

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **WESTON RHYN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Weston Rhyn

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123403

Headteacher: Mr B Bevan

Reporting inspector: Mr.M. Lester  
20596

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 196374

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Old Chirk Road  
Oswestry  
Shropshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Sue Pugh

Date of previous inspection: 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20596	Martin Lester	Registered inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20498	Mary Hamby	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art Design and technology Physical education Religious education	
19028	Vanessa Ward	Team inspector	Special education needs English Information and communication technology Geography History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This smaller than average school is situated in the village of Weston Rhyn, north Shropshire, close to the Welsh border. There are 172 pupils on roll, and a further 23 children who attend for half sessions in the nursery. The numbers in each year group vary considerably but the classes are carefully organised and some contain a two-year age range in order to provide manageable class sizes. All the pupils are of white ethnic origin and none speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (10.7%) is broadly in line with the national average. However, the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (13.7%) and those with statements of special educational needs (0.0%) is below the national average.

The school catchment area is disadvantaged in terms of social and economic indicators. Weston Rhyn was established as a mining village and as such has experienced significant changes in its circumstances. This is reflected in the village being part of a European Funding initiative, a rural Education Action Zone (EAZ) and a Sure Start multi-agency Family Support network. However, the proximity of Wrexham and Chester has resulted in new settlement within the community. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the nursery is slightly below average. The school has experienced significant staff changes within the past three years and only the headteacher remains from the time of the previous inspection. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher had only recently returned from long-term absence following a serious accident.

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

The school provides a sound quality of education for its pupils within a supportive and inclusive environment that successfully promotes very positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. The teaching is consistently at least satisfactory and is frequently better. The teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. By the time the pupils move onto secondary school, their attainment is broadly average with the exception of geography, history and religious education in which standards are below expectations. There is a broad curriculum that is enriched through very good provision for extra-curricular activities. However, the balance and depth of the curriculum is variable. The leadership promotes the self-esteem of the pupils and staff very effectively. However, the school management systems and self-evaluation procedures require more coherence and consistency to ensure greater effectiveness. On balance, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

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

- The management of pupils in lessons and around the school is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good resulting in good progress.
- The provision for the pupils' personal development is good and results in very positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and positive relationships.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good.
- The provision for extra curricular activities is very good.

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

- The setting of work that builds consistently upon the pupils' prior attainment.
- The balance and depth of the curriculum, especially in relation to geography, history and religious education, in order to raise standards.
- The coherence of school management and the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

On balance, the improvement since the last inspection in 1997 is satisfactory. The school has effectively addressed the key issues identified in the previous inspection report. The most notable improvement is in the quality of education provided for the youngest pupils and the standards they achieve. In addition, the consistent and co-ordinated effort to support the pupils' personal development has been effective. Similarly the schools' partnership with parents is more productive. However, although there is now no unsatisfactory teaching the matching of work to the pupils' prior attainment and the subsequent marking to support good progress is inconsistent. Similarly, although standards have improved for the younger pupils they have fallen in

some subjects for the older pupils. Although the breadth of the curriculum has improved this is sometimes at the expense of depth and balance, particularly in Key Stage 2.

## 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				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	D	C	D	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	E	C	D	D	
Science	E	D	D	D	

When the children enter the nursery, their attainment in most areas of learning is slightly below average. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy. The children make sound progress through the nursery and reception classes and when they enter Year 1 their attainment is in line with expected levels in most areas. Nevertheless, the children remain slightly behind in their speaking, reading and writing skills, and they are not likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

The school's results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 dipped noticeably following the previous inspection in 1997. However, the results in recent years have improved significantly. An analysis of results for 2001 shows that the pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 was securely average overall. In contrast, attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 was just below average overall. However, the improvement in the Key Stage 2 results over time is in line with the national trend. The school's assessments for this year indicate that results at the end of both key stages will be broadly average overall. The inspection findings confirm that the Year 6 pupils make steady progress in their work and attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average. The majority of the pupils are achieving reasonably well but the higher-attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.

Although the inspection findings show that standards in the other subjects are broadly in line with expectations, there are a few areas of significant weakness. For example, the standards achieved in history and geography are below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. In addition, attainment in religious education at the end of both key stages does not reach expectations.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils show very positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils are clearly aware of the school's expectations and behave well both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are effectively supported to develop very constructive relationships with one another and with teachers and other adults.
Attendance	The attendance levels are above those found in primary schools nationally.

These aspects are strengths of the school that contribute positively to the development of the pupils' self-esteem. Consequently, the children enjoy coming to school and working hard to do their best.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching during the inspection was good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The evidence gathered by examining the pupils' past work and teachers' records and planning indicates that, over a longer period of time, the overall effect of the teaching on the pupils' progress has been satisfactory. The school has experienced significant changes of personnel during the past three years and this has undoubtedly affected the continuity and consistency of the teaching.

The teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and competency in ICT is frequently good. The school now provides a relevant and interesting curriculum for the younger pupils in the nursery and reception classes that supports this development. In addition, the school has successfully embraced the guidance offered by the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and significantly enhanced learning resources in information and communication technology. Similarly, the school's consistent approach to classroom management and the inclusion of all pupils results in the children generally remaining well focused on their learning. The effective deployment of the teaching assistants supports the pupils' learning to good effect. This is particularly so for the pupils with special educational needs. However, the provision of work that systematically builds upon pupils' prior attainment and the quality of marking are inconsistent. This means that in some areas the pupils do not progress as well as they might do.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. A broad and often exciting curriculum is provided, but sometimes at the expense of depth and balance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school effectively identifies and supports the pupils who have special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	As a result of good provision, the pupils are willing to take responsibility and show initiative. They clearly understand right and wrong and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and respond well to them. However, some of the risk assessment procedures are ineffective.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. The provision for Key Stages 1 and 2 is enriched most effectively through a broad range of extra-curricular activities. However, the focus upon literacy and numeracy results in some imbalance in the curriculum. For example, some subjects are taught neither regularly enough nor in sufficient depth for the pupils to achieve well. The school has strengthened the partnership with parents and this is now satisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership effectively establishes a caring ethos but needs to improve certain management procedures to make them coherent and consistent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the school and fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities to sound effect.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A significant amount of information is gathered but procedures to ensure it is effectively evaluated are not securely in place.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes sound use of its delegated budget and also enhances provision through involvement with the EAZ project.

The leadership and management of the headteacher, senior staff and governors are satisfactory on balance, but are characterised by both strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher promotes the self-esteem of the pupils and staff very effectively. There is a shared commitment to improvement, but the coherence of school management and the rigour of self-evaluation procedures are both in need of improvement. When initiatives are carefully planned, pursued, monitored and evaluated they are often effective as evidenced with the development of the nursery and several EAZ projects. These issues also provide good examples of best value principles being applied effectively. The levels of staffing are good. The accommodation is adequate and the imminent expansion of the nursery building and the adjacent outside area will improve facilities. The levels of educational resources are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children enjoy coming to school and working hard to do their best.</li><li>• The teaching is good and promotes good progress.</li><li>• It is easy to approach the school with problems or concerns.</li><li>• The teachers encourage good behaviour and help the children to become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The provision of homework</li><li>• The information about their children's progress</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with the overall positive views of the parents. The inspection findings are that the school's arrangements for homework and the information given to parents about the pupils' progress are both satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Since the last inspection there has been considerable fluctuation in the school's results in the national tests. Between 1997 and 1999 there was a fall in standards in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. But over the past two years results have improved considerably. In 2001, the Year 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics, combining Level 2 and the higher Level 3, were broadly average in comparison to schools nationally and to those in similar circumstances. Analysis of last year's results in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was close to the national average in all three subjects. However, the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was below the national average. Overall, the results in 2001, combining Level 4 and the higher Level 5, were below average in comparison to schools nationally and to those in similar circumstances. However, the results in English were marginally better as they were close to the national average. The trend in the test results for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science over time is in line with the national picture. There have been variations in the overall results of girls and boys over the years, but no clear pattern emerges. The inspection evidence shows that all pupils are treated equally and consequently these variations are likely to reflect the capabilities of different cohorts. The school's assessments for this year indicate that results at the end of both key stages will be broadly average.
2. When the children enter the nursery their attainment in most areas of learning is slightly below average. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy. The children make sound progress through the Foundation Stage and when they enter Year 1 standards are in line with expected levels in most areas. Nevertheless, the children remain slightly behind in their speaking, reading and writing skills, and they are not likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. This is mainly because the range of their vocabulary is relatively narrow, and they tend not to choose either reading or writing activities as part of their freely chosen play. Although some of the children have difficulty with pronunciation, most are able to reply to questions, albeit often with one word answers. By the time the children leave the reception class, some of them still form letters in an unconventional way or hold their pencil in an awkward grip. However, they listen well and some of the older children can be attentive for twenty minutes or so.
3. The current standards in English, mathematics and science are close to the national average at both key stages. As the pupils move through the school, they continue to listen attentively and develop the ability to reply using appropriate language. By the end of both key stages, their ability to read fluently, accurately and with expression is close to the expected levels. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6 most pupils use a cursive script, and they usually take care with the presentation of their work. Their spelling abilities are also improving and the current focus on teaching phonics is contributing significantly to their progress. Spellings are frequently learned for homework, and when these are linked to other work it helps the pupils to appreciate the value of improving their skills. They recognise patterns in spelling and this helps both their reading and writing. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress in communicating their mathematics using the correct language, symbols and vocabulary when speaking and writing. They show a sound grasp of mental arithmetic strategies and generally apply these effectively to aid their calculations. In science the pupils show reasonable knowledge and understanding across the differing aspects of the subject. However, a thorough scrutiny of work provides only limited evidence of scientific enquiry.
4. Several initiatives are being used effectively to raise standards in English and mathematics. For example, the literacy and numeracy strategies are both now well established within the curriculum. Furthermore, good use is made of additional funding to target the needs of specific groups of pupils through both Additional and Early Literacy Support groups and also by running Booster Classes. Funding from the EAZ provides support and training for the staff in teaching spelling and writing more effectively. The classroom support staff have received relevant training about these initiatives and are deployed to good effect throughout the school. As a result, the basic skills are being taught well, resulting in the pupils often making good progress in these aspects of their learning. Similarly, the work for pupils with special educational needs is carefully considered so that they also make good progress. They are often given additional support by teaching assistants, and this is effective in meeting their specific needs. A part-time

teacher also takes some pupils and helps them to work successfully towards the targets that have been identified for them in their individual education plans. The higher-attaining pupils however, are not consistently achieving well enough. This is often as a result of them being given the same work as their classmates, and on many occasions this is insufficiently challenging. **This is a key issue for action.**

