

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S C OF E (VC) FIRST SCHOOL

Bishopswood

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124236

Headteacher: Mr A Kirby

Reporting inspector: Mrs H Bonser
22870

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 March 2002

Inspection number: 196688

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whiteoaks Drive Bishopswood Stafford
Postcode:	ST19 9AH
Telephone number:	01785 840318
Fax number:	01785 840318
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Baxter
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22870	Hilary Bonser	Registered inspector	English, geography, music, physical education, religious education, Foundation Stage, special educational needs.	The school's results and achievements; Teaching and learning; Leadership and management.
9756	Kenneth Parsons	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development; Care and welfare of pupils; Partnership with parents.
30457	David Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, equal opportunities.	Curricular learning opportunities, personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA Ltd
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Church of England First School is a voluntary controlled school that draws about a third of its pupils from the rural village in which it is situated and the rest from neighbouring villages. The school is smaller than average in size, with 72 boys and girls from 4 to 9 years of age. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are above average overall. About ten per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is well below the national average. At present, none have statements of special educational need, which is below average. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, many of which are advantaged. The percentage of those known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Very few pupils speak English as their second language and none are eligible for additional support. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities. Over the last three years, the number of pupils attending the school has increased steadily. All but one of the current teachers have been appointed since the last inspection, including the headteacher, who took up his post three and a half years ago.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St John's School is now a good school with many strengths. Standards in English and mathematics have risen rapidly in the last three years because the quality of teaching is good. This means that pupils achieve well overall by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. Pupils behave well and are very keen to learn. The headteacher, governors and staff work together very well as a team to improve standards for all pupils and are fully committed to continuing this. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are now well above average and pupils do well because they are taught well.
- The headteacher provides good leadership, working closely and effectively with all staff and governors to overcome weaknesses and to bring about improvements in teaching and the standards of work.
- The school provides good support and guidance for pupils; together with the very good relationships between all members of the school community, this makes a strong contribution to pupils' very positive attitudes towards school.
- The school promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, successfully encouraging them to behave well and responsibly, to get on very well together and to work hard.
- The school provides a good range of relevant learning opportunities that help to interest pupils and motivate them to learn.
- The good partnership with parents contributes well to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work across all subjects are not high enough.
- Standards and pupils' achievement in all other subjects are not yet as high as they are in English and mathematics.
- The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. It has responded well to the issues noted at that time and other good improvements have been made. There are now schemes of work for all subjects, which help pupils to build on previous learning. The school development plan has become a useful tool for improving standards. There have been considerable improvements in assessment procedures, especially in

English and mathematics, and in the way that teachers use the information to help pupils of all levels of attainment do well, although there has not been time yet to develop this fully in other subjects. In addition to this, the overall leadership and management of the school has improved and is now good. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. A good programme of monitoring and support, together with a well-focused programme of in-service training, has helped to bring this about. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very well and consistently. As a result of all of this, standards have risen significantly in English and mathematics. There have been good improvements in the learning opportunities and environment of the school, contributing to the positive attitudes of pupils, which are very good. Better financial planning and management has increased the cost effectiveness of the school. There is a strong, shared commitment in the school to continue to raise standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A	A	A	B
writing	A	A	A	B
mathematics	B	A	B	D

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

The small number of pupils in each year means that the results of national tests can vary considerably from year to year. This reflects the differences between year groups in the relative numbers of higher and lower attaining pupils rather than sudden fluctuations in standards. Consequently, comparisons made of pupils' attainment with all schools nationally and with similar schools should be treated with care.

Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to all schools nationally. Compared to similar schools, results were above average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. This is because very slightly fewer pupils reached the higher Level 3 in that particular year group. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards were above average overall. Since the last inspection, results have improved significantly, rising more rapidly than the national trend. This was recognised by an achievement award from the Department for Education and Skills last autumn.

Pupils now achieve well overall. Standards on entry to the school are above average. Past work and lesson observations show that children achieve satisfactorily and standards remain above average overall by the time they leave the reception class. At the end of Year 2, and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, pupils achieve well and standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards in history are also above average at the end of Year 4. They are average in all other subjects. Children in the reception class are achieving satisfactorily rather than well, because this year they have had a number of different teachers, owing to unavoidable staff absence. Consequently, there has been some lack of continuity in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school is likely to meet the challenging targets set for this year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy coming to school, they are enthusiastic, eager to learn and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout the school both in lessons and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall; very good relationships between all adults and pupils in the school. Pupils act responsibly.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average.

The way in which pupils work together, show interest in their work and respect for others, whatever their level of need, is a particular strength of the school. All adults in the school provide very good role models for them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 overall quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. It was good or better in three-fifths of the lessons seen. It was very good, and at times excellent, in nearly a third of them. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. As a result, pupils now learn well in many lessons throughout the school. This, in turn, has led to improvements in standards and in the achievements of pupils of all levels of attainment. Teaching is now good in English, mathematics and science, where it was satisfactory before. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Teaching was satisfactory in religious education. Not enough teaching was seen in other subjects to make overall judgements. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, where a temporary teacher had just taken up her post. It was good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4.

The school now meets the needs of all girls and boys well, including higher attaining pupils. In well taught lessons across the school, teachers plan work thoroughly, taking good account of pupils' differing ages and levels of ability. They use skilful questioning to involve all pupils and use a good variety of methods and resources to give pupils well-matched, challenging and interesting activities. As a result, pupils concentrate well, work hard and make good progress. The difference between these lessons and those that were satisfactory, often lay in the expectations that teachers had of what pupils could do and how well they kept pupils focused on exactly what they should be learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; a wide range of relevant learning opportunities that interest and motivate pupils well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils have clear achievable targets and are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; good for spiritual, moral, and social development; satisfactory for cultural development

How well the school cares for its pupils	Well overall; a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' self esteem contributes very well to their personal development.
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The curriculum is enriched especially through the good links with the community and partner schools, well-used visits and visitors and a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school works well in partnership with parents and this also makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall; good leadership by the headteacher, supported by very good teamwork between all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall; they are taking an increasingly active and effective part in the management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; strengths and weaknesses are analysed increasingly well and result in effective action to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good; available money is used well to support the school's priorities.

