough to determine specific strengths and weaknesses and, though the school recognises, for example, that writing standards need to improve, the specific weaknesses have not been clearly identified. Once this is done, individual pupils or groups of pupils can be given a precise focus for improvement. A Year 4 teacher is doing this by sticking a target in the front of each pupil’s exercise book. This is a useful initiative but is indicative of different practices across the school in many areas of English. The co-ordinator has been well supported by the local authority’s literacy consultant who has offered practical help to develop the skills of observing lessons and scrutinising teachers’ planning. The emphasis now needs to be on a close scrutiny of pupils’ exercise books to assess how the curriculum is being delivered and to iron out some of the inconsistent practice.

122 Areas for development:

- Review the policy regarding the use of reading books at home;
- Provide regular opportunities for all pupils to produce unaided pieces of writing, particularly creative stories;
- Analyse the data from the tests that pupils take so that specific weaknesses can be identified and strategies implemented to improve progress;
- Make better use of the library so that pupils develop independent study skills and have more opportunities to carry out research for a variety of subjects;
- Develop the use of ICT to support the development of literacy skills;
- Improve marking so that it is consistent across the school in identifying what pupils have to do to improve.

MATHEMATICS

123 Standards of attainment in mathematics by the end of years 2 and 6 are below those expected nationally. In Key Stage 1 there has been a steady improvement in test results over the past three years, and standards are rising. In Key Stage 2 there was a dramatic fall

⁸ The last five or ten minutes of the lesson when the whole class comes together to review work.

in standards by Year 6 in the 2000 and 2001 national tests. Some teachers lacked the expertise necessary to take pupils on to more advanced levels of work and the numeracy strategy took some time to become engrained into school practice. The standards achieved by the current Year 6 pupils have improved considerably. Despite this progress, standards at both key stages are below those found in similar schools. The school has paid effective attention to the teaching of mathematics during the last school year, but it has yet to realise the potential of all its pupils. As well as falling short of the national percentage of pupils reaching the average level 2 in Year 2 and level 4 in Year 6, relatively few pupils achieve the higher level 3 and level 5 grades, indicating that not all higher attaining pupils are making the progress of which they are capable.

124 Although children make good progress in nursery and reception, by the time they start Year 1 standards are still below expectations. Basic knowledge and skills are established through Key Stage 1 and while there is ground to make up, pupils improve their understanding. Pupils in Year 1 practise sequencing and partitioning numbers into tens and units, learn about odd and even numbers and begin to add and subtract in money problems. While they generally cope well with the tasks, these are sometimes too similar for pupils who have different abilities, and fail to extend higher attaining pupils. In Year 2, while tackling the same concepts, pupils work with greater or smaller numbers according to their mathematical abilities so that their number skills are able to support investigations. Higher attaining pupils are being well challenged, and all aspects of mathematics are covered. The quality of teaching in the infants is consistently good or very good, with pupils showing real enthusiasm and interest, and there are strong indications that standards here will continue to improve.

125 Teaching in the juniors is also good overall, although it is stronger in the lower juniors. It is apparent too that this is a fairly recent development, as the work produced by pupils over the whole year in most classes does not reflect the teaching seen in the course of the inspection. The focus on mathematics in Key Stage 2, following last year's disappointing results, is clearly having a positive effect. The work in most pupils' books is heavily biased towards number operations, often with a lot of practice, and there are relatively few recorded tasks that have been designed to make pupils think and discover for themselves. The emphasis in the lessons seen is much more on pupils using their investigative skills to test ideas and reach conclusions. This is seen to good effect in a Year 3 lesson, where pupils sort objects using a variety of criteria. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to decide for themselves which criteria to use, and there is plenty of discussion about why some choices work better than others. In a Year 6 lesson where pupils classify shapes using flow diagrams, some uncertainty in teacher subject knowledge, together with a poorly designed task, limits pupils' investigations and the progress they make. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics is weaker at the top of the school. Teachers develop pupils' ICT skills appropriately in designated lessons in the computer room.

126 Pupils throughout the school respond positively in mathematics. Even on the odd occasions when lessons are fairly pedestrian, they maintain their interest and work hard at the tasks they are given. Faced with more demanding teaching they show both interest and involvement. In a Year 2 class, for example, an excellent mental and oral activity challenges pupils to ask suitable questions to find an unknown number. Great excitement is generated, with forests of waving hands! There is visible progress in learning, too, as pupils realise that questions such as "Is it even?" or "Is it over fifty?" work much better than wild guesses. This expectation of pupils to reason mathematically is seen in other lessons too, and is often supported by tasks that expect pupils to discuss what they are doing, either with a partner or in a small group. In this way pupils' interest is maintained and the focus is on the development of mathematical skills. Talking to pupils in Year 6, as well as looking at the work they have produced, indicates not only some gaps in their knowledge but also a lack of

opportunity to apply the skills they learn to a variety of problems. This weakness, which reflects on teaching over time rather than recently, is clearly one that the school is trying to address.