5. Although the inspection findings show that standards in the other subjects are broadly in line with expectations, there are a few areas of significant weakness. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the expected levels in art and design, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and music. In physical education no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, but standards in Key Stage 2 are as expected. The standards achieved in history and geography are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. For example, the pupils' general knowledge of world geography and their understanding and use of co-ordinates in map reading are below what is expected. In history, the pupils have only superficial knowledge of the periods of history they have studied, and have underdeveloped skills of historical enquiry and investigation. Moreover, their attainment in religious education at the end of both key stages is below expectations. For instance, the pupils in Year 6 show limited understanding of either the messages or meanings in Bible stories, such as The Parable of the Sower. Their knowledge of other religions is scant, and they confuse some of the main practices and artefacts from the main world religions by thinking, for example, that Diwali is a celebration associated with Judaism. **These are key issues for action.**

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

6. This is an aspect of the school in which the strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection have been consolidated. The pupils display very positive attitudes towards their learning and involvement in the life of the school generally. In lessons, their approach to the tasks set is generally enthusiastic and they are prepared to tackle any challenge with determination and evident enjoyment. The pupils' very good relationships with their teachers provide them with a good measure of security so that they can feel confident in asking questions and suggesting ideas. This was also evident in the way they felt free to approach members of the inspection team, on the playground for example, to chat about their interests and experiences. The great majority of the parents feel that their children like school and there is virtually no unauthorised absence. Levels of attendance are above those levels found in primary schools nationally and most pupils arrive promptly for the start of the school day. They also take full advantage of the very good provision made by the school for activities outside of lessons.
7. Behaviour across the school is good, both in lessons and on the playground. The policy to support good behaviour is consistently applied and having a beneficial effect on the life of the school. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils know what is expected of them and are displaying a good level of self-control, even in lessons where the level of excitement is high. In a personal and social education lesson, for example, where the whole class was moving around asking each other questions, the noise level remained low and the pupils stayed on task, despite the novelty of the activity and its potential for uncontrolled behaviour.
8. The Foundation Stage children have positive attitudes to learning, are well behaved and co-operative. They learn their class rules and know what is expected of them. The children move round the school in an orderly fashion and during the well-organised lunchtime activities, they play sensibly together and know that it is fair to take turns and to share what they have. Some show great perseverance with activities, even those that they find difficult like large jigsaw puzzles and walking on stilts.
9. As the pupils progress through the school, they are given opportunities to assume a greater degree of responsibility and they respond well to them. When carrying out routine tasks and in caring for the younger pupils, many pupils were seen fulfilling their responsibilities in a mature and sensible way. A newly introduced "Buddy" system, for example, is giving the oldest pupils the opportunity to give sensitive support to the younger pupils on the playground. It was clear that those who wear the identifying yellow cap are regarded as friends by many of the younger pupils. The skills of mutual support and care are well developed by the oldest pupils. In a personal and social education lesson, where the pupils were reflecting on past achievements, many were able to suggest occasions when a fellow pupil had done well, even when the pupil concerned was struggling to remember past successes. Similarly, in a game of rounders all the pupils were asked to think of ways to help the team that kept getting out. Both teams were keen to make suggestions, such as "Look at the next post before running",

and as a consequence of these tips from their classmates, the team improved its score. The whole class was delighted by the improvement and encouraged the players by cheering them on.

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

10. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. Altogether, forty-six lessons were observed and none of these was unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when approximately one in ten (9%) lessons were unsatisfactory. Approximately a quarter (28%) of lessons were satisfactory, about a further half (51%) were good, and most of the remainder (19%) were very good with one excellent lesson (2%).
11. The school has experienced significant changes of personnel during the past three years and this has undoubtedly affected the continuity and consistency of the teaching. At the time of the inspection the very experienced deputy headteacher, who currently teaches Year 2, had only recently returned to work after long-term absence due to a serious injury. The evidence gathered by examining pupils' past work and teachers' records and planning indicates that the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall throughout this period but now consistently shows several good features. For example, the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and computing is frequently good. The school now provides a relevant and interesting curriculum for the younger pupils in the nursery and reception classes that encourages children to express themselves and to recognise and use words and numbers. In addition, the school has successfully embraced the guidance offered by the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and their associated support programmes such as the Additional and Early Literacy strategies. Moreover, the teachers often provide exciting opportunities for the pupils to apply their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and computing in other subjects. The teachers use the school's resources well and this clearly enhances the learning potential of many of the lessons. Furthermore, the teachers manage their pupils well and have established a productive ethos for learning in the classrooms. Overall, the effective deployment of the teaching assistants supports pupils' learning to good effect. This is particularly so for the pupils with special educational needs.
12. The consistent application of the school behaviour policy contributes positively to the effective management of the pupils. For example, all the practitioners in the Foundation Stage work well together and offer good models of courtesy for the children to emulate. They have consistent approaches to behaviour management and this helps the children to understand what is expected of them and how to behave well. The members of staff know the children very well and their kindly manner helps them to feel settled and happy. Similarly, the teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2 manage their pupils well and have established a productive ethos for learning in the classrooms. This was evidenced in several personal, social and health education lessons in which the children made at least good progress as a result of the trusting but appropriately challenging ethos established by the teachers. Similarly the pupils contributed to and benefited from interesting discussions about issues such as the reasons for having a school uniform, finding the most suitable material to build a raft for "Sneaky Sid" or choosing colours for the best effect.
13. The teachers often make good links between subjects. This usually results in exciting learning that provides genuine opportunities for the pupils to apply their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and computing in other subjects. For example, the production of historical accounts and scientific reports gives purpose to their writing. Art and design lessons develop speaking and listening skills through discussion about what a painting might be called, and computer programmes are well used to produce original art work and to carry out research about famous artists. Learning in mathematics is supported through the use of ICT to record data about the human skeleton gathered in science lessons and the control of a floor turtle.
14. The teachers use the school's resources well and this clearly enhances the learning potential of the lessons. For example, objects gathered during a visit to the Blue Planet by Key Stage 1 pupils promoted good learning in follow up work in geography, science and art. Similarly, the use of a skeleton model helped the pupils in Year 4 and 5 to understand a diagram of the human body that they had studied. In Year 6, the teacher brought in some good resources of her own to help the pupils to distinguish between certain rock types in their study of rocks, minerals and fossils. In addition, several teachers use exciting methods to gain the pupils' full attention, such as the use of puppets in English and hand actions or role-play in mental arithmetic sessions.

15. On occasions very good teaching was observed. For example, in the group reading sessions in the reception class, the teaching is very successful in helping the children to acquire new skills and learn more about books. In one lesson, a lesser able group learned that non-fiction books had an index, and that they were different from stories because they contained facts. The teacher very thoroughly ensured that the work was geared to what the pupils already knew, and built on this at an appropriate pace. Similarly in a formal letter writing exercise in Year 3 the teacher clearly knew the capabilities of her pupils and provided exciting work that challenged pupils of all abilities. This lesson also provided a real purpose for writing that fully captivated the pupils' interest. A very effective science lesson in the Year 4 and 5 class, about the human skeleton, provided a very good balance between teacher exposition and demonstration and investigation by the children. In addition research carried out as homework was applied in the lesson as the pupils named the various bones using both the common and Latin names
16. The current teaching team is very committed and works hard, but requires more guidance and direction to ensure good progress in all subjects for all pupils. Although most of the pupils make satisfactory progress overall, there are some inconsistencies in the ways that some groups progress across the school. The children with special educational needs are included well in the lessons and usually have help from one of the adults in the class. They do well in relation to their prior attainment, and are making up ground as they move through the school. Similarly the work in English and mathematics is frequently tailored to meet the differing needs of individuals. The higher-attaining pupils however, are not consistently achieving well enough. An analysis of their work throughout the school shows that they have often been given the same work as their classmates, and on many occasions this is insufficiently challenging. In some instances, across a range of subjects, the work provided has been covered earlier in the key stage and at a similar level. Consequently, it does not extend the pupils' learning. In addition, although the teachers regularly mark the pupils' work they do not consistently provide clear advice about how to improve the work. For example, in science most of the pupils' work is marked regularly, but there is insufficient feedback to the pupils about their achievement in this subject. Similarly, written comments in English work often refer solely to the accuracy of spelling and punctuation and do not help the pupils to know how well they have met the aims of that particular lesson. **These are key issues for action.**
17. Tasks involving reading, research and the learning of spellings and tables are all used appropriately as homework to support the learning in school. Each half term, the pupils in each class are set targets in English and mathematics. They are displayed in the classrooms and written in the relevant pupils' books. Some pupils are aware of what they are trying to achieve; others have little knowledge of what the targets mean and their purpose. This is a new initiative, and the staff is evaluating how to develop it so that the targets have the maximum effect on the children's learning and progress.