The school works well to apply the principles of best value when making decisions. Staffing levels are good overall and the learning support assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. A satisfactory level of resources and sound accommodation, which is being improved well, are used effectively to create an interesting learning environment for pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Their children are well taught. They are expected to work hard, do their best and they make good progress. • The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents. • The school is approachable and responsive to their views and concerns. • The children are well behaved and the school helps them to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside the classroom. • The amount of homework given.

Inspection findings support the positive views parents have of the school. With regard to their concerns, the team found that there is a good range of activities beyond the classroom for a school of this size. Some parents felt too much homework was given and others too little. The amount given is in keeping with the school policy and it is used satisfactorily to support children's learning in class.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The small number of pupils in each year means that the results of national tests can vary considerably from year to year. This reflects the differences between year groups in the relative numbers of higher and lower attaining pupils rather than sudden fluctuations in standards. Consequently, comparisons made of pupils' attainment with all schools nationally and with similar schools should be treated with care.
2. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, based on average points, were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to all schools nationally. Compared to similar schools, results were above average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. This is because very slightly fewer pupils reached the higher Level 3 in that particular year group. Teacher assessments in science indicate that standards were above average overall. When comparing pupils' individual results with those they obtained in baseline assessments when they started school, it is clear that all achieved at least as well as expected and most achieved well. Variations between the performance of boys and girls overall are not significantly different, as boys do better overall than nationally. Since the last inspection, results have improved significantly, rising more rapidly than the national trend. This was recognised by an achievement award from the Department for Education and Skills last autumn. Lesson observations, evidence of past work and pupils' records confirm this positive picture. Standards at the end of Year 2, and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, are well above average in English and mathematics and above them in science.
3. Children's attainments on entry to the school, from analyses of the baseline assessments and discussions with teachers, are above average, although the proportion of relatively higher or lower attaining pupils varies from year to year. Children are achieving satisfactorily. Most are on course to exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the end of their reception year and to meet them in all other areas of their learning. Detailed records are now kept of individual progress through the school. These show that most boys and girls of all levels of attainment achieve well in relation to their prior attainment as they move through the school. There have been a number of different teachers in the reception class this year, owing to unavoidable staff absences. This is why there is a difference in the achievement of children in the reception class and in the rest of the school.
4. This is a good improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards and achievement were described as satisfactory overall. It has been brought about by good improvements in the leadership and management of the school and in the quality of teaching, which is now good overall, notably in English, mathematics and science. In English and mathematics, in particular, standards have been raised through a successful focus on fully challenging pupils of all levels of attainment and providing work in lessons that is well matched to pupils' differing needs, helping them to achieve well. Other factors include the increasing impact of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, which have been implemented very well, as well as the good use the school now making of initiatives, such as the additional literacy strategy. The good behaviour and positive attitudes that boys and girls of all levels of attainment have towards their work also contributes to their achievements. As a result, the school is likely to meet the appropriately challenging targets it has for the end of Year 2 and Year 4, as part of its wholehearted commitment to continuing to raise standards.
5. In English, pupils now achieve well overall in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Teachers provide a good number of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through discussions, role-play and drama. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, pupils listen very attentively to their teacher and to each other.

They respond thoughtfully in discussions and begin to build on each other's ideas. Standards in reading are also well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is partly because phonics and a good variety of ways for pupils to tackle unfamiliar words are taught in a consistent, well-structured way. Pupils are generally enthusiastic readers, and show a good understanding of what they read. Standards in writing are well above average by the end of Year 2 but above average at the end of Year 4. This is partly because recent improvements have not impacted yet on standards in Year 4. However, while pupils write in a good variety of forms, their handwriting and the presentation of their work in English and in other subjects are often untidy, with careless errors in spelling and punctuation. Teachers do not yet make enough use of information and communication technology to promote pupils' language skills.