127 Pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who find mathematics difficult, are generally well supported in lessons, both by teachers and learning support staff, who are well prepared and make a significant contribution. The work planned for these pupils in the lessons seen is also appropriate, but this is not always the case in their books, where there is a tendency to expect all the pupils to attempt the same task. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not often stretched by the demands on them, and sometimes lower attaining pupils struggle to complete much work. The quality of teachers' marking at its best is very good indeed, with comments which are helpful and to the point, but this good practice is not consistent between classes.

128 The school implements the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately, although some lessons are over-long and run out of steam. It is instructive that the best lesson seen during the inspection lasted 45 minutes, rather than the usual hour, and was full of pace and activity for the pupils. The mathematics co-ordinator is well informed, hard working, and fully aware of the changes in approach that will develop the subject. Very good use has been made of the expertise of a visiting numeracy advisory teacher from another school, and teachers are enthusiastic and keen to try out new ideas. Action plans for improving mathematics need targets which are linked to specific improvement in standards overall and which have clear and measurable success criteria, so that the school knows what works. To support this the system for tracking the progress of individual pupils requires targets which older pupils in particular are aware of, so that they know what they need to do in order to improve. The ethos of the school, and the response of both teachers and pupils to new challenges, indicate that the subject is well placed to maintain the recent improvement.

129 In order to develop mathematics further, the school should:

- Consider the best use of staff numbers and expertise;
- Continue to encourage pupil independence through setting mathematical challenges;
- Through assessment and target setting, ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable;
- Ensure consistency of practice between classes and through the school;
- Continue to build on improvements in teaching and learning so that pupils achieve higher standards.

SCIENCE

130 Current standards by the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are below average. This is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national average. Teacher assessments for 2002 indicate that there is likely to be some improvement on the results of the 2001 tests at the end of Year 6. However, current standards of work seen in lessons and a scrutiny of previous work are an improvement on the very low results achieved in the tests in 2001. Work seen in lessons during the current inspection indicates that the school is making some progress in reversing the trend of low attainment over the past two years. This is due to the improved quality of teaching, particularly in infant classes, and better planning of science across the school so that knowledge, skills and understanding are being built on more systematically and progressively as pupils move through the school. These are all improvements since the last inspection. However, as at the time of the last inspection, standards and learning continue to be affected by the lack of achievement of pupils at the higher than expected levels, in both the infants and the juniors. This still remains an area of improvement for the school.

131 Most pupils build up a satisfactory body of scientific knowledge as they move through the school. They develop knowledge, but at the expense of understanding and skills of investigation, which are not as secure. Scrutiny of their past work shows that limited work is set that challenges the more able pupils and extends their understanding. All groups of pupils follow the same range of work and use the same supporting worksheets. More able pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to record their own ideas and opinions about what they have found out. For example, after a 'minibeast safari' around the school grounds, pupils in Year 2 are able to identify a number of creatures that favour particular environments. However, pupils are not asked to say why this is so. Often they are required to record their findings in simple pictures or tables, and the use of number skills, through recording their findings in the form of graphs, is under-developed. In the one lesson observed in the infants, the quality of teaching was good. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection, which found half the teaching seen in infant classes unsatisfactory. This was a good lesson because it was well planned, organised and resourced so that all groups of pupils settled quickly to their tasks. There was a good pace to learning and by the end of the lesson most pupils identified a number of ways in which people change as they grow older. Appropriate use was made of computers as pupils took turns to correctly sequence a series of pictures from youngest to oldest. However, all groups of pupils were encouraged to record their ideas as pictures rather than challenging more able pupils to think of other ways of recording, for example, in written form. While this lesson successfully enabled most pupils to achieve satisfactorily at the level expected, it missed opportunities to extend the understanding of different groups of pupils.