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

18. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and for religious education. It is broad and provides the pupils with a wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences that promote positive attitudes to learning. This is consistent with the findings of the last inspection. The school currently spends a considerable amount of time teaching literacy and numeracy. This is partly in response to the national initiatives and partly because of an identified need to raise standards in English and mathematics. This extra time is gained at the expense of other subjects and leads to imbalance within the curriculum. For example, the teaching of geography, history and religious education is currently too infrequent, particularly in Key Stage 2 and this restricts the pupils' progress. This issue was mentioned in relation to history at the last inspection and provides **a key issue for action.**
19. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be inappropriately planned to meet the needs of all the children. The school has implemented its action plan successfully to improve the quality of education offered. The curriculum is planned across the six recommended areas of learning using the nationally recommended guidance. Suitable use is made of the available space, but the curriculum for outdoor activities is to some extent still limited by the small play area adjacent to the nursery class. However, there are imminent plans to increase the size of the nursery classroom and to extend this outdoor play area.

20. Satisfactory policies and guidelines are in place to support the teachers' planning across the curriculum. However, there are no consistent whole-school systems for assessing the pupils' progress in most subjects. Careful consideration is given to planning the curriculum in the long term because each pupil spends two years in one of the three classes in Key Stage 2. However, this planning is only partly successful and leads to some of the current imbalance in curriculum coverage. For example, some of the themes in the science programme of study are repeated, whereas others have only scant coverage. Furthermore, some of the work is repeated at the same level for pupils of different ages in some of the Key Stage 2 classes. This is part of **a key issue for action**.
21. The literacy and numeracy strategies are now well established and new initiatives, such as the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1, are improving the range and quality of the activities to support the teaching of basic skills. Recent training in teaching ICT has improved the teachers' knowledge and confidence, and they now teach these skills well. A visiting secondary teacher liaises with the class teacher in Year 6, and the pupils visit the secondary school to smooth their transition. Links with other schools through the EAZ are successfully supporting curriculum development, particularly in English and ICT.
22. The school is conscientious in the early identification of the pupils with special educational needs and provides well for them. A draft policy reflects the requirements of the new code of practice and the school is beginning to make changes in its practice to meet those requirements. Additional adult support for pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned, and this helps them to make good progress. However, the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to provide for higher-attaining pupils, especially in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. A few higher-attaining pupils work successfully in classes with older pupils.
23. The provision for health education, drugs awareness and sex education is integrated appropriately into both the day-to-day work and the curriculum for science. Educational visits and visitors to the school play an important part in enriching the pupils' learning. For example, visits by the police, dental nurse and the library services are all used effectively for this purpose. Good contacts with the local community and businesses include involvement in projects concerned with energy conservation, communications and recycling.
24. The staff provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for a large number of pupils in Key Stage 2. They include clubs for music, sport, art and involvement in activities such as inter-school sports matches and local music festivals. All of these activities help to enhance the curriculum and to foster the very positive attitudes that the pupils show towards their learning.
25. The overall provision for the pupils' personal development is good and has positive outcomes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and is consistent with the findings of the previous inspection. The teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own experiences. For instance, in an assembly in which the pupils were invited to consider the importance of friendship. Discussion during personal, social and health education lessons develops insights into attitudes and values, such as the importance of contributing to team efforts. The teachers help to enhance the pupils' sense of self-worth, for example, by helping them to recall their achievements over recent years.
26. The provision for the children's moral development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The policies for behaviour, personal, social and health education provide a secure framework for promoting an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. This encourages the pupils to recognise the expectations placed upon them to behave sensibly. They are encouraged to recognise that qualities such as truthfulness, and fair play are valued in the school. The teachers make good use of incidental opportunities to promote moral development. For example, when a pupil in Year 1 protested that the class musical composition was not fair because the pupils playing the short notes had only one note to play. The inclusion of pupils in the setting of class rules, and in discussion about how and why they should be observed, provides a useful platform for discussion about moral issues. Involvement in environmental issues, such as recycling, also helps to raise their awareness of moral dilemmas.
27. The provision for the pupils' social development has also improved to a good level since the last inspection. The teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to share and work together, for example when they are using computers or discussing ideas. The teachers foster group discussion well, making

sure that the pupils take turns to speak and are courteous in listening to others. They encourage the pupils to take on responsibilities, such as looking after resources, caring for class pets, and acting as librarians. Day and residential visits also provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop their social skills. Performance in plays and concerts and participation in sports matches enable the pupils to learn about being part of a team and about interacting with different people.

28. The provision for cultural development remains good. Activities in history, dance, drama and music help to raise the pupils' awareness of cultures from other times and other countries. The holding of a multi-cultural week also helps the pupils to increase their breadth of understanding of different cultures. This is enhanced further through studies in art and literature. Awareness of local and national culture is raised during studies in history. The displays of work in many subjects throughout the school help to provide a pleasing aesthetic environment that contributes to the ethos of the school.

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

29. On balance the school makes satisfactory arrangements for the care of its pupils. The teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and respond well to them. The school has effective procedures for monitoring and promoting the progress of pupils with special educational needs and the behaviour and attendance of all pupils. However, the arrangements for recording most pupils' progress and identifying appropriate next steps in learning are inconsistent. In addition some of the risk assessment procedures are ineffective. **These are both part of key issues for action.**
30. The liaison arrangements between the nursery and reception class are good and help the children to settle quickly into school routines. As part of a well managed induction programme the children visit the school for weekly hall times, assemblies and occasional concerts and this helps them to become familiar with the school building. A recent initiative, the "story share" is working well. In this short session, the nursery children go into the reception class for a story, have an enjoyable time and get to know their new teacher and new classroom. It also provides the teacher with a good opportunity to meet the children and assess their listening skills informally before they enter her class.
31. The current arrangements for recording the pupils' attainment and progress are somewhat inconsistent and are not effective in ensuring the best possible educational guidance and the achievement of the highest possible standards for all pupils. This has a detrimental effect in two areas. The information that is gathered on the children does not consistently lead to differing levels of challenge in the work they are required to do. As a result, the more able pupils do not always make the best possible progress. In addition, the planning of lessons does not take sufficient account of what the pupils already know and can do. This limits the depth of study they can undertake in any given subject and sometimes leads to pupils of different ages undertaking work at similar levels. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is securely based on first hand observations. The quality of these observations is variable, but overall they are satisfactory. Some of the best record accurately the learning and progress of individual children, but others merely show what activities the children have engaged in. However, the children with special educational needs are identified quickly and suitable procedures are in place for their provision within the school and for the involvement of outside agencies.
32. The school has clear and helpful procedures laid down for child protection and these are actively followed by the teaching staff. Advice and guidelines are contained in the staff handbook and appropriate contact is maintained with the local authority where relevant.
33. A sub committee of the governing body carries out an annual health and safety audit of school premises. Although it deals effectively with routine care of the school building, it does not place sufficient importance on risk assessment and safe practice. A number of concerns were identified during the inspection, including the lack of clear directions on the routes to be followed out of the building in the event of fire and an absence of sufficient fire exit signs. The conservation area adjacent to the playground has been allowed to deteriorate to the point where it is no longer safe for children. There is also a potential risk to the pupils' safety when only one member of staff has to supervise more than thirty pupils across the road to the school field.
34. The school has effectively addressed the inconsistencies in its policy and practice in regard to the pupils' behaviour that were identified in the last report. All members of staff now maintain the same clear



expectations for good behaviour and, along with consistently good classroom management, this has created a stimulating and orderly environment in which the pupils can feel secure and work hard. The pupils' personal development is fostered through opportunities to take on increasing responsibilities as they move through the school, and there is an appropriate and challenging programme for their personal and social education. Another contributory factor to the pupils' personal support is the very good relationships between the staff and the pupils. The pupils reflect the value of the care they receive through their mature and friendly approach to school life.

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

35. The school's links with the parents are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when this aspect was identified as part of a key issue for action. The parents are generally positive about the school and appreciate the ease of both formal and informal contact with the staff. Information from the parents who returned the questionnaires indicates that they feel that their children like coming to school, that the teaching is good and that the school is helping their child to become a mature and responsible individual. The inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents. The main concerns raised relate to the information they are receiving about how their children are getting on and the amount of homework. The inspection findings are that both the amount of homework provided and the information about the pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. However, although the information in the annual reports on children has steadily improved in helpfulness over the past few years, it does not always contain sufficient detail of what the pupils know and can do and the progress they are making. Apart from English and mathematics, the emphasis is generally on the work covered and the pupil's personal development. Some parents also felt that there was not an interesting range of activities outside lessons and that the school did not work closely with them. The inspection findings are that the provision for extra curricular activities is very good when compared to that offered in most schools. In addition the inspectors judge the partnership with parents to have improved to a satisfactory level since the previous inspection.
36. The school values the views of parents and emphasises a partnership when introducing children to the nursery. Parents are offered a home visit, which many accept, and value the personal approach of the nursery staff. When the children start at the nursery, their parents can stay for as much of the session as they wish, and this helps the children to settle down until they feel confident to stay on their own.
37. A number of parents help the school by accompanying the pupils for swimming and on school trips. The annual production, which is a feature of the school, benefits from the active involvement of a small group of the parents who help with the costumes and scenery. Occasionally, parents with craft skills assist in class with activities such as cookery and art. There is an active Friends Association that organises social events through the year and raises valuable funds for the school. It also produces a joint newsletter with the staff that provides a useful channel of information for the parents about the life of the school. Termly letters about the topics to be covered in each class are another way the school involves parents in the work their children are undertaking, although they lack any specific guidance on how they might support the learning at home.
38. Parents are notified of their children's special educational needs early in the identification process and are encouraged to discuss these with the staff. They are invited to attend review meetings and to be involved with their child's learning at home.