6. Standards in mathematics are well above average in all aspects of the subject at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve well overall in relation to their previous attainment. This is a direct result of improvements in the quality of teaching and the very effective implementation of the national numeracy strategy. Teachers also make good use of their assessments to plan work that is matched well to pupils' differing needs. In general, the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' developing mathematical skills is not yet fully developed. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, when drawing timelines in history and graphs in science.
7. Standards in science are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve well overall, in relation to their prior attainment at the end of their reception year. Their investigative skills have improved since the last inspection and they use scientific language with accuracy and understanding. Teachers do not yet match work for pupils of differing levels of attainments as effectively as they do in English and mathematics because assessment procedures are not as well developed.
8. Standards in information and communication technology are average at the end Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' skills in word-processing, in particular, have improved since the last inspection. However, teachers do not make enough use of pupils' skills to support their learning in other subjects. This is partly because pupils' opportunities to use information and communication technology are limited as there is only one computer in each class at present. These will be improved significantly when the new computer suite is completed shortly.
9. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. They develop a good knowledge of Christianity as a result of a good variety of opportunities for this, and a sound understanding of aspects of Islam and Judaism. They show positive attitudes to the subject and respect for the beliefs and values of others.
10. By the end of Year 4, standards are average in art and design, geography, design and technology, music and physical education. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their previous attainment at the end of their reception year. As yet, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects are not as high as in the core subjects. One reason for this is that, since the last inspection, the school has focused appropriately and successfully on raising standards particularly in English and mathematics. Standards are above average in history and pupils achieve well because teachers use their good subject knowledge well in a good variety of challenging activities, including a wide range of visits and visitors, to enthuse and interest the pupils.
11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good gains in their learning, relative to their prior attainment. They make good progress towards their individual targets because they receive good support from the co-ordinator for special educational needs and their class teachers. Higher attaining pupils also achieve well as teachers give them appropriately challenging work. This is an improvement since the last inspection for both groups of pupils. The very few pupils with English as a second language are not in need of additional support for this and achieve well. No significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls were noted during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Overall, pupils' relationships, attitudes and behaviour are very good and a strength of the school, one which makes a significant contribution towards their attainment and progress. They have at least been maintained and in some cases improved from the levels achieved at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have very positive attitudes. They enjoy coming to school and are very willing to talk about their experiences of school life. They leave their parents without a fuss at the start of the day, and are prepared and ready to start work at their lessons. Some children, arriving as the classes were filing into the building, were seen to run up the path to the playground in order not to be left behind. Pupils complete their homework willingly, and a number of them take advantage of the range of activities the school has to offer. They have good involvement and interest in school activities. In class, their attitudes to their work were never less than satisfactory and were good or better in over three-quarters of the lessons seen. In general, they listen with interest, concentrate well and work hard. This reflects the care that teachers take to set the work that interests the pupils.
13. The behaviour of pupils in the school is good, an aspect appreciated by virtually all parents. Pupils generally conform well to the school's high expectations. Their sensible behaviour in Years 1 to 4 means that teachers do not have to spend much time maintaining order. In a Year 1 and 2 science lesson, for example, pupils' behaviour allowed the teacher to maintain a brisk pace of learning, which in turn enthused and stimulated pupils. The good behaviour of pupils in lessons has a clear benefit to the quality of learning taking place. Even in the less interesting lessons, pupils do their best, and most resist any temptation there may be to misbehave. Behaviour in the reception class is satisfactory, but less good than in the remainder of the school. The recent lack of continuity in the teachers available here has inevitably led to classroom expectations and routines being less well established. Although at times children in this class do listen carefully, they have a tendency to call out, and quite a few find it difficult to maintain their concentration for very long. Pupils' behaviour around the school is very good. The playground is an unthreatening place, with pupils playing happily together. Pupils feel able to bring attractive toys, such as electronic games, to school. No pupils have been excluded in recent years and this is a very good achievement. Neither parents nor pupils regard bullying as a problem, and any incidents of bullying or serious teasing that occur are quite exceptional to the normal run of school life. Pupils respect each other's and the school's property. They look after their environment well and there is no litter.
14. The established teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, whilst the newly arrived temporary teacher in the reception class had worked well to build good relationships with these children in the short time available to her before the inspection week. These strong relationships contribute to a productive mutual respect and partnership in learning. Teachers value the work of all pupils and they in turn are confident to ask for support and guidance when they need it; this has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils' relationships with each other also reflect the strong values encouraged by the school. The first of the school's rules is that pupils are expected to behave courteously towards one another, and they do. Pupils respect each other as individuals and understand the impact of their actions on others. They share resources well when working in pairs or in groups, and co-operate well, respecting each other's points of view. In a Year 1 and 2 religious education lesson, the children were very attentive as they listened to each other, and they felt secure letting their own feelings show to their classmates. Similarly, in another religious education lesson, this time in Years 3 and 4, pupils were confident telling the others about things that were precious to them for sentimental reasons, without embarrassment.
15. Pupils throughout the school pay attention to each other's ideas. They value each other irrespective of attainment levels, each pupil being accepted for their own ability to contribute. Inclusion is well established in the fabric of the school, with all pupils feeling part of the school community. Low and high attaining pupils work constructively together and no pupil is excluded from pair or group work. In a Years 1 and 2 physical education lesson, for example, boys and girls worked well together in their groups. Pupils in different years often know each other and

older pupils play with younger ones. Pupils have the confidence to enable them to relate well to each other and to adults. The whole school operates in a way that shows courtesy and consideration to each other and to adults.

16. When given the opportunity, pupils take initiative and personal responsibility well. In lessons, pupils carry out jobs such as handing out books willingly and this makes a significant contribution to the easy running of classes. Before assemblies, pupils set up the hall without adult intervention. Pupils willingly undertake such tasks as litter picking, replenishing the nuts in the birdfeeder, or sharpening pencils for reception children. They take pride in their work, encouraged by the way teachers value it. Children are keen to show what they have achieved, such as in a Year 3 and 4 history lesson, when they approached the inspector in order to display their research findings on Tudor England. Pupils appreciate the range of activities provided outside of lessons and they participate well in them. In many lessons, pupils are able to take some responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, pupils worked industriously because the class teacher had explained the lesson objectives to them and they were keen to meet them.
17. Attendance is well above the national average for a school of this type. Unauthorised absences are few in number and pupils arrive at school punctually, allowing an efficient start to the school day. There are no particular groups of pupils with poor attendance. A number of parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time, which can affect their attainment. Rates of attendance show an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses in teaching noted at the time of the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and is now good and pupils learn well in many lessons. This has made a considerable contribution to the improvements in standards and pupils' achievements and continues to do so. The quality of teaching was good or better in three-fifths of the lessons seen. It was very good, and at times excellent, in nearly a third of them. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The consistency of the overall quality of teaching is a particularly good feature as most of the present teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. A key factor in this has been a well-planned and ongoing programme of monitoring, support, and in-service training, together with good teamwork and the sharing of expertise. Teachers now provide challenging and interesting work for all pupils, whatever their level of attainment, especially in English and mathematics, enabling them to do well. These were particular areas for improvement in the last report. Improvements in the quality of planning also provide better continuity of learning for pupils.
19. Teaching is now good across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This consistent picture makes a key contribution to the good achievements of pupils in these subjects. Teaching in religious education was satisfactory overall. In design and technology and information and communication technology no teaching was seen. Not enough teaching was seen to make overall judgements in art and design, history, geography, music and physical education. In Years 1 and 2, the small amount of teaching seen in geography was good, and satisfactory in music and physical education. In Years 3 and 4, the small amount of teaching seen in art and design was good and excellent in history. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4. In the Foundation Stage, where a temporary teacher has just taken over the reception class, the teaching was satisfactory.
20. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school, helping pupils to achieve well and to make good progress in many lessons. One reason for this is that teachers have worked hard to implement the national literacy and numeracy strategies very well and consistently, effectively helping pupils to build on previous learning. Teachers' expertise has been strengthened through ongoing training, including the sharing of good practice by the co-ordinators, who are leading teachers in literacy and numeracy respectively. This helps teachers, for example, to use questioning and intervention well to extend pupils' skills and understanding. In a very well taught literacy lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher made very good use