132 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school. The scrutiny of previous work of junior classes shows a similar picture of satisfactory knowledge development in all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. However, all groups of pupils record in the same manner and there is little evidence of the thinking of more able pupils being challenged or extended. Investigations are often teacher-directed, as at the time of the last inspection, and all pupils are asked to do the same kind of work. This was apparent in one lesson observed, where pupils evaluated and improved their previous work on making a pressure pad alarm using their knowledge and understanding of electricity. The level of challenge for Year 6 pupils was low and not well matched to the prior attainment of the different groups. This meant that some pupils were not sufficiently interested or engaged by the activity, while others found it too difficult. The result was poor concentration and involvement by the majority of pupils and the lesson did not develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. More successful lessons were observed in other junior classes, where teachers showed more confidence and security in their own knowledge of science, and provided well-planned and interesting activities that helped all groups of pupils to make satisfactory progress. For example, in a lesson on the effects of changes on solids and liquids, pupils understood whether some changes were reversible or not. This was developed well through the demonstration of the effect of melting different substances. In another lesson, pupils' knowledge and understanding of different substances and chemicals was developed through a game. This was a good lesson because all groups of pupils were challenged at an appropriate level so that they were all able to make an effective contribution to the lesson. Good use was made of computers during this lesson by a classroom assistant who supported the learning. This was, however, an isolated instance and the better use of literacy, numeracy and computer skills to support teaching and learning in science remains an area of development for the school. At present resources are satisfactory in quality and quantity but more books for research purposes in the school library would help to extend pupils' skills of enquiry.

133 Talking to pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 confirms that they are developing a satisfactory knowledge base in science, but their levels of understanding and skills of investigation do not match this. Pupils enjoy science but want to be more directly involved in

'finding out'. The planning of science across the school has improved since the last inspection and the profile of the subject has been raised by the work of the co-ordinator. The current leadership and management of the subject are good. A very successful 'Science Week' was held that involved teachers, pupils and parents, and the co-ordinator has begun to address the issues of low attainment. She has introduced a new system of assessment in all year groups that will provide teachers with much more secure information about the prior attainment of pupils, which can be used to make planning more effective for different groups of pupils. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject has yet to be developed properly.

134 In order to raise standards, the school should:

- Plan activities that are more closely matched to the previous learning of different groups of pupils, particularly higher attainers;
- Analyse assessment data to identify more clearly what it is that different groups of pupils must do next in order to improve;
- Extend the involvement of pupils in investigations in science through planning their own experiments and recording their findings in a variety of ways by using their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

ART AND DESIGN

135 Standards in art and design are average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. This represents unsatisfactory improvement in art and design since the previous inspection. At the time of the last inspection attainment was average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

136 It was possible to observe only one art lesson during the inspection, with teaching being satisfactory. Targets were shared with the pupils and there was satisfactory emphasis given to the use of technical vocabulary. On the basis of a scrutiny of completed work and discussions with pupils, there are weaknesses evident in the quality of teaching. Overall, pupils' achievement levels are below average, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve at the same rate as other pupils. Art and design has a low profile in the school and displays, except for a few good examples, lack creativity and impact. Few serve as examples of good practice or technique. Teachers are not yet confident in their teaching of art and design, but are becoming more familiar with the requirements of the new curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 1.

137 The way in which the teaching of art and design is structured does not support steady learning and achievement through both key stages. Art and design is taught in half-termly blocks of time, alternating with design and technology. However, in some cases at the end of Key Stage 2 art is replaced by another subject on the timetable and is then dependent upon links with other subjects for development. For example, art in science, in the form of observational drawings of plants, provides the practice but does not teach the basic skills. There are also some examples of art being developed in history and geography. Skills and knowledge that are learned are not practised in a continuous way and knowledge and understanding are not well developed through the school. For example, pupils in both Years 2 and 6 are unable to explain the 'primary colours' and how black and white are used in painting. The use of ICT in art is not planned specifically within the curriculum but is taught in designated ICT lessons in the computer suite. The library is not accessed regularly for personal research but teachers provide books when learning about famous artists in order to illustrate their work.

138 The subject is not being developed properly by the co-ordinator. There is no effective monitoring in order to identify areas for development and raise standards, and as a consequence, the status that art and design holds in the school is too low. Art needs to progress from an illustrative tool to a skills and knowledge-based subject. Assessment is planned annually but there is no process by which skills are checked frequently to ensure that pupils make progress. There is no portfolio of work to guide teachers and raise their expectations of pupils' achievements. Resources are good but they are not used frequently enough.