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

39. On balance, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are notable strengths and some significant weaknesses. The headteacher promotes the self-esteem of the pupils and staff very effectively. He provides a very good role model in promoting the pupils' personal development within a caring ethos. This results in the pupils showing very positive attitudes to learning, exhibiting good behaviour and forming positive relationships. However, some of the school management procedures lack coherence and the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are not rigorous enough. **These are key issues for action.**
40. The leadership and management of the school are clear about their aims. In the case of those relating to the ethos of the school and the personal development of the pupils they have successfully achieved

them. For example, the consistent implementation of the behaviour policy, by all adults in the school, has brought about good improvement to the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Similarly, the headteacher is very clear about the exciting and broad curriculum that he wishes the children to experience. He has effectively promoted the development of a broad curriculum in particular for the youngest pupils. For instance, the provision of a nursery led to improvements both to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved in the Foundation Stage. These are both good examples of the positive way in which the school tackled some of the key issues raised at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. In both instances the initiatives were carefully planned, pursued, monitored and evaluated. The governors also play an important role in supporting the development of a positive school ethos. For example the relationship between the governors and staff is positive because each governor is linked to a year group and makes visits to classrooms to learn at first hand about the quality of education offered at the school.

41. Both the staff and governors have a strong commitment to the improvement of the school. The teachers all take their leadership and management responsibilities very seriously. For example, the co-ordinator for special needs has a good understanding of the procedures required and is adjusting practice well to meet the guidance in the new Code of Practice. She has good levels of expertise in this area and supports the staff effectively in writing individual education plans and in keeping track of the pupils' progress. In addition, the governor with responsibility for special needs is well informed about the new code of practice and how this is impacting upon the school. Similarly, the coordinators for English, mathematics and science are striving to support their colleagues in improving the quality of education provided. However, the establishment of management procedures that ensure optimum results from all the hard work and energy applied has yet to be achieved across other important areas. For instance, when analysing current arrangements to ensure curriculum balance and procedures for assessment, marking and target setting the leadership has not established a coherent approach that ensures that these activities are carried out in a consistent fashion. For example, the recent emphasis upon the teaching of literacy and numeracy has allowed some other subjects to have too low a profile. Furthermore, the English, mathematics and science co-ordinators files are intended to support the raising of standards, but they do not have a commonly agreed format. Similarly, record keeping systems are not in place for all subjects and where they do exist, for example in ICT, they differ from class to class. All teachers mark their pupils work, but again the quality of the marking is variable in content and in its effect upon the pupils' learning. These significant differences run counter to a whole-school approach that is readily understood and shared by staff, governors, pupils and parents.
42. The school has experienced significant changes of personnel during the past three years and this has undoubtedly affected the continuity and consistency of several aspects of school life. On occasions the leadership has responded very effectively to the challenges posed by this situation. For example, in ensuring the consistency of approach to behaviour management. However, this explicit guidance and support for staff, within a clearly defined framework, is not so well developed in other important areas of school life. The current teaching team is very committed and hard working, but requires more guidance and direction about how to ensure good progress in all subjects for all pupils. Although performance management procedures are in place they have yet to result in the drawing up of a co-ordinated strategic plan that explicitly links individual objectives with whole school priorities. The leadership is aware of the importance of providing reliable and easily measured success criteria within the performance management system. As part of this process the school holds a lot of useful assessment data about each child. However, the current procedures do not readily provide quantifiable and easily understood information about the progress of the pupils' each year or over longer periods of time. Although the teachers set improvement targets for their pupils in English and mathematics the provision of work that builds upon the prior attainment of all pupils is inconsistent.
43. The governing body has a good depth and breadth of experience and expertise and fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities to sound effect. However, the governors do not have a well-developed role in accounting for the performance and improvement of the school overall. A great deal of data is available about the school, but the procedures to ensure the effective evaluation of this information are not well established. For example, although an annual risk assessment is carried out the current arrangements to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address any issues arising are ineffective. When development priorities have clearly been identified the governors have deployed resources to sound effect. A good example of this is the allocation of teaching assistants throughout all classes to support the teaching and learning. The school makes good use of specific grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs and for the purchase of ICT equipment. In addition, the governors and

headteacher have also been effective in securing and using additional funding from the EAZ project. This is improving the provision of learning resources and therefore the quality of education provided.

44. The levels of staffing are good. The accommodation is adequate and the imminent expansion of the nursery building and the adjacent outside area will improve facilities. The levels of educational resources are satisfactory.

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

The headteacher and staff should:

1. Set work that builds consistently and systematically upon the pupils' prior attainment for example:
  - by making better use of the information gained from marking, assessment and test results.

Paragraphs 4, 16, 20, 29, 72, 85, 120

The governors and senior staff should:

2. Improve the balance of the curriculum in order to:
  - ensure it covers the full range of the programmes of study in all subjects,
  - raise standards in geography, history and religious education.

Paragraphs 5, 18, 86, 87, 94, 96, 117

The governors and headteacher should:

3. Introduce consistent and coherent management practice for example
  - improve the school's self-evaluation procedures;
  - ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements for risk assessment.

Paragraphs 28, 39, 112

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	22	12	0	0	0
Percentage	2	19	51	28	0	0	0

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

### 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)	11.5	163
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	30

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
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)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	14
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	27	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (88)	94 (94)	90 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	13	14
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	29	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (88)	87 (81)	90 (75)
	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)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	9	12	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	7
	Girls	10	9	12
	Total	15	15	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (72)	71 (75)	90 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	9
	Girls	12	10	11
	Total	18	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (72)	76 (75)	95 (83)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	138
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)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	363,371
Total expenditure	367,570
Expenditure per pupil	2,029
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,902
Balance carried forward to next year	14,703

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*





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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	35

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	43	9	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	66	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	40	20	3	9
The teaching is good.	60	34	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	40	23	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	6	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	46	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	17	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	37	46	9	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	51	0	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	26	11	6	17

## **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**

45. At the time of the previous inspection, the Foundation Stage was found to be an area in need of improvement. The provision was judged to be unsatisfactory because the planning was inappropriate and the children did not make sufficient progress. In the four years since then, the school has implemented a suitable action plan to bring about improvements, and the Foundation Stage curriculum is now a good feature of the school's provision. A sound policy is now in place and gives suitable guidance. The co-ordinator does not teach in the Foundation Stage, but has responsibilities for the performance management of the staff. She has an astute understanding of the school's current provision and is aware of the need to monitor the teaching and learning more frequently in order to identify and share best practice
46. A significant improvement in the school's provision is the well-equipped nursery that was opened in 1997. This offers part time places for up to twenty-four children, and aims to enable them to complete four terms within the nursery before they transfer to the reception class in the term in which they become five years of age. At the time of the inspection, the nursery class contained six children who were four years of age and seventeen three-year-olds; in the reception class there were three children who were still four years of age together with twenty three children who were already five years old.
47. When the children enter the nursery, their attainment is slightly below that of other three-year-olds in most areas of learning and particularly so in communication, language and literacy. The children make sound progress through the nursery and reception classes and when they enter Year 1 their attainment is in line with expected levels in most areas. However, the children are still slightly behind in their speaking, reading and writing skills, and they are not likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Nevertheless, the standards reached by the end of the Foundation Stage have improved since the previous inspection.
48. The teaching across the Foundation Stage is good on balance with some very good features in the reception class. One of the strengths, in both classes is the teamwork approach. All the adults work well together, valuing each other's contributions and offer good models of courtesy for the children to copy. They have consistent approaches to behaviour management and this helps the children to understand what is expected of them and to behave well. The staff know the children very well and their kindly manner helps them children feel settled and happy.

### **Personal Social and Emotional Development**

49. The staff understand the importance of this area of learning and plan a range of activities which promote independent learning and encourage the children to ask questions, seek answers and solve problems. Consequently, the children learn at a suitable pace and display increasing involvement in their activities as they grow older. The nursery curriculum is reasonably successful in helping the children to understand that they should take responsibility for their own learning by planning what they are going to do in the course of the session. Each day, a group of the children draw pictures in their planning books of the sequence of things that they wish to do. However, they do not always follow this plan, and when they are later asked to review their morning's work, some of them struggle to discuss what they have done. The time taken to review each individual's work causes some lack of concentration on the part of other children who are not directly involved in the activity. In the reception class, the children are given a more limited range of choices, and this effectively encourages them to persist for extended periods of time.
50. The teaching encourages the children to play together harmoniously and gives them practice in resolving social conflict. For example, when the big blocks were put out in the nursery, the staff were vigilant in ensuring that the children worked together well. The small group made a fire engine and the sensitive adult intervention ensured that everybody had equally important roles and that they worked together well taking turns and sharing the equipment. In the reception class, the children wait patiently for their turn, for example, when using scissors and when their teacher is busy with another group. They get on with things by themselves, like putting a sequence of pictures in order, and show enjoyment and pride in their

achievements. The children respond well to questions, and realise that in some instances they have a correct answer, and in others they can express an opinion. When playing outside they join in the chasing games together with the other children, but at other times, like assembly, know that they have to sit quietly.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

51. The teaching encourages the children to express themselves and most of them understand the nature of conversation. Although some still have difficulty in pronunciation, most are able to reply to questions, albeit often with one word answers. The children in the nursery talk to themselves and to each other during play, providing sound effects for such things as the fire engine or ambulance. In the reception class, the children's speech is developed soundly through question and answer sessions when they are encouraged to answer using a complete sentence. In both classes, the adults provide good models of language to help the children acquire negotiation skills, for example using phrases like "Please would you....?" or "May I...?" These models are having a positive effect and the children themselves are starting to include courteous language when playing with a partner.
52. In both classes, the range of the children's vocabulary is still relatively narrow, particularly with regard to the use of adjectives and adverbs in their speech. The teachers are aware of this and try to redress it, for example, by stressing these parts of speech when reading a story. The staff also try to extend the children's vocabulary incidentally. For example, in recalling their recent visit to the farm, the nursery nurse asked some of the children to recall the sights and sounds of the farm, and to remember some of the new words that they had learned, such as "udders". However, some opportunities for vocabulary extension are missed. When a group of children in the nursery were directed to the modelling table and were requested to start painting the boxes, there was insufficient discussion about the materials and what they might make with them. In consequence, the excellent opportunity to discuss size, shape, and colour was lost. The children in both classes listen well and some of the older children can be attentive for twenty minutes or so. The children look at the person who is speaking, and show by their expressions that they are concentrating hard. When they go to their activities, few need reminding of what is to be done, showing that they have listened attentively.
53. The classrooms have quiet areas where books are displayed, but the children tend not to choose these as part of their freely chosen play. The teachers understand how vital reading skills are, and make these areas attractive, but they need to monitor more carefully which children use them and how long they stay there. In directed activities, such as the group reading sessions in the reception class, the teaching very successfully helps the children to acquire new skills and learn more about books. For example, a lesser able group learned that non-fiction books had an index, and that they were different from stories because they contained facts. This lesson was successful because the work was geared to what the pupils already knew, and developed at a pace appropriate to the children's understanding.
54. The children's writing is slightly below expected levels, and as with reading, they do not regularly choose the writing areas as part of their freely chosen play. The teachers demonstrate that writing has an important purpose, for example, in recording thoughts and ideas, but some of their handwriting is not a good enough model for the children to emulate. By the time they enter Year 1, some of the children still form letters in an unconventional way and a few still hold their pencil in an awkward grip. Most of the children know that letters have to be written in a certain order to have a particular meaning, and that writing is linear in form. The higher-attaining children put together a simple story of three or four sentences, but their handwriting is still untidy and they sometimes forget to leave spaces between their words.