of a well-chosen text to extend pupils' ideas about the characters' feelings, by challenging their initial responses. In this way, for example, a lower attaining pupil was able to suggest that the mother in the story liked fish because she asked Yim Sung to go and get her some to eat. A higher attaining pupil suggested that Yim Sung was 'trustworthy', 'because he went fishing when he was asked to'. When asked for another example, she added, 'He didn't open the boxes until he needed to'. These were good examples of how the teacher used well matched, skilful questioning to help pupils of all levels of attainment to make very good advances in their learning during the lesson. In a very well taught mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher used his subject knowledge very well to help pupils learn and use specific mathematics terms accurately. He made good use of pupils' strategies and errors to help them improve their mental skills of multiplication of money.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school. This helps pupils to make good progress towards their targets. In one such well taught lesson with a Year 2 pupil, the very positive and patient approach of the co-ordinator clearly built the pupil's confidence. The care taken in preparing attractive and varied resources showed that his work was valued and motivated him well. The very precise targets for the session, the clarity with which the co-ordinator explained confusions over 'our' and 'hour', 'call' and 'cool', and the close partnership with the parents through the homework book, all contributed to the good progress made in the lesson.
22. In many lessons, there are strong features that contribute to the positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning. Teachers manage their pupils in a very consistent and positive way. This is based on the very good relationships and mutual respect between all staff and pupils throughout the school. Teachers help pupils to meet their high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work by creating a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. They have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils and use this sensitively to support them and to promote their self-esteem and personal development. They listen to and value pupils' ideas, helping them to develop their confidence in expressing them. This reflects the aims of the school very well. Many good examples of this were seen in lessons across the school. It means that all pupils are keen to share their ideas, irrespective of their level of attainment, and learn readily from their mistakes.
23. The good links between subjects evident in many lessons, the frequent use of first hand experiences on visits or with visitors and well chosen resources helps to make learning relevant to pupils at all ages and captures their interest. Drama and role-play is also often used effectively in lessons to enhance learning. A particularly striking example of this was seen in an outstanding history lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 about the plague in Tudor times.
24. Teachers work in close collaboration with their learning support assistants. They brief and deploy them well, so that their skilled and valued support has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Many good examples were seen of teachers using effective questioning techniques to both consolidate and extend pupils' learning, ensuring, for example, that boys and girls of all levels of attainment were equally involved. In many lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies to keep up a brisk pace and sense of urgency, for example, by using time targets effectively. As a result, pupils listen well and work hard. In most lessons, they settled very quickly and sensibly to group activities, showing how well they can concentrate and co-operate with each other.
25. The impact of such features on pupils' rate of learning was illustrated in a very well taught numeracy lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The teacher planned the tightly structured lesson very well. Her high expectations of pupils' behaviour and concentration, together with her very good management of them, were reflected in the energetic and purposeful pace of the initial mental activity. She used probing questions help them recall previous work on two-dimensional shapes and to describe them in precise mathematical terms. She then moved their learning on rapidly to extend their knowledge and understanding of three-dimensional shapes through well chosen, practical activities that were very well matched to the differing ages and levels of attainment of the pupils, so that all made very good progress in their learning.

26. There were some elements of teaching, where there was some inconsistency between teachers and between subjects. These often made the difference between good and very good teaching and satisfactory lessons. In some lessons, although teachers had clear objectives in their planning, they did not explain these clearly to pupils or encourage them to evaluate their work against them at the end of the lesson, so that they knew how well they were doing. Teachers often advise pupils how they can improve their work as they are working in class with groups or individuals. However, in their books there are few comments to help pupils to know precisely how to improve the content of their work. Untidy work, poor handwriting and careless spelling and punctuation are often not corrected or commented on, indicating that that teachers' expectations over the presentation of pupils' work are not high enough. Although individual targets are agreed with pupils, no evidence was seen of teachers making effective use of them in lessons to help pupils focus on their specific areas for improvement.
27. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work in the core subjects, which are reflected in the good planning and the challenging activities set for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Teachers make very good use of the good assessment procedures in English and mathematics in particular, and increasingly in science, to focus their planning. One very good example of this was the way that teachers briefed learning support assistants to note pupils' responses, especially in oral work. These were later discussed with the teacher so that, together with the careful evaluations of pupils' progress against the weekly learning objectives, subsequent planning could be adjusted accordingly. This has contributed significantly to the improvements in standards and pupils' good achievement in these areas. However, in other subjects, where assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, there is more variation in teachers' expectations and the effectiveness with which work is matched to pupils' differing ages and levels of attainment. This was evident in some lessons and in past work. This is one reason why pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory rather than good in most of these subjects, in spite of making good progress within some lessons.
28. Teachers help pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills satisfactorily. A few good examples were seen of information and communication technology being used effectively to support the learning objectives in other subjects. However, in general, teachers do not make enough use of opportunities to use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, including that of pupils with special educational needs.

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

29. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good throughout the school and have improved significantly since the last inspection in 1997. At that time, the curriculum was inconsistently planned and it was incomplete for the under fives. There was no detailed, whole-school, long-term curriculum plan, and there were no schemes of work for most subjects. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and almost all the issues have been addressed. Sufficient teaching time is allocated to each subject. Policies and schemes of work are in place. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned, taking good account of the early learning goals for children of that age.
30. The curriculum is now well balanced and broadly based. It provides a good range of quality opportunities overall and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A suitably strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of English, mathematics and science. Longer-term planning has improved dramatically with the introduction of the national numeracy and literacy strategies. In almost all other subjects, national guidance is used to ensure that pupils can build appropriately on previous learning.
31. The school has rigorously implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies. These are successful in developing pupils' basic skills and they have had a very positive impact on the rising standards in English and mathematics. The pupils also benefit greatly from special

curriculum events such as Roman, Viking and Tudor days, which successfully enrich the curriculum. There are good cross-curricular links between subjects such as history, design and technology, literacy and drama when pupils study topics on the Tudors. These enhance the learning opportunities, increase pupils' interest and motivation and help to raise standards.