139 To raise standards in art and design, especially in Key Stage 2, the school needs to:

- Develop portfolios of work to represent different levels of attainment;
- Develop the monitoring role of the co-ordinator;
- Teach art and design more frequently in order to build up pupils' skills and knowledge progressively throughout the school;
- Improve the profile of the subject through display around the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

140 Attainment in design and technology is well below average by Year 2 and very low by Year 6. Pupils fail to develop the necessary knowledge of a range of materials and the skills and techniques for making products successfully. Their limited experience of these practical aspects make designing artefacts difficult, and pupils rarely evaluate their finished work. In Year 1 pupils draw sketches to show their intentions when making vehicles and identify some equipment needed, but by Year 6 plans are no more detailed than they were in the infants. Year 6 pupils' moving car designs are also just sketches with a list of the resources needed. In some cases, recorded ideas are not useful – one for a sandwich, for instance, had bread and cucumber, chocolate spread and meat which appeared to indicate they would all be used at once. There is no evidence of developing step-by-step plans, and many of the artefacts produced for junior projects are identical. By the end of Year 6 pupils have only worked with card, paper, fabric and food – and, in many cases, because the projects have not been for functional purposes, they have not learnt enough about properties such as strength, durability and flexibility to know which to choose for a particular purpose. Very few pieces of work have been evaluated, and the few which have go no further than giving a score out of ten or are judged by the pupil to require no improvement. Detailed consideration of aspects like fitness for purpose and ease of construction are not undertaken.

141 Very limited progress is made by all pupils in all aspects of the subject. New plans have recently been introduced using some projects given in Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documents and some used previously in the school. These are not sufficiently detailed and do not systematically introduce, develop and apply skills and knowledge. Too many projects are actually art and design rather than design and technology – they have no function, but are decorative. Although design and technology lessons are timetabled, the actual time spent on the subject is very limited due to this misunderstanding. For instance, a lesson in Year 3 during the inspection which was planned as design and technology was to design an Aztec brooch. In practice, pupils were only required to decorate clay and the resultant artefacts could not be used to fasten garments, so it was really an art and design session. Year 6 pupils completed curve stitching as one of their recent projects which also had no practical use. Moreover, current puppet-making is identical in Years 1 and 6, requiring pupils to produce a papier-mâché head and a fabric body. In samples of work there is even evidence that some Year 1 pupils have made cardboard puppets with some moving parts which are more complex than Year 6 pupils' work. Year 6 pupils did not draw any plans or designs for these puppets. Pupils throughout the school regularly produce

cards for celebrations, but they do not learn a new mechanism to enhance them as they progress through the school. The subject, therefore, fails to meet statutory requirements, and standards have fallen since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be satisfactory. Infant pupils do have useful opportunities to build working models using construction kits so that they see for themselves how mechanisms work, but this is not used effectively to prepare them for the work they are to plan. In Year 2, for instance, most pupils were sketching a picture of a piece of playground equipment they hoped to make, but without understanding how a roundabout turns or a seesaw balances they had little idea how to design their own models. There is no evidence of pupils' ICT skills being developed in the subject.

142 Only one lesson was observed during the inspection so it is not possible to judge the overall quality of the teaching, but the shortcomings in planning show school-wide weaknesses in subject knowledge, including what constitutes design and technology. This adversely affects lesson content, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are often inappropriate. Teachers' plans are not rigorously monitored to ensure the work is developing the necessary designing, making and evaluating skills, and although there is a co-ordinator for the subject there is no overview of provision. The recent decision to gather work into a portfolio to enable teachers to moderate work has been ineffective because evidence is not annotated with information about the purpose and context of the work. Mixed samples of art and design with design and technology work further confuse understanding of National Curriculum expectations. Because projects have largely been decorative the available resources for design and technology projects are inadequate. Assessment sheets which identify key skills from each project have also been recently introduced. They are not, however, being used to check which skills pupils have acquired even though this would help teachers to develop more appropriate expectations.

143 To raise standards in design and technology the school requires:

- Long-term plans which include projects requiring designing, making and evaluating functional artefacts;
- More detailed plans for each project which identify those skills to be introduced, developed or applied;
- Training for teachers to give them a better understanding of what is expected of primary pupils in design and technology and the skills to teach it;
- Assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge so that subsequent work builds on what they know and ensures progress;
- Monitoring of provision across the school to ensure pupils are doing design and technology work regularly and systematically;
- The necessary resources to complete the planned projects, including a greater variety of materials and tools.