### **Mathematical development**

55. The staff provide a range of activities to engage the interest of the children and help them learn about mathematics. The children enjoy the singing of number rhymes, like "Five little Speckled Frogs," and this helps them to remember how to count back from five to zero. They know how to count to ten by the time they leave the reception class, and many handle larger numbers confidently. A good feature of the teaching that has a positive impact on the children's learning is the "brain gym" session at the start of some of the reception class lessons. In these sessions, the children perform a series of hand actions that helps them to concentrate on what the teacher is saying and doing. This is then followed by a few

minutes of mental arithmetic when the children learn helpful methods for counting on. In one lesson, for example, the teacher instructed the children to “put the big number in your head” and in consequence the children were able to give the correct answer to the addition problem. By the time they enter Year 1, the children recognise common shapes, like circles and squares, and the more able children recognise a few three-dimensional shapes. They have an appropriate mathematical vocabulary and are starting to learn the language of comparison such as “taller” and “shorter” as a result of successful teaching that builds on their prior attainment.

56. In the nursery, the staff offer numerous opportunities for the children to use numbers purposefully, for example, counting the children present each day, or the pieces of fruit on the plate. The teaching is most effective when it helps the children to have positive dispositions towards their learning and encourages them consistently to try hard with counting and matching activities. The teaching is less effective when it does not engage the children’s interest, for example, a dice game in the nursery when the children had to recognise the numeral and clap the correct number of times. The group of children doing this had quite different abilities; the ones that found it easy lost interest, and the one pupil who found it difficult shied away and needed encouragement to take part.

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

57. There was little specific teaching of this aspect during the inspection, but observations of the pupils at play, conversations with them, and an analysis of the school’s records shows that attainment is within expected levels. The children know some of the landmarks on their journey from home to school, and are able to suggest what some of them are used for. They know that the level crossing helps to stop the cars “crashing into the trains” and that the post box is a useful feature in the village. They know that it would take too long to take a letter to Oswestry and that the post van collects letters and takes them to “a big place” where they get sorted out. They name other occupations such as a farmer, fire officer and police officer and have a reasonable understanding of what these people do.
58. The children are aware of the natural environment, name features of common plants, and are keenly interested in the rate of growth of the ones in their classrooms. The farm visit by the nursery has aroused their interest in animals and the accompanying photographs show how much they enjoyed such experiences as stroking one of the pigs and feeding a lamb. These experiences make a strong contribution to the children’s spiritual development and are valuable too in developing their social skills. The reception class children are starting to be aware of the nature of belief and join in prayers appropriately. A very good feature of the provision is the wide range of activities organised, particularly in the nursery, to extend the children’s appreciation of other cultures. For example, they have celebrated Ethiopian New Year, Rosh Hashanah, Diwali, and the Japanese festival Shichi Go San.
59. The children in the reception class use the computers confidently and are eager to learn more about them. They use the mouse to move an icon around the screen and predict what will happen before they click on it. The nursery children use the listening centre and are aware of other forms of technology, like mobile phones. They are developing an understanding of uses of technology in the world around them and know, for instance, that the bar scanners in the supermarket “know what you’ve bought”.

### **Physical development**

60. The curriculum provides a range of suitable opportunities, and the teaching builds on the children’s developing skills to promote confidence and independence. For example, the reception children are encouraged to manage their own fastenings and only to seek help as a last resort. This is successful, and when changing from a physical education lesson, most of them got dressed unaided. The lesson itself was very successful in helping the children to improve their balance and agility and to improve their hand to eye co-ordination when throwing and catching beanbags. The teacher concentrated on key factors, like getting the children to stand two steps apart so that they encountered success, before moving them further apart to provide the appropriate extra challenge. The children move with good awareness of space, and of each other, and clearly love the opportunity to be physically active. They show reasonable co-ordination and balance, and are able to keep themselves still when required.
61. The children in nursery experiment with different ways of moving, and use the small play area confidently. The teaching is enthusiastic and encouraging, but is not always effective and does not always focus

sufficiently on skill development. For example, the children were not taught the correct grip to use with the hockey sticks, and so some children gripped them like a racquet. The hockey sticks were in use at the same time as the stilts, which was rather ill considered. The children using the stilts needed to concentrate on their own movements without the extra challenge of having either to step over passing balls or avoid swinging sticks.

62. In both classes, the teaching helps the children to use small tools like scissors and spatulas correctly, but more attention needs to be paid to the way that some children hold pencils. The children are also given ample opportunity to handle different textures and improve their dexterity. In the nursery, for example, the children were able to squash and roll play dough and see how this felt compared to shaving foam. The members of staff consistently emphasise to the children the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In the nursery, the children are encouraged to eat the fruit on offer and the staff talk to them about the effect of exercise on their bodies.

### **Creative development**

63. Ample opportunities, both planned and incidental, help the children to make steady progress through this area of learning. Regular routines such as singing in the nursery class help the children to improve their pitch and rhythm. In one lesson, for example, the children improved their clapping in time to the music from the good lead offered by the teacher. They enjoy the actions to accompany the “Dingle Dangle Scarecrow” and they are keen to use the picture props when joining in another farmyard song.
64. The children's paintings are typical of their age groups across the two classes and clear progression can be seen over the course of the Foundation Stage. They develop from broad swathes of colour into much finer detail including recognisable representations of what the children imagine and remember. They work successfully with ready-mixed colours, colours that they have mixed themselves, and other media, such as chalks and crayons. They explore texture and shape by using different coloured paper in their collages, and when sticking they know that it would be wasteful to use too much of the adhesive.
65. The children in the nursery class build creatively with the large and small construction kits, and are aware of basic principles in design. For example, they know that their models will need to be sturdy if they are to sit on them, and they adapt them to new uses, for example changing a steam engine to a fire engine. They make the most of these materials and see the opportunity to use the longer pieces as “ladders” to help them rescue people that they imagine are trapped in a building. The children enjoy playing pretend games in their role-play areas. Some of the imaginative play helps to reinforce key skills like numeracy, for example, when the children count pulse rates in their hospital play.

### **ENGLISH**

66. The inspection findings indicate that current standards are close to the national average at both key stages: this is similar to the judgement made at the previous inspection.
67. Several initiatives are being used effectively to raise standards. The literacy strategy is well established and good use is made of additional funding to target the needs of specific groups of pupils through both Additional and Early Literacy Support groups and by running Booster Classes. Funding from the EAZ provides support and training for the staff in teaching spelling and writing, and this in turn enhances the pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics. The work for pupils with special educational needs is carefully considered so that they make good progress. They often receive additional support from the teaching assistants, and this is effective in meeting their specific needs. A part-time teacher also takes some pupils and enables them to work successfully towards targets that have been identified in their individual education plans. The teachers often set tasks for the higher-attaining pupils that build well on their prior learning. Occasionally, however, they are given work that is insufficiently challenging and this slows their rate of learning. Analysis of national test results over several years shows that there is no consistent relationship between the performances of boys and girls
68. By the end of both key stages, levels of attainment in speaking and listening are as expected. The pupils listen attentively to their teachers. The teachers' enthusiasm both stimulates and sustains the interest of the pupils, who listen attentively to what is being said. The skilful use of puppets in a Year 2 lesson caught the pupils' attention and helped them to focus their attention and listen carefully. The teachers'

clear instructions enable the pupils to settle quickly to their tasks. For instance, pupils who were learning to use commas to signify additional information in sentences watched closely as the teacher demonstrated what they were to do, and then settled to their tasks quickly and sensibly. The teachers are successful in encouraging the pupils to speak up in discussion. This was clearly evident when the pupils in Year 4 expressed opinions about the wearing of school uniform. During the discussion, the teacher skilfully rephrased some of their comments in a way that not only demonstrated the correct use of standard English, but also conveyed the message that the pupils' ideas were valued. The teachers use praise well to encourage speaking skills and this gives the pupils confidence. In a Year 6 lesson, skilful questioning encouraged the pupils to offer ideas about suitable content and language to be used when writing in journalistic style.