32. A weakness remains in the use of information and communications technology. Although all of the strands of the curriculum are taught, opportunities are missed to use pupils' skills to enhance their learning and raise standards in other subjects. Planning for the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is not effectively in place.
33. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. Topics such as healthy eating are dealt with in lessons and other issues are discussed in religious education, in assemblies and through the use of visitors. There is a formal programme in the summer term for Year 4 pupils that includes drugs misuse, when the school nurse provides valuable support. The sex education policy, supported by the school's governing body, requires that all questions relating to this topic will be discussed sensitively by the class teachers as, and when, the subject arises.
34. The provision for equality of access and opportunity is satisfactory. Staff are very aware of the imbalance in numbers between boys and girls and are careful to take account of this, for example, when grouping pupils. All aspect of school life are open to boys and girls, irrespective of their level of attainment, background or culture. The small size of the school helps teachers to use their very good knowledge of each pupil to meet their differing needs well. Both staff and pupils are valued by all and visitors are made to feel very welcome.
35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good across the school. Their progress is monitored carefully and results in their targets being frequently updated, sometimes on a weekly basis, helping them to do well. The special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers prepare pupils' individual education plans together and this helps to ensure that work is well matched to their needs and that pupils receive effective support both in lessons and when withdrawn for specific help.
36. Some parents expressed concerns about the extra-curricular activities for their children, but the inspection team found the plans for this year to be good. They include a number of sporting activities for pupils such as tag rugby, hockey, cricket and football. There are opportunities for pupils to play musical instruments such as violins, keyboards, guitars, and recorders. Normally, there is a school orchestra and choir, but this is not functioning at the moment because of the temporary absence of one member of staff. There is a lunch-time and after-school gardening club run by the headteacher. Visitors to the school, who enhance the curriculum, include the local clergy, artists, and a retired teacher who works with history classes. Pupils make well-planned visits to places of interest such as Boscobel House, Weston Park and Rugeley power Station to stimulate their interest and support their learning in different areas of the curriculum.
37. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The school encourages people from the community to visit the school and to share some of their own experiences with pupils. The local community policeman has been a regular visitor to the school and the local clergy make significant contributions to the life of the school.
38. There are good links with particular institutions, especially the Kidsclub and nursery that share the same site, and the middle school. The transfer links between the schools and from the nursery are good. The teachers often meet with colleagues from local schools to discuss matters of educational interest and for in-service training. The school has established a robust partnership with Wolverhampton University and collaborates in the training of students each year. There are also valuable connections with Telford and Stafford colleges.
39. The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a strength of the school. This is an improvement on the satisfactory arrangements found during the last inspection. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development well. In assemblies,

individual and group interactions with their pupils, teachers consistently encourage pupils to recognize and celebrate their own individuality and worth. Pupils have regular opportunities to join in prayer, sing hymns and feel positive about themselves. Some opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual issues are sometimes missed in assemblies, although good examples were seen in lessons, as in a religious education lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Daily acts of collective worship are of a broadly Christian character and meet statutory requirements. Signs, symbols and displays around the school emphasise and celebrate the school's close links with the Christian Church and its beliefs.

40. The school fosters pupils' moral development well. Teachers unfailingly recognise and encourage pupils' personal efforts in class and in assemblies. In assemblies, through the theme of the week, and in class discussions, moral themes are given considerable emphasis. There are consistent approaches by all adults to rewarding effort and applying consistent, fair but firm disciplinary measures. Much of the school's provision is embedded in its everyday life and teaching. The headteacher and all staff provide good role models. They consistently treat people, other members of the school community and each other with courtesy and respect.
41. Arrangements for promoting pupils' social development are good. There is a strong sense of community, which is fostered by the promotion of common and inclusive values by all who work in the school. Teachers encourage pupils to work co-operatively through paired and group activities. Many pupils have opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, for example, by acting as monitors in class and during assemblies. Each day, they prepare the worship table, the CD player, and the overhead projector for morning assemblies. During break and lunch times, older pupils often assist younger ones with various tasks. There is a vibrant house system, which successfully encourages pupils to work together, and they enthusiastically celebrate the acquisition of house points.
42. Promotion of the cultural dimension of pupils' development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their cultural heritage, and they benefit from visitors to school and from a series of well-planned visits to places of interest. Teachers successfully heighten pupils' awareness of the work of famous artists such as Hans Holbein, Van Gogh and Matisse. They introduce them to the richness and diversity of other cultures. For example, they celebrate the life of St David, they study Indian and Chinese cooking and other aspects of their culture and discover the colour and intricacy of design in various forms of art, from Batik to Cretan. However, as there is no whole-school planning of the multicultural aspects of learning, some opportunities to develop multicultural awareness are missed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school places particular emphasis on pupils' social and personal development. A strong ethos permeates the school, which means that in some areas there is less need for formalised procedures than in a larger or less personal school. St John's School has a very strong sense of community. Virtually all parents believe that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals.
44. The school's procedures for child protection need to be improved. The headteacher has not received recent training for the role and the school does not do enough to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and school procedures. The school policy is quite general and needs to be more specific in guiding staff on what is expected of them. Health and safety provision is effective. The school has adopted local education authority guidelines. Governors and headteacher are active in ensuring that health and safety procedures are in place and followed. The school site generally provides a safe environment and routine health and safety procedures and testing are in place. No unsafe practice was seen in lessons during the inspection. The school provides a caring and supportive environment. All teachers are active in the pastoral care of their pupils and make considerable efforts to address the welfare of individuals when they need it. This contribution appreciated by both parents and pupils. This support allows pupils to feel safe and valued and to concentrate on their learning, thus helping them to progress to the best of their ability. Overall, procedures for child protection and ensuring

pupils' welfare are satisfactory.