GEOGRAPHY

144 Pupils reach broadly average standards in geography by the end of Years 2 and 6. Generally, they make sound progress, improving their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language in the junior department of the school, but in the infants, pupils requiring support are given appropriate help in lessons and make similar progress to their classmates. The large number of pupils identified as having special educational needs are also properly supported by teachers and learning support assistants. Although work is not always tailored to their needs they are given suitable support to enable them to make sound progress. Since the last inspection, progress in developing the subject has been sound. The scheme of work has been improved and this now enables pupils to develop their mapping skills more systematically. The range of topics is better balanced than previously and literacy and

numeracy basic skills are gradually being incorporated into teachers' planning. However, much of the work set for higher attaining pupils still lacks challenge. This is particularly the case in the upper junior classes when pupils complete cloze procedure tasks which are uninteresting and do not extend pupils' reasoning skills and their imagination.

145 Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of maps. They know the main countries of the British Isles. Higher attaining pupils use the index in simplified atlases to locate their own city of Coventry. The majority of pupils understand the difference between a plan and an aerial photograph. "It's like looking down from a helicopter," remarked one pupil referring to the latter. When looking at a globe pupils know that the British Isles is only small compared to other land masses but they are unable to locate it without adult help. Higher attaining pupils know that the hottest places are "round the middle of the earth" but cannot recall the term 'equator'. All pupils, with the exception of lower attainers, name the four seasons. Pupils of all abilities design appropriate weather symbols for different types of weather conditions and give reasons for their own particular sketches.

146 In Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of direction, naming all eight points on a compass rose. They use two-figure grid references to locate features on a map. Most pupils know the major continents but they have limited knowledge of the world's major oceans, only being able to name the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Through their recent studies of Pakistan they have learned about the climatic differences in Asia and compare their beliefs and values with those of the followers of Islam. However, their skills in research are limited because they have too few opportunities to investigate for themselves by using reference books from the school library. There are also limited opportunities to express their own views in literacy tasks that relate to geography topics, because teachers do not capitalise effectively by providing imaginative written tasks.

147 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is sound but the subject is taught better by infant teachers who show more flair and imagination. Pupils behave very well in lessons and concentrate well because teachers manage classes effectively. They listen to teachers and settle to tasks quickly and sensibly. Relationships are positive amongst pupils and teachers. On the rare occasions when pupils shout out answers, it is the result of over-enthusiasm rather than poor behaviour. Teachers usually begin lessons by consolidating earlier learning, using a good range of questions to find out the level of pupils' understanding. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons by supporting and encouraging small groups of pupils. Most lessons move along at a reasonable pace but sometimes lack a visual stimulus, such as photographs or maps, to enliven pupils' interest. Teachers in the infant department tend to have higher expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and make lessons more exciting through the use of practical activities which are well matched to pupils' ability levels.

148 The curriculum is relevant to pupils' experiences and builds well on previous learning. Topics are chosen carefully to illustrate a variety of places and people and comparisons are drawn with pupils' own lifestyles. Video presentations are used effectively in lessons but there is no evidence of pupils using ICT to enhance their learning. All pupils have equal opportunities to learn and make progress, through a range of activities in lessons and on off-site trips.

149 The co-ordinator is conscientiously developing the subject through a range of strategies, including assessment of pupils' work, retaining samples of moderated work and auditing resources. However, the lack of opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, especially in the juniors, is restricting her ability to make properly informed judgements on standards throughout the school.

HISTORY

150 Standards in history at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This reflects the picture found at the last inspection. The majority of pupils continue to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. These judgements are based on three lessons seen, a scrutiny of pupils' previous work, looking at teachers' planning and talking to pupils and the subject co-ordinator.

151 Planning has improved since the last inspection and now gives good support to teachers. All the requirements of the National Curriculum are addressed and appropriate emphasis is given to developing pupils' skills of enquiry. Better use of the school library and the Internet for research purposes would enhance this aspect of the school's provision and is an area of development for the subject.

152 Pupils develop a good understanding of the passage of time and Year 2 pupils can talk sensibly about 'times now', 'times past' and 'times long ago'. Pupils in Year 6 understand that information presented in pictures is different from illustrations, which may or may not be true to life. They know that myths and legends may or may not have an element of truth in them. All pupils enjoy events that bring history to life. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on the effects of the Blitz on everyday life in Coventry, pupils are fascinated by the tales of a visitor to school and ask sensible and sensitive questions afterwards. Year 2 pupils talk animatedly about famous people such as Mary Seacole and Samuel Pepys. Good use is made of visits to such places as Lunt Fort, Harvington Hall and Coventry Cathedral to extend pupils' understanding of their topics.