69. The pupils' skills in reading develop satisfactorily as they move through the school. By the end of both key stages, their ability to read fluently, accurately and with expression is close to the expected levels. The teachers successfully teach the pupils to use a range of techniques to help them read difficult words, sometimes breaking words into separate sounds. On other occasions, the pupils use either pictures or the sense of the story to help them to work out what a word might be. The pupils are introduced appropriately to non-fiction books and learn how to use contents and index pages to access information. In Year 1, they enjoyed finding out about plants both from books and on computer. The recently refurbished library holds a good range of books and the pupils express enjoyment in finding information from books. One pupil spoke enthusiastically about the factors that give rise to volcanoes and what causes them to erupt. Labels and written information on display around the school convey the message that reading is important. The pupils particularly enjoy reading the "Big Books" that are often used during literacy lessons. In Year 2, the pupils were fascinated by a story of two monsters, which the teacher made very interesting. The pupils listened intently and were eager to predict what might happen next and to guess at the meaning of some words that were new to them.
70. The development of the pupils' handwriting shows satisfactory progress through both key stages. Correct letter formation, uniformity of size and neatness all improve at a satisfactory pace. By the time the pupils reach Years 5 and 6, most of them use a cursive script. They usually take care with the presentation of their work. The teachers provide a good range of types of writing, including stories, non-fictional accounts, letters, diaries and note making. The pupils plan their stories well and show satisfactory progress in their understanding of how they are structured. They often produce a first draft of a story and then edit their writing, but focus mainly on correcting spelling and punctuation, only occasionally altering it in order to improve the sense or make it more interesting. Satisfactory use is made of information and communications technology for word processing, although this is mainly used for typing work that has already been written, rather than for initial drafting.
71. The teachers make very good links between literacy and other subjects. For example, the writing of historical accounts and scientific reports provides good opportunities for the pupils to practise their literacy skills and gives purpose to their writing. Similarly, in a Year 1 class, when teaching her pupils to write labels for a diagram, the teacher reminded her pupils of current work in science on naming the parts of plants. The pupils' spelling abilities are improving and the current focus on phonics is contributing significantly to this. Spellings are frequently learned for homework, and when these are linked to other work the pupils appreciate the value of improving their spelling skills. They recognise patterns in spelling and this helps both their reading and writing. Pupils in Year 6, when learning about mnemonics, used words they were trying to learn in connection with their current work in geography. The use of correct punctuation develops satisfactorily through both key stages. Older pupils generally make accurate use of capital letters, full stops and question marks, and are beginning to make greater use of speech marks and apostrophes. In all subjects, the teachers remind the pupils of correct punctuation and this helps to reinforce their understanding.
72. All of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, and much of it was good. The quality of the relationships that the teachers have established with the pupils encourages them to want to learn. The teachers make learning interesting and this fosters positive attitudes in the pupils. Occasionally, the lessons are too long, the pupils begin to lose concentration and the quality of learning is reduced. Although most work is marked, the quality of the marking varies considerably. The teachers do not consistently write comments that help the pupil to know what they have done well and what they should do to improve. Written comments often refer solely to the accuracy of spelling and punctuation and do

not help the pupil to know how well they achieved the aims of that particular lesson. **This is part of a key issue for action.**

73. Tasks involving reading, research and the learning of spellings are all used appropriately for homework to support the learning in school. Each half term, the school sets targets for groups of pupils in each class that are written into the back of their writing books. Some pupils are aware of what they are trying to achieve, but others have little knowledge of what the targets mean and of their purpose. This is a new initiative and the teachers are deciding how to develop it so that the targets have maximum effect on the children's progress.
74. The co-ordinator works conscientiously to support the staff and to raise standards. She has led training for the staff and has observed all her colleagues teaching, but has not been involved sufficiently in analysing the assessment data and determining subsequent action. She is working hard to develop her knowledge and skills in order to promote the raising of standards in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. The inspection findings indicate that current standards are close to the national average at both key stages: this is similar to the judgement made at the previous inspection. The pupils show positive attitudes to mathematics and generally work well to make sound progress overall.
76. Several initiatives are being used effectively to raise standards. For instance, the numeracy strategy is now well established within the curriculum. The school also makes good use of additional funding to target the needs of specific groups of pupils, for example, through Booster Classes and the deployment of teaching assistants in all classes.
77. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a secure grasp of mental arithmetic techniques and can count on and back in tens from any two-digit number. They know what each figure in a two-digit number represents and most pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100. In both mental and written calculations, they recognise number sequences involving odd and even numbers and are beginning to appreciate the concept of multiples and multiplication as repeated addition. Most pupils are aware of standard measurements and can measure in centimetres, with reasonable accuracy. They also have a secure understanding of the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 6, a majority of the pupils has a secure understanding of working with four and five digit numbers showing awareness of the most significant digit when estimating and rounding off. This also applies when they are working with numbers with up to two decimal places. Many children also check the reasonableness of their answer to addition and subtraction calculations using numbers of this size. They recognise and understand the properties of various two-dimensional shapes and can measure angles, perimeter and area.
78. The teaching is consistently at least satisfactory and is often good. A particular strength is the way that the teachers manage their pupils well and establish a productive ethos for learning in their classrooms. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and set clear objectives, which are then explained clearly to the pupils. The children respond positively and are eager to answer questions and to explain their methods of calculation. The teachers use the time spent on mental calculations productively and maintain a good pace in these activities. Their subject knowledge is secure and they often use interesting approaches to make the learning fun and practical. For example, following a good recall of previous learning, the pupils in the Year4/5 class quickly grasped the concept of parallel sides in both regular and irregular polygons through examining everyday shapes in the classroom. The classroom doors, windows and numerous other items were closely scrutinised and accurately described with reference to many properties including angles and parallel sides. The Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed a mental arithmetic speed challenge, "Cowboy", in which the winner of each duel challenged the next contestant. In most lessons, the teachers are quick to assess accurately what the pupils understand and this allows them to intervene appropriately when a child has problems. The teaching assistants play an important role in helping individuals and groups of pupils. They maintain the pupils' concentration and as a result of clear explanations and probing questions they contribute to their good progress. This is particularly noticeable of the pupils with special educational needs. Analysis of the national test results over several years shows that there is no consistent relationship between the performance of girls and boys. In the lessons

seen during the inspection, all pupils, irrespective of gender, were involved well in the teaching, were keen to learn and had positive attitudes to the subject.

79. The co-ordinator works conscientiously to support the staff. She has led staff training, scrutinised planning and observed teaching in order to identify the action required to promote the raising of standards in mathematics. These efforts are beginning to bear fruit.



## SCIENCE

80. The inspection evidence shows that standards at both Key Stage 1 and 2 are now within expected levels. At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils at both key stages attained well in relation to national standards. They made good progress through Key Stage 1 and sound progress through Key Stage 2. The current judgements indicate a drop in standards since the previous inspection. The school has appropriately identified the quality of education provided in science as a development priority.
81. By the time the pupils reach Year 6 they know that gravity is a pulling force and all the pupils, including those of lower ability, identify the forces in action when an object is floating in water. The pupils correctly identify magnetism as a force, understand that opposite poles attract, and are able to sort and classify materials as magnetic and non-magnetic. They understand that living things need food and water to survive and are becoming aware of the effect of diet on health. They know that certain substances are harmful to health and have covered drug misuse at an appropriate level. In Year 2, the pupils know the dangers of electricity and have designed attractive leaflets about keeping safe in the home. They know that a complete circuit is needed to light a bulb and have some understanding of how a switch works. They identify pushes and pulls as forces, and are starting to learn about buoyancy as the forces at work when an apple, for example, is placed in a tank of water.
82. The teaching is consistently at least satisfactory with some good features, particularly in Key Stage 1. Notable strengths lie in the ways that the teachers manage their pupils and the productive ethos for learning they have established in their classrooms. This helps the pupils to learn to respect each other and to respect the equipment with which they work. Some of the lessons attract the pupils' interest very well, and give a real purpose for investigations, such as finding the most suitable material to build a raft for "Sneaky Sid". Some of the teachers are very responsive to the pupils' suggestions and this helps all of them to learn. For example in a Year 2/3 lesson about buoyancy, the teacher asked how she could make an apple sink. When one of the pupils suggested pouring in more water "to cover it up" the teacher went ahead with the idea even though it was not in her plan. This diversion was very effective and the pupils remarked that "Now it's bobbing up even more!" In ways like this, the lessons are tailored to the pupils' particular needs and the teacher is able to glean important information about the pupils' conceptual development. In some other lessons however, the teachers stick to their plan, even when it is clear that not all of the pupils are keeping up with the work.
83. In last year's Key Stage 2 tests, the girls attained slightly better than the boys. This bucked a trend of the boys doing better than the girls, in some years significantly so. In the lessons seen during the inspection, there was no evidence to suggest that the teaching was biased in favour of boys or that the boys were out-performing the girls. Pupils of both sexes were fully included in the lessons and questions were directed equally to girls and boys. The girls seemed just as keen to learn and had positive attitudes to the subject.
84. The teachers use the school's resources to good effect in their lessons. For example, the use of a skeleton model helped the pupils in Year 4 and 5 to understand a diagram of the human body that they had studied. In Year 6, the teacher brought in some good resources of her own to help the pupils in their study of rocks, minerals and fossils and this helped them to distinguish between certain rock types. However, the lack of hand magnifiers in this lesson meant that the pupils were not able to study the samples as closely as they wished.
85. One of the weaker aspects of the teaching is the marking of the written work. Most of the pupils' work is marked regularly, but there is insufficient feedback to the pupils about their achievement in science. On too many occasions, the teachers' comments focus solely on technical aspects of English without giving the pupils an indication of what has been done well, and how they might develop their scientific thinking. In some instances, the teachers' comments include misspellings and give a poor model of technical vocabulary, for instance, writing "picture" instead of diagram. Remarks such as "Neat colouring" and "Super" do not help the pupils to move on, and bear little relation to the task itself. In a few instances, the work is not marked and so the pupils have no indication of how well they have done. **Improvement in marking is part of a key issue for action.**