45. The permanent class teachers know their pupils very well. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, although largely informal. Formal records are kept on the few pupils who find it difficult to meet the school's expectations. Throughout the school, teachers successfully meet their individual needs and are effective in supporting them when required.
46. The school has sound procedures to monitor attendance and encourage pupils to come to school regularly. Parents co-operate well with school procedures. There are systems in place to identify problems with attendance as they emerge, although the strong support for the school from parents means that these are not often needed. There is rarely a need to involve the Educational Welfare Officer if problems arise.
47. There are good procedures to monitor and promote positive behaviour. These are not just the formal systems. Rather, they take the form of a general unspoken consensus throughout the school that there is a natural way to behave, and that pupils will conform to it. This expectation and ethos is strong throughout the school. There is an effective system of rewards and sanctions, with pupils motivated in particular by the house point system; these are earned through good work or behaviour. Pupils encourage each other to perform well to help their house gain the house trophy. Pupils also value seeing their names entered in the school's celebration book; most pupils take pleasure from their good work or behaviour. The school encourages self-discipline well. All staff, including teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors, are active in reinforcing the school's expectations consistently.
48. The standards of behaviour achieved owe much to the relationships between staff and pupils. The school has a behaviour policy, although much of it is general advice to teachers rather than defining a whole school approach. It lacks detail. The policy for combating bullying also lacks rigour, and is too vague to provide staff with real guidance on how to act. Again, the policy is not as good as the practice. The strength of this small school lies in its relationships and expectations. The school's approaches to encouraging good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are effective, based on establishing a climate for behaviour that emphasises the positive.
49. The arrangements for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are good and are being implemented in accordance with the Code of Practice. The school cares for its pupils with special educational needs well. Baseline assessments and, as necessary, screening tests are used well to identify pupils' needs at an early stage of concern, so that appropriate support can be given. This contributes to the good progress that they make. Records are up to date and individual educational plans contain specific targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers give good support to help pupils meet these. The school works closely with the local education authority advisor to maintain this good level of care.
50. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Assessment was described as unsatisfactory in the previous report. Since then, there has been a substantial improvement in assessment procedures and in the use made of the information from these. The school has introduced good procedures to assess children's attainments when they start school, which are repeated at the end of their reception year to ascertain their progress. The information is also used well to set targets for pupils for the national tests at the end of Year 2, so that their rate of progress can be monitored and additional support or challenge given where necessary. Children's progress is also monitored carefully against the objectives of the early learning goals.
51. There are now good procedures for assessing pupils' progress in mathematics and in English. Teachers assess pupils' progress against the key learning objectives of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, as well as maintaining detailed records of specific areas such as reading and phonics. The optional national tests are now used in Years 3 and 4, together with other regular tests in spelling and mathematics. The school is also helping to pilot a commercial

assessment scheme, which is linked to the National Curriculum and to individual and school target setting. This has already produced useful additional information, both to monitor pupils' individual rates of progress in English and mathematics and to identify weaker areas in their learning. This is being extended to other subjects and will complement the necessary improvements that the school has identified in other subjects to update the current procedures in those.

52. There are now more opportunities for pupils to be involved in self-assessment as they agree individual targets with their teachers and monitor their progress towards these on large target boards in the hall. Parents are also involved in this process at spring term parents' evenings, which involves them well in their child's learning. However, these are not yet as effective as they might be in moving pupils' learning on, as during the inspection, for example, teachers made no use of these targets in lessons to help pupils improve their work.

53. The school makes good use of all of the information from these procedures to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement further. For example, the quality of information in English and mathematics now enables teachers to plan more precisely, so that pupils of all levels of attainment are given more challenging work. This is also an improvement since the last inspection and has contributed well to the rise in standards. Information from baseline and school assessments and national test results are used to track the progress of individual pupils carefully as they move through the school. The headteacher and class teachers carefully review this information to identify any pupils who are not making the expected progress. Appropriate support is then provided through, for example, use of the additional and early literacy strategies, or individual programmes of work. This early identification and intervention to support individual difficulties or to extend higher attaining pupils contributes significantly to the good achievements of pupils. Information from national tests is analysed well to identify areas of relative weakness. This leads to effective adjustments being made to the curriculum and in teaching and learning to raise standards further. Good examples of this, this year, include improving the range of writing in Years 3 and 4, and adjustments to the emphases in guided reading in Year 2.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The partnership with parents has been improved since the satisfactory situation noted during the last inspection of the school and is now good. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting with inspectors held positive views on all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They endorse the good standards of behaviour achieved and think the school helps children to become mature and responsible. They think the school is well led and managed. There were just a few comments about the amount of homework and the range of activities outside of lessons. Inspectors' findings do not support either of these concerns. Homework, including reading books, is appropriate for this age group, whilst the range of extra curricular activities is good for a first school of this size.

55. The major concern of some parents has been about the number of different teachers in the reception class this year and the lack of continuity that has resulted. Although the school has done its best to solve a problem over which it has no control, it has not kept parents well enough informed about the situation to alleviate their very real worries. For a few parents, this problem has adversely coloured their view of the school's management. Despite this, overall, parents' views of the school are good and it enjoys the confidence of its local community.

56. The overall quality of information for parents is good. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents both provide clear information. Both documents could provide more of a flavour of the school, celebrating with parents its very real achievements. There are newsletters to keep parents generally well informed of the life of the school. The annual reports to parents on their child's progress are quite short and concentrate on curriculum coverage. They do include targets and comments on what pupils can do, but do not give a clear picture on how well they are attaining against national standards. However, parents have regular opportunities to discuss

progress with class teachers, and a particularly strong feature is the half termly sharing times, when parents come into school and their children tell them about their work whilst taking them through their books. In addition to this, parents are invited termly to join their children for lunch and many enjoy taking advantage of this. This too helps to strengthen the partnership, as well as enabling parents to see, for example, how the new lunchtime arrangements are working. Particularly for younger pupils, the home school diaries are also often used well as a two-way means of communication.