153 In the lessons observed teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Teachers' planning is good with clear objectives about what pupils are going to learn and the skills they are going to develop. This results in all groups of pupils being involved and interested in their work and this gives a good pace to the lessons. A good example of this is the Year 3 lesson on how the Aztecs recorded using pictures. Good use of resources and a well-organised and managed learning situation enabled all groups of pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding well over the time of the lesson. Good use is made of displays to enliven pupils' knowledge, for example, in the photographic display in a Year 4 class on Britain since the 1930s. There are examples of links to other subjects such as English in the Year 5/6 class on writing a letter as an evacuee, art and design in the displays of Anglo-Saxon brooches by Year 4 and models of houses in Year 1, and the use of the Internet for research in Year 6.

154 The subject is led well by the joint co-ordinators who have helped to maintain the profile of the subject across the school. They are developing a very useful system of assessment and a portfolio of pupils' work that will be helpful to teachers in their future planning. However, as at the last inspection, there is a lack of opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning which restricts the co-ordinator's overview of standards in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

155 Attainment in ICT is broadly average at the end of the infant and junior stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were judged to be below average. Pupils acquire the necessary skills to use a variety of programs and appropriately apply their knowledge in different situations. Most pupils can use the keyboard and mouse confidently, open the programs and files they need and respond to the menus and icons which enable them to fulfil the tasks they are set. At the end of the session they save their work if required and close down programs. Older pupils and higher attainers

are often confident about using the correct technical vocabulary to discuss work in progress. Year 6 pupils create the first slides for a multi-media presentation on Coventry Cathedral intended for children using *PowerPoint*. Average attainers confidently select pictures, adjust the size to suit the space, type in their text and choose the font, size and colour which they feel is best. Higher attainers experiment with sound and animation so that captions appear, accompanied by sounds from a variety of directions and in different ways. They are also able to select the background colour and effect. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs fulfil the basic task of pasting pictures and producing accompanying text but are not completely confident about highlighting those parts they want to change, or delete sections unnecessarily when they could insert or move their typing. Year 5 pupils carry out a similar task to contribute to a guide to the Cathedral using *Word* and are also confident about selecting pictures downloaded from the Internet and producing accompanying text. Higher attainers use *WordArt* to enliven their titles and select a different font and colour for effect. Again, lower attainers work inefficiently, selecting a font and typing a word, then deleting this and starting again with a different font. Year 4 pupils use *Clicker* to help them to create their letters, selecting words from the word bank provided and using the spell check on unknown words. In Year 3 pupils select and drag icons to order parts of tunes correctly. By trial and error, most succeed in a correct playing of *Teddy Bears' Picnic* and some higher attainers also order *London's Burning*. A few higher attainers have other strategies such as listening to each phrase played when a particular icon is selected and are able to identify the correct sequence more rapidly.

156 Years 1 and 2 pupils create pictures using a variety of tools in a graphics program. Year 2 pupils select and change colours to flood fill the background for a beach holiday scene, draw palm trees and deckchairs using brush and spray effects, and erase parts of the picture they want to change. They switch between icons and colours confidently. Only the higher attaining pupils know how to undo the last command, however, so much work is lost when other pupils start afresh because flood filling covers more than intended. Year 1 pupils use the same program to create friendly monsters. Most pupils do most of their pictures using just a few tools and colours, but higher attainers do discover other tools such as those which give closed shapes, and change the colour more frequently. Other Year 1 pupils produce a series of simple sentences describing objects by selecting appropriate icons from the screen. Higher attainers select and type further words to enhance their sentences.

157 Progress is generally satisfactory for all pupils although not all pupils have yet had sufficient experience in all aspects of ICT to ensure that work is more demanding as they mature. Pupils in Years 4 and 6, for instance, have recently produced very similar repeat patterns using a graphics program. This is because older pupils missed out on some parts of the ICT curriculum before the provision of the new computer suite. Pupils now have regular ICT lessons and planning is in place to develop skills incrementally across the school. Some aspects of the ICT curriculum are also underdeveloped because suitable resources have not yet been acquired, particularly in control and monitoring. However, the co-ordinator is aware of the need and is seeking suitable software.

158 ICT is sometimes effectively used to support other subjects in the curriculum. In Year 4, for instance, pupils working on persuasive writing in a literacy lesson composed letters supporting or opposing birds being kept in captivity and produced advertisements. In Year 5 information on local temperatures is accessed from the Internet to enhance learning in science and geography. However, opportunities to integrate ICT into pupils' regular daily learning are currently underdeveloped, which is an aspect of the subject which has not been maintained since the last inspection. This, though, has rightly been identified by the co-ordinator for further work and training.