86. Although most of the pupils make satisfactory progress across the school, there are some inconsistencies in the ways that certain groups of pupils progress. The pupils with special educational needs are included well in the lessons and usually have the help of one of the adults in the class. They do well in relation to their prior attainment, and are making up ground as they move through the school. However, the higher-attaining pupils are not achieving well enough. An analysis of the pupils' work throughout the school shows that they have often been given the same work as their classmates, and on many occasions this is insufficiently challenging. For instance, as part of their work on electricity, the pupils in Year 6 had to colour in a picture of Michael Faraday, complete a word search, and colour in a picture showing the dangers posed by electricity in the home. This is not atypical of work in other aspects of the subject and in other year groups; it is further exacerbated throughout the school by the overuse of low-level work sheets that give insufficient intellectual challenge to the pupils. In some instances the work has been covered earlier in the key stage and repetition of the topic at much the same level fails to move the pupils on sufficiently. The work should be based on the pupils' prior attainment and better matched to their needs and abilities. **This is a key issue for action.**
87. One of the school's priorities is updating the planning and teaching of science. This is highly appropriate because some of the themes in the programme of study are repeated several times, whereas others have only scant coverage. Electricity and plant growth appear frequently, for example, but work promoting scientific enquiry is less evident. Some of the work that is revisited, is not revisited at a higher level, for instance work about plants in two of the Key Stage 2 classes. Overall the curriculum for science lacks coherence and should be reviewed as part of **a key issue for action.**

## ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. At both key stages, standards in these two subjects are in line with expected levels. This indicates a decline since the previous inspection when standards in art were above expectations at Key Stage 2, and standards in design and technology were above expectations at both key stages.
89. In Year 6, the pupils produce pictures from studies of Monet and Seurat which show that they are being introduced to the work of famous artists. Their paintings in the style of Monet show that the pupils have thought hard about the tones they might use in their work. Most of them understand the benefit of adding an horizon to their landscape paintings and a few of the higher-attaining pupils are starting to show form by adding shading and shadows to their work. A few of these pupils have a good understanding of colour values and know that by choosing colours like ultramarine and crimson for a sky, their painting will have a vibrant feeling, reminiscent of a sunset on a hot day. Most of the other pupils are starting to learn about colour values from well-conceived lessons that demonstrate the properties of primary and secondary colours. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher used her subject knowledge well in her instruction to the pupils about complementary colours. In this lesson, the pupils made clear progress in their understanding of the importance of choosing complementary colours, such as red with green, to create an effective contrast.
90. The pupils have positive attitudes to work in the subjects and understand the importance of finishing their products to a suitable standard. The fabric work in Year 6, based on local landmarks, showed clearly that the pupils take a pride in their work. Similarly, their pictures of the level crossing, the post box and the bridge were finished off well, with neat stitching and some decorative embellishment with sequins and cord. These pupils also showed a high level of persistence as they made small pictures with cotton wool buds in an attempt to imitate the pointillist style of George Seurat. Throughout the lesson, they persevered in covering their paper with dots of colour and by doing so, some of the higher-attaining pupils started to appreciate how colour can be mixed by the eye as well as by the brush.
91. The curriculum covers a suitable range in both subjects and is supported well by visits to the local area and further afield. The recent visit to the Blue Planet by pupils in Key Stage 1 has been used well as a stimulus for some multi-media work to represent the rock pools by the shoreline. These pictures show that the pupils have thought carefully about their designs and have produced some pleasing results. The way that the pictures are displayed in the hall is especially effective and demonstrates that the work of pupils of all abilities is valued equally. Throughout the school, other displays of work in these subjects help to provide a pleasing aesthetic environment that contribute to the ethos of the school.

92. The teaching is satisfactory with some good features. A strong, common feature is that the pupils are well managed thereby enabling the teachers to focus on the lesson objectives. The teachers are also good at encouraging the lesser able pupils to take a full part in the lessons and their inclusive style ensures that boys and girls play an equal part. Suitable resources are provided to ensure that pupils who are left-handed are in no way disadvantaged. The use of sketchbooks throughout the school is good and helps the pupils to try out ideas for work in art and in design. These sketchbooks show that the pupils have been encouraged by their teachers to jot down ideas for models, to label parts and to add notes to help them subsequently. Another good feature of the teaching is that sufficient emphasis is placed on evaluative elements of the subjects. In a lesson about bread in Year 3, for example, the pupils were guided well in their choice of adjectives to describe the taste, texture, smell and appearance of a range of different breads. The work in their books also shows that the pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own products and to suggest ways in which they may be improved.
93. In both cases, the teachers make good links with other subjects and this reinforces the learning and application of key skills. In a lesson in Year 4, for example, speaking skills were extended through a discussion about what a painting by Edward Hopper might be called, and learning in English is also reinforced by such activities as the designing of book jackets. Throughout the school, good links are made with information and communication technology. The pupils use the computers frequently to produce their own pictures, and the older pupils are starting to make good use of them for research about artists. Learning in science is strengthened when the pupils design posters warning about the dangers of electricity, and when they have to use their scientific knowledge to power their models or torches. Some of their products have been put to practical use. For example, the range of games made by the pupils in Year 6 was used at a social event and raised £146.00 for the school funds.
94. One of the weaker elements of the teaching is that the timing of some of the lessons is out of kilter with the planning. The ends of some lessons are rushed and there is insufficient opportunity for the main teaching points to be reinforced. In one instance, the pupils were not requested to tidy their own things away before they went home, and in consequence the teaching assistant was left with the chore. On another occasion, the pupils were not reminded about hygiene before handling food because of the pressure of time at the lesson. A common element is that there is insufficient thought given to the ability of different groups of pupils and in some instances this is holding back the more able. An analysis of the work and lesson observation show that most of the starting points are the same for pupils of all abilities, and there are too few instances of different levels of challenge being given to different groups of pupils. **This is part of a key issue for action.**
95. There is currently no coordinator for design and technology and the headteacher has nominal responsibility for the subject until a new teacher is appointed. There are no agreed procedures for assessment in the subjects, and there is little recorded evidence of pupils' progress over their time. A portfolio of work has been assembled for art, but its potential as a tool for improvement is limited because it does not show the context of the work, the level that it illustrates and the skills employed in its execution.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

96. By the end of Key Stage 1, the standard of the pupils' work both in geography and history is in line with expected levels and this matches the findings of the previous inspection. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below what is expected and this represents a fall in standards since the previous inspection. **This is a key issue for action**
97. At Key Stage 1, discussion with pupils and analysis of their work indicates that they have satisfactory knowledge of changes over time as they look, for example, at the differences in kitchen design, household appliances and transport from different periods. They know facts about the life of Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. They express their likes and dislikes of the local area and gain sound understanding of maps as they make drawings and add simple labels to show their route to school. In Key Stage 2, there is insufficient depth in the teaching and the length of time between the topics in each of these subjects is too wide. This means that the pupils have difficulty remembering the knowledge and skills they have been taught and it is hard for the teachers to build sufficiently well on their prior learning. Discussion with the pupils and analysis of their work shows unsatisfactory progression in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the key stage. For example, the pupils' general

knowledge of world geography and their understanding and use of co-ordinates in map reading are below what is expected. Similarly, they have only superficial knowledge of the periods of history they have studied, and have underdeveloped skills of historical enquiry and investigation. The school successfully uses educational visits and the production of concerts and plays to enrich the pupils' experiences of history and geography at both key stages. A recent example was the production of a concert in connection with work about the Victorians.

98. No history was taught during the inspection. The quality of teaching observed in geography was good at both key stages. For instance, the pupils in Year 6 were fascinated by the teacher's demonstration of how both erosion and deposition affect coastlines. The teacher's skilful handling of discussion gave the pupils insight into these processes and they were able to show their understanding by writing accurate definitions of these terms. The pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in both subjects. In Key Stage 2 both subjects are taught neither regularly enough nor in sufficient depth for the pupils to achieve well. Much of the written recording in both subjects currently relies heavily on worksheets that are often too easy for the higher-attaining pupils.
99. The teaching of geography has already been identified as an area for development in the school development plan. The history co-ordinator is well aware that more artefacts need to be used to enrich the pupils' learning and to help them to develop skills of historical enquiry.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

100. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment is broadly in line with expected levels and is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection. The school has made good use of the additional funding provided by national government both to improve the quality of the pupils' work and to enhance the teachers' expertise and confidence in teaching this subject. The school now has a generous ratio of computers to pupils and makes good use of laptop machines, a computer-linked projector and an interactive screen for lessons to develop the pupils' computer skills. At other times, the computers are used with a range of software, including word processing packages, art programmes and databases, to support learning in a range of subjects.
101. The quality of teaching is good. A particular strength is the way in which the teachers give very clear instructions and demonstrations that both interest and motivate the pupils. In discussion, the pupils express enthusiasm for their work and show an eagerness to learn. This was very evident in a Year 3 lesson in which the pupils were giving instructions to a screen turtle. They watched and listened carefully to the teacher's well-paced demonstration and then focused intently on their own work, co-operating very well, taking turns and supporting each other.
102. Information and communications technology (ICT) is used to good effect to support learning across a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4, who were learning about the human skeleton, took turns to enter data on to a spreadsheet. In a geography lesson, a computer-linked microscope was used effectively to enlarge a shell and project it on to a screen. The enlarged picture was printed out and used to help the pupils capture more detail in their drawings. Good links were made with mathematics as pupils gave directional instructions to a screen turtle to make it draw triangles, squares and hexagons. In this lesson, the teaching built skilfully on what had gone before, revising the previous work on giving directions and then showing the pupils how to use the 'repeat' command.
103. The pupils in Year 1 worked hard to navigate an Internet site in order to find information about plants. They learned how to scroll down and how to hover the mouse over certain words and pictures in order to make more information appear on the screen. The teacher's initial use of the interactive screen to teach these skills, followed immediately by the pupils themselves working in pairs on laptops, enabled them to practise these new skills successfully whilst they were still fresh in their minds.
104. The pupils' work shows that they use word processing to produce written reports, stories, raps and posters with imaginative layout and the use of different fonts and colours. However, little opportunity is provided for the pupils to draft their writing on a computer, which would provide more practice in using editing skills and increase their familiarity with the keyboard.