57. The contribution of parents to the school and their children's learning is good. Most parents do support their children's homework. A few come into school to help in class, making a positive contribution to the work of the school. A close liaison is maintained with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, which contributes to their good achievement. Parents support school policies and have signed the home school agreement, formalising existing positive attitudes. The parents' association is active in organising social and fundraising events. Parents' financial support has helped the school improve facilities, for example, in their significant contribution to the new computer suite. The parent governors make an appropriate contribution to the work of the school's governing body.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The overall leadership and management of the school has improved since the last inspection and is now good. There has been a good response to the key issues identified in the previous report, as well as very effective continuing improvements in other areas. The very good improvements in assessment procedures in English and mathematics, in particular, and the way that these are used to match work to pupils' needs, mean that pupils of all levels of attainment are now given appropriately challenging work helping them to learn well. School development planning has improved and there are now policies and schemes of work for all subjects, which help pupils to build on previous learning. In addition to this, the quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. A good programme of monitoring and support, together with a well-focused programme of in-service training that has made good use of expertise from within and outside the school, has helped to bring this about. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very well and consistently. The increasing impact of these changes can already be seen in the considerable rise in standards and in achievements of pupils over the last three years. In addition, there have been further improvements, for example, in the positive attitudes and behaviour of pupils, partly as the result of a stimulating curriculum that has been put into place.
59. The headteacher provides good leadership. His role in establishing a common approach to all aspects of school life, in motivating staff and securing their commitment to ongoing school improvement has been an important factor in the improvements since his appointment. The response of the staff team, through mutual support and hard work, to improving the quality of teaching and learning for pupils, contributes well to the common sense of direction and the focus on raising standards further for all pupils, irrespective of their level of attainment, gender, background or culture. This is clearly shared by governors and parents, as is the determination to maintain the good level of care and support for each pupil and to ensure that all of them continue to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life. A strong sense of teamwork pervades the whole school to the considerable benefit of pupils. The very good relationships, teachers' very good knowledge of individual pupils, the way they promote their self-esteem and recognise achievements are good examples of how the school's aims and values are seen in practice daily. This makes a strong contribution to the personal development, positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils.
60. The headteacher and staff work together very well as an effective and efficient team to manage the smooth day-to-day running of the school and the pastoral care of pupils. As it is a small staff, each teacher co-ordinates several subjects. They are enthusiastic and committed to improving standards, teaching and provision in their respective subjects. Their involvement in identifying and monitoring priorities for the school development plan contributes to this. They regularly review planning and the outcomes of pupils' work. Through lesson observations and

useful feedback from these, the co-ordinators have helped to promote the consistent approach to teaching and to improve its quality. This is the result of a good programme of monitoring and evaluation established by the headteacher. The school has rightly and successfully concentrated on improving standards in English and mathematics over the last three years and more recently in science. The school has already recognised the need to review and improve standards in the remaining subjects by including a rolling programme for this in the school development plan.

61. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who was appointed this year, already provides good leadership, contributing well to the improvement in both provision and the achievements of pupils with special educational needs from satisfactory to good since the last inspection. She works closely with class teachers and learning support assistants and this results in very focused support for individual pupils. She liaises well with the local education authority consultant and keeps staff up to date with new initiatives. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities in this area satisfactorily and receives regular reports on the provision for special educational needs.
62. The determination and capacity of the school to raise standards further, by improving the quality of teaching and learning, is seen in the careful way that the performance management process is linked effectively to the targets in the school improvement plan and to the well-planned in-service training. The school makes good use of this and other initiatives, such as the additional and early literacy strategies for the benefit of pupils. The headteacher finds processes and paperwork involved in the effective implementation of national initiatives time-consuming, especially in the light of his 0.6 class teaching commitment as the head of a small school. Nevertheless the impact on standards has been very positive, reflecting his own approach, as he delegates appropriately and manages his time and bureaucratic demands well.
63. Over the last year the headteacher has involved teachers and governors in a detailed self-evaluation of all aspects of school life. This helped to identify the key strengths to build on and the priorities for improvement, which were incorporated into this year's school development plan. The current plan is a useful tool to support developments in standards, teaching and all other areas of the school, although some of the targets are not precise enough to be easily measurable. It is costed clearly, closely linked to the planned provision for in-service training and provides an overview of improvements in the next three years. This is a good improvement from the unsatisfactory situation at the time of the last inspection. As teachers were involved in drawing it up, they are very aware of the priorities and fully committed to them.
64. Another improvement is the increasingly good use being made of performance data, from a variety of assessments, to track and monitor the progress of individual pupils. A new assessment and information system is now being developed, which, through new technology, makes the use of such information more time efficient and adaptable. Test results are carefully analysed to identify weaknesses in the curriculum or in the achievements of pupils so that appropriate remedial action is taken to improve standards. The analyses are also used very effectively to identify lower attaining pupils who will benefit from programmes such as the additional literacy strategy.
65. Governors are committed and very supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily. Since the last inspection, they have clarified their roles and responsibilities and now work well in partnership with the headteacher and staff, making good use of their individual skills. Several governors work regularly in school. This, together with detailed information from the headteacher, has helped to inform their clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of what is needed to continue to take it forward. It has also enabling them to develop some aspects of their role well, especially in the area of finance. As yet, their monitoring of the school development plan and the curriculum is not sufficiently structured and pro-active, as they rely mainly on information from the headteacher.
66. There have been good improvements in financial planning and management. The funds received by the school are used effectively to improve standards and achievement and to provide a good quality of education overall. Good forward planning has enabled good and ongoing improvements

in the accommodation, such as the new computer suite and an additional teaching area, which is enhancing the pupils' learning environment. The budget surplus last year was part of a planned carry forward to fund the suite. In addition, two part time learning support assistants have been appointed and the hours of the part-time teacher have been increased to allow more time to fulfil her role as special educational needs co-ordinator. This has a clear impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The good use made of specific and additional grants have contributed to this, as well as the adeptness of the headteacher in finding additional sources of funding. The school ensures through competitive tendering that they obtain best value for money when purchasing resources and services, for example in the new building works. Parents were consulted over changes in the catering arrangements, which are now more efficient. All of this has increased the cost effectiveness of the school over the last three years.