159 ICT is consistently satisfactorily taught throughout the school and is well taught in the infants. All teachers use the whiteboard effectively to demonstrate programs and procedures, and instructions for carrying out the day's work are clear so that pupils know what to do when they start the task. They usefully remind pupils of previous work so that they know how the new work relates to what they have learnt previously and builds on it. Learning support assistants are well deployed so that support is available for different groups, especially pupils with special educational needs, in order to enable them to make similar progress to the rest of the class. These adults also provide useful demonstrations and instructions when necessary. Once pupils are working at the computers adults make timely interventions so that pupils overcome their problems. In the best lessons work is well matched to pupils' different needs, based on assessment of pupils' prior knowledge. In Year 1, for instance, a group of pupils needing extra practice in controlling the mouse were given specific support which enabled them to create their own monsters by the end of the lesson. Teachers also have high expectations of pupils and set appropriate challenges which pupils aspire to achieve. In these lessons, too, there is a focus on the correct vocabulary and pupils learn to use it themselves. Occasional less effective practice is due to the fact that teachers' own training in ICT is relatively recent. Teachers are not so good, for instance, in giving pupils alternative strategies. In Year 3, for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to start from the first phrase of music and build up the tune consecutively and did not actively promote any alternatives. They also sometimes fail to develop good work habits such as clear naming of files for future location and regularly saving work. Although learning support assistants are valuable in technical support, teachers do not always ensure general classroom expectations, such as dealing with spelling errors, are consistently adhered to by all the adults.

160 Pupils in Year 6 have regular opportunities to use the computer suite at lunchtime. This extra-curricular activity is enjoyed by those who attend, but because it is unfocused it seldom increases or enhances their skills in using ICT.

MUSIC

161 By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils are achieving standards that are similar to those found in other schools. For the younger pupils, this is a similar judgement to that at the last inspection. For the older pupils, standards in 1997 were said to be good. The apparent decline since then is due to more precise definitions in the revised National Curriculum of the requirements for above average attainment. Few pupils are achieving these. Provision for music is satisfactory. All elements, such as listening, composing, performing and evaluating their work are included in the programme of work. However, ideas for the activities that pupils undertake are drawn from a variety of sources – from documents issued nationally and locally and from radio broadcasts – and the school needs to ensure that the gradual development and acquisition of skills is carefully planned.

162 Progress is satisfactory across the school for all pupils, including those with special educational needs who take a full part in lessons and, like other pupils, are fully included in all activities. Pupils in Year 1 learn to distinguish between long and short musical sounds and, in their lesson, individuals enjoy performing quite complicated sequences of these sounds for their classmates to copy. In Year 2, pupils identify high and low sounds and name a variety of percussion instruments, explaining how they use them to accompany songs. They recall *The Food Rap* that they performed with other local schools at a 'Morning of Music' and pupils in Year 6 recall their experience of a similar event with pleasure, explaining how they composed a verse for *The Coventry Song*. These occasions offer good opportunities for pupils to learn a variety of songs and to perform their 'party pieces' for the other schools. For the Year 6 pupils, this enabled them to play their recorders. All pupils in this year group learn this instrument, although the range of notes they have acquired is

limited. They also have lessons with the steel band instruments and, though it was not possible to observe a performance during the inspection, the pupils talked enthusiastically about this aspect of their music.

163 Teaching overall is satisfactory but lessons sometimes proceed at a leisurely pace. In a recorder lesson, for example, each pupil in turn was asked to identify a note in the tune and this reduced the time for actual playing and for improving the performance. In contrast, in a Year 5/6 lesson the teacher allowed maximum time for composing activities but was able to quickly quieten the class, all of whom were heavily involved in small group compositions with a variety of instruments. When they proceeded to perform their 'weather' compositions, there were suitable contrasts between the soft, quiet music for falling snow and the loud, raucous sounds to accompany a thunderstorm. The teacher missed the opportunity, however, to let pupils evaluate the performances of their classmates. Pupils are used to evaluating music however. In Year 3, they have listened to *The Planet Suite* and realised the difference in mood between *Mars* and *Venus*. In a Year 4 lesson too, pupils listened carefully to some African instruments being played. They struggled to express their thoughts in musical terms, saying that, "it makes a wonky sound," but realised that the instruments, the 'Kora' and 'Gonge,' belonged in the guitar family. The teacher showed good knowledge of the subject and, in another part of the lesson, rightly encouraged pupils to use terms such as 'crotchet' and 'quaver'.