105. Although a good range of suitable activities is provided, some of the work done in different year groups is quite similar. This reflects the previous gaps in learning, mainly of the older pupils, when learning resources were not so readily available. The recently enhanced provision of computers and the increased expertise of the staff are being well deployed to support the pupils to build upon their prior learning. However, a comprehensive system for the teachers to evaluate and record the pupils' progression in learning ICT skills is not yet in place. Although some records are kept there is no common whole school format in use. There is currently no co-ordinator for ICT and the headteacher has nominal responsibility for the subject until a new teacher is appointed.

## **MUSIC**

106. By the end of both key stages, the pupils reach the expected levels and this matches the findings of the last inspection. The staff provides a wide range of musical experiences for the pupils, including performing, composing, listening and appraising. Instrumental tuition and extra-curricular clubs, such as those for singing and playing recorders and chime bars, enrich the pupils' learning. The school gives high priority to performing and provides all the pupils with opportunities to take part in concerts and singing festivals with other schools. The school recently produced a compact disk of the pupils' singing and playing. The pupils speak positively about these occasions and their enjoyment of the subject.
107. The teaching is consistently at least satisfactory, with several good features. The teachers provide frequent opportunities, both in assemblies and in lessons, for pupils to listen to and discuss music from a wide range of composers. For example, the pupils in Year 6 listened intently to Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy', and, after reflection, expressed the feelings which the music had evoked. Many described it as music which reminded them of celebration, and thought it might be played on a special occasion, such as a visit by the queen or as a parade passed down a street. The skilful prompting and questioning of the teacher enabled the pupils to identify the main instruments that were being played. The pupils' knowledge of musical terms such as 'tempo' and 'dynamics' develop well. However, there is no whole school system for recording their progress.
108. Younger pupils readily identify whether different sounds are long or short. In Year 1, the enthusiasm of their teacher sparked the pupils' interest and they thoroughly enjoyed making long 'moo' and short 'snap' sounds in response to animal pictures. The teacher was careful to involve all the pupils as they successfully grouped percussion instruments according to the length of the sound they make. The use of picture cards to represent long and short sounds helped the children to compose and then play a simple rhythm using percussion instruments.
109. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has worked hard to provide written guidance for her colleagues. She is keen to raise standards in music and has rightly identified the need to support the members of staff who feel less confident about teaching music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

110. On the basis of the three lessons observed in Key Stage 2, it is clear that the standards of pupils' work in games and athletics are in line with expected levels throughout the key stage. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' co-ordination, control and ball skills are in line with expectations, and they work well to improve their performance. Standards in games were higher at the time of the previous inspection when it was possible to observe a wider sample of activities. Standards in swimming are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. All the pupils have the opportunity to participate, and by the time they leave, most can swim 25 metres, and many swim much further. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, and so it is not possible to judge either attainment or teaching.
111. Throughout Key Stage 2, the teachers make very good provision for their lessons by setting down their plans appropriately, and identifying the objectives that they hope to cover within the course of the lesson. This enables them to convey clearly to their pupils what they will learn, and is helpful in keeping the lessons focussed on improving skills. Very good teaching ensures that the lessons are taught at a brisk pace and are timed well so that all elements of the plan are covered. Consequently, most of the lesson is well spent in vigorous exercise, but there is sufficient time for the pupils to warm up, to cool down and to reflect on their performance. The teachers set a very good example by changing into suitable sports' clothing and by demonstrating actions skilfully. During the warm-up in a Year 6 lesson, for

example, the teacher demonstrated the correct way to stretch the leg muscles and emphasised the importance of keeping the feet in the correct position. This helped the pupils to understand the importance of exercising the muscles correctly before vigorous exercise, and enabled them to improve their balance.

112. During the lessons the teachers are careful to point out safety precautions to the pupils, for instance, how to cushion their landing when jumping and to look carefully before throwing a ball. The teachers ensure that every precaution is taken before crossing the road to the sports' field and remind the pupils of the potential dangers. However, there is a potential risk to the pupils' safety when only one member of staff has to supervise more than thirty pupils across this road, particularly as the school is on a bend. **This is part of a key issue for action.**
113. The pupils clearly enjoy being physically active and appreciate the praise that they receive for their efforts. The teachers pick out those pupils who have improved their performance and commend this, rather than spotlighting only those pupils who are the best. This is very effective in helping the lesser able to improve their performance within the lessons. A further strength is the way that the teachers ensure that the pupils evaluate each other's performance in lessons. A familiar routine used in Year 4 and Year 5, for example, is to stop the class briefly and ask a pupil to demonstrate. The rest of the class are then asked, either "How can we make it harder?" for a pupil who is succeeding, or "How can we make it easier?" for a pupil who is struggling. The pupils offer thoughtful suggestions that prove effective in improving performance. For example, a boy who could bounce a tennis ball twenty times on his racquet was given the challenge to flip the racquet over each time, and this helped him to develop a flexible wrist action that others then tried to replicate.
114. Girls and boys are encouraged equally, and the teachers are even handed in their praise so that both sexes feel proud of their improving skills. A particularly good feature of the teaching is the way that the pupils are taught to work together and to appreciate each other's contributions, even when they are in direct competition with each other. For example, in a game of rounders all the pupils were asked to think of ways to help the team that kept getting out. Both teams were keen to help out and made suggestions, such as "Look at the next post before running", and as a consequence of these tips from their classmates, the team improved its score. All the pupils in this class were delighted by the improvement and encouraged players by cheering them on.
115. The teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and in one excellent lesson this enabled the pupils to noticeably improve their skills across a range of athletic pursuits. In this instance, the teacher made very good use of her assistant's skills so that all the pupils remained focussed and suitably challenged throughout the lesson. The assistant demonstrated how the pupils could improve their standing long jump skills by swinging their arms to increase momentum, and this enabled the pupils to jump further. The teacher herself demonstrated very well to other pupils, for example, that the ball should be in the crook of the neck before attempting a "shot putt", and the correct arm position before throwing a "javelin". Her subsequent vigilance in ensuring that they practised what had been demonstrated ensured that there was conspicuous improvement in performance.
116. The subject is enhanced through a wide range of sporting activity that takes place out of school hours. Competitive individual and team games enable the pupils to improve their sporting and social skills by taking part in activities that offer a challenge. Pursuits such as rugby coaching, life saving and attendance at an outward bound centre help the pupils to understand the importance of rules and how they can participate as a member of a team.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. There was very little religious education taught during the inspection week. An analysis of pupils' previous work and discussions with them shows that attainment is below the expected levels at both key stages. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection. **It is a key issue for action.**
118. The pupils in Year 6 had recently studied Easter and had remembered some of the main elements of the Easter story. However, they needed prompting to recall the name for Easter Day, and could neither remember the word "resurrection" nor understand that this was the cornerstone of the Christian faith. They remembered some of the Bible stories, such as "The parable of the sower" but could give no

indication about either their messages or their meanings. Their knowledge of other religions is scant, and the pupils confused some of the main practices and artefacts from the main world religions by thinking, for example that Diwali is a celebration associated with Judaism, and that Jews would study from the Muslim holy book, the Qur'an.

119. The subject is taught neither regularly enough nor in sufficient depth for the pupils to achieve well. However, the little teaching that was seen was satisfactory and related well to the work in other subjects. The good behaviour in the class enabled the teacher to focus on her teaching objectives. This resulted in the pupils learning at a satisfactory pace for most of the lesson, and enjoying handling the good resources that the teacher introduced. They learned that Christians use the sign of the fish to signify their belonging to the church, and they related this well to other signs that they knew. However, the following activity (where all the pupils coloured in a fish outline) did not make the most of the available time and was insufficiently challenging for the pupils. A common weakness of the teaching across the school is that it does not take account of the pupils' prior attainment and build sequentially upon this, and in too many cases the pupils have been given the same work, regardless of their ability. There are no regular assessments of pupils' work so the school has inadequate records in the subject to give the teaching sufficient direction.
120. Across most of the school, the work in the pupils' books lacks depth and is not on a par with what they attain in some other subjects. The work tends to be descriptive, rather than exploring meaning, and there is too little evidence of the pupils being asked to draw together the similarities and differences between religions. For example, work on friendship in Year 4 tends to describe the physical attributes of the friend, rather than focussing in on the nature of friendship. In Year 2, the writing about Harvest described what happened in the Harvest Assembly, rather than what harvest means and how people give thanks for the fruits of the natural world. In Year 1, however, there is ample recorded work and the pupils describe their feelings and empathise very well with those of others. For example, one of the higher-attaining pupils sensitively recorded her feelings about the nativity, and concluded from her study of Easter that "Judas was a "baddy" because he did not believe that "God was Jesus' Dad". The pupils in this class are asked to pose questions for themselves and respond well to those posed by their teacher, for example, when asked to consider what Heaven might be like. Attainment in this class is well within expected levels and the work over the course of the year shows suitable development. The marking of work in this class is better than in others and is interactive on occasions. For example one pupil was asked, "What did he feed them?" in response to some writing about Jesus feeding of the five thousand. Her response, "Bread and fish", showed that she had understood her teacher's question and the need to respond to it. The marking in other classes is superficial and attends mainly to the grammatical aspects of English, rather than to the development of pupils' understanding and improvement of the subject itself. Improvement in marking is part of a **key issue for action**.
121. Occasional visits support the curriculum and help the pupils to appreciate the lives of others. For example, a visit to the missionary ship "Logos" helped the pupils in Key Stage 1 to understand how one faith community dedicates itself to the Christian way of life, and visits to the local church also support their learning about Christianity. The school's programme of assemblies supports elements of the subject, and some of the pupils in Year 6 said how much they enjoyed watching the videos that are shown on some Thursdays. During the inspection week, assemblies on the theme of "Friendship" drew on stories from the Bible and emphasised well the nature of Christian fellowship. The headteacher engaged the interest of the pupils by participating in role play in the parable of the Good Samaritan in order to draw the pupils' attention to the need to take risks oneself and to put oneself out in order to be a true friend. Acts of worship and hymn singing also help the pupils to familiarise themselves with the nature of belief and to be respectful of different faith communities.