164 Music plays a significant part in school life, particularly in assemblies and masses and in productions at Christmas. Singing is tuneful and pleasant, with clear words and a sensitive appreciation of the mood. Pupils can join an infant and a junior choir and practices are held after school. There are also opportunities to learn the guitar but no other instrumental tuition is available. Musicians sometimes perform in school and a 'Jazz Ensemble' has recently made a big impression on the junior pupils. Teachers, particularly those in the infants, have to go out of their way to collect some instruments from the junior building but, overall, there are sufficient instruments in the school to teach the curriculum. Some are of good quality, particularly the tuned percussion. The steel band instruments are particularly impressive.

165 This year, a teacher new to the school is taking responsibility for music in the infants while still liaising closely with the co-ordinator. She leads the infant choir, for example, and her involvement is likely to enhance provision in the school. Teachers are beginning to explore the range of opportunities that computer programs and the Internet offer for the promotion of musical knowledge and skills. This needs to be developed, as does a system for recording the standards and progress that pupils achieve, although a reasonable start has been made in assessing the Year 6 pupils' composing and performing skills. The co-ordinators for the subject do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, an issue raised at the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

166 Standards in physical education are sound by the end of Years 2 and 6, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching overall, and the planning based on national guidelines, is making practice more consistent across the school. As a result pupils' progress is no longer uneven, representing an improvement since the last inspection.

167 Pupils in Year 2 are expected to be independent, both when changing for the lesson, organising equipment and practising bat and ball skills in pairs. Less adept pupils receive plenty of encouragement, both through the support of a classroom assistant and because the equipment they use is carefully chosen to help them succeed in the tasks set; as a result

they make good progress. The majority make less obvious progress, partly because some activities are too difficult and also because they are not encouraged to think for themselves how they might improve. There is insufficient focus on the key areas of 'control' and 'accuracy'. In a Year 5 games lesson fielding and throwing skills are developed effectively through focused teaching, lots of appropriate practice and the use of pupils to demonstrate success.

168 Gymnastics is well taught. In a Year 3 lesson pupils develop balances using different parts of the body and are encouraged to link them into a short sequence. They then work with a partner to produce a combined effort where they match each other's movements. They watch each other and comment on what works well, using this to improve their own performance. This leads to better co-ordination and control, although more emphasis on the length of time to hold a balance, as well as greater focus on style and presentation, would encourage still higher standards.

169 Year 4 pupils make good progress in their swimming lessons. There is a good emphasis on safety and a responsible attitude, with staff making their expectations very clear. Skills are well taught and pupils are given plenty of praise and encouragement. With a relatively short time in the water, pace is good and pupils are continually involved. Pupils behave sensibly and follow instructions, and are in line to achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.

170 The quality of movement in a Year 6 expressive dance lesson, and the way in which pupils are able to respond to changes in the tempo and dynamics of the musical accompaniment, indicate that they are accustomed to performing in this way. While the resources (both the music and the video of the prologue to *West Side Story*) are well chosen, their use lacks imagination and as a result limits the pupils' response, rather than encouraging them to be creative. Some appear embarrassed and are reluctant to try things out, suggesting that they are unaccustomed to having an audience.

171 Teaching is always at least sound, and often good. It is firmly based on good relationships, both between teachers and pupils and pupils themselves. This allows teachers to expect and receive a good level of attention and response. Little time is wasted on managing behaviour, and as a result lessons are well paced and productive, with plenty of pupil activity. Warm-ups are good, with a balance between stretching and aerobic activities, so that by Year 6 they are of a high standard and embedded in normal practice. Lesson intentions are sometimes too general and rather vague, which in turn means not enough attention is paid to developing specific skills, and it is more difficult to assess how much progress pupils are making. There are also some missed opportunities for involving pupils in assessing their own progress through setting clear targets.

172 The deputy headteacher currently leads the subject. She is at present being 'shadowed' by a newly qualified teacher who will take responsibility in September. This is an effective use of induction. The local adviser for physical education has modelled lessons for Key Stage 1 to give ideas to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is good provision for extra-curricular sport, with increasing involvement of non-teaching support staff, who make a valuable contribution. The majority of Year 6 pupils attend the residential visit to Alton Castle, which involves outdoor and adventurous activities. There is as yet no formal assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of each unit of work or monitoring of teaching and learning, which would help teachers to monitor progress more carefully.