67. There is a good number of suitably qualified teachers. They are deployed effectively to promote higher standards in a way that enables the considerable expertise of several members of staff to be shared effectively. The school has experienced some difficulties in recruiting suitable replacements for part-time and temporary teacher vacancies over the last year. This has caused, for example, some disruption to pupils' learning in the reception class, as they have had several different teachers. The school has worked hard and appropriately to minimise the impact of this, through, for example, continuity of planning and liaison between teachers. The learning support staff provide very effective support for pupils' learning. The school is well supported at lunchtimes by the mealtime assistants and by the cleaner, who, as all other staff, provide good role models for pupils. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory, well cared for and interesting displays provide an inviting learning environment. This, together with a satisfactory range of well used resources, contribute to pupils' very good attitudes and interest in their work. The library resources are adequate, but the school has plans in place to improve this.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In the context of the school's strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in their action plan in order to raise standards and the quality of education further:

- a) Improve the presentation of pupils' work and the standards of handwriting across all subjects, by:
- establishing and implementing a handwriting policy that provides a clear progression from a printed to cursive style by the end of Year 4;
 - ensuring that teachers model the agreed style consistently;
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of the presentation and accuracy of all completed work and ensuring this is reflected in the marking policy.

(See paragraphs 5, 26, 88, 98, 102, 116, 119 and 140.)

- b) Raise standards and pupils' achievement further in all other subjects towards the level of those in English and mathematics by*:
- ensuring all staff have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - developing and implementing appropriate assessment procedures to enable teacher to plan suitably challenging work consistently for pupils of differing levels of attainment.

(See paragraphs 10, 27, 51, 60, 109, 113, 116, 131 and 140.)

- c) Make more effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum by*:
- providing more planned opportunities for pupils, including those with special educational needs, to use their skills in other subjects.
 - making more use of classroom computers, as well as time in the computer suite to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

(See paragraphs 8, 28, 32, 91, 98, 104, 113, 127 and 140)

In addition to the above, the following point for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Updating and improving the formal procedures for child protection. (See paragraph 44.)

**The school has already identified these areas for development.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	4	5	7	0	0	0
Percentage	6	24	29	41	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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	72
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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)

Note: the numbers of boys and girls are omitted as there were fewer than eleven of each in the year group.

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84(83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	72
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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	171,867
Total expenditure	161,931
Expenditure per pupil	2,049
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,330
Balance carried forward to next year	17,266

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	72
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	68	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	61	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	52	13	3	3
The teaching is good.	35	55	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	63	7	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	39	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	32	61	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	23	70	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	46	11	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	60	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	42	26	3	10

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

68. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. A good range of attractively organised resources enhances children's learning opportunities. This is a good improvement from the time of the last inspection when provision was described as satisfactory and the variety of resources as unsatisfactory. A particular strength is the good planning of the curriculum, which ensures that activities in all areas of learning have clear learning objectives to give them a clear sense of purpose and are set in contexts that interest and motivate the children. A very good example of this is the carefully planned use of the outdoor environment, over the year, to teach specific aspects of each area of learning.
69. Children enter the reception classes on a full time basis at the beginning of the term in which they are five. A well-planned programme introduces the new children and their parents to the school and ensures that good relationships are quickly established between the school and its families. There are close links with the private nursery that shares the same site and from which many of the children join the school. For example, the reception and nursery children have music lessons together each week and visit the play-park together to use the large equipment, especially in the summer term. This familiarity helps children to settle quickly and happily into school.
70. Several different teachers have taught the reception class during this year, as a result of unavoidable staff absences. A temporary teacher, who has just taken up her appointment to cover the maternity leave of the class teacher, will teach the class for the rest of this school year. The teaching seen during the inspection period was satisfactory in all areas of learning, enabling the children to make steady progress in their learning. Although scrutiny of the children's work over the first half of the year showed some pupils achieving well, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, their rate of learning varies with the changes in teachers and their achievement overall during the year is satisfactory.
71. Children enter the reception classes with above average standards in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics skills. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, most are likely to exceed the early learning goals in communication language and literacy and in mathematical development. There are particular strengths in reading. In all other areas, children are on course to meet the standards of the early learning goals for children of this age.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Children achieve satisfactorily overall in this area of learning and are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of their reception year, and to exceed them in some aspects. The teacher provides an attractive, welcoming and secure environment that helps young children to settle quickly and feel part of the school. Children generally respond well to class routines with regard, for example, to the number allowed in particular areas, and as a result of this, organise themselves and work well independently of the staff. They show confidence and relate well to each other and to all adults in the classroom. Children are developing a good level of independence by regularly choosing and organising their own activities, after completing the directed tasks. Children take care in dressing and undressing themselves before and after physical activity, although some still do this very slowly. Most are keen to take on class responsibilities and undertake jobs such as tidying up and taking registers to the office.
73. The teaching seen in this area of learning was satisfactory. The teacher provides a wide range of practical activities that successfully promote children's development in a variety of settings. For example, there are frequent opportunities for children to work alone or in small groups with construction resources, in the writing area or in the role-play area. Children's self esteem is developed very well as all staff value each child's contributions. Activities, such as the 'Tea

Room', in the role-play area, help to develop their imagination, at the same time encouraging children to play co-operatively. Children generally play happily together and are willing to take turns with equipment. Although there are few girls in the class, boys and girls work and play together well. In the 'Tearoom', for example, a boy and girl busily 'wrote' a menu, which they then prepared and cooked together with enthusiasm.

74. Staff set a very good example for children to follow. They work together as a team and as a result the children see the value of co-operating with each other. However, in class and group activities, the teacher does not yet have consistently high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour and concentration and response, for example, in taking turns in speaking and following instructions. More confident children call out, and although their comments are usually relevant, they tend to dominate quieter pupils who are then more reluctant to contribute. In physical activities a few boys indulge in silly behaviour, which slows the pace of learning in the lesson as the teacher reprimands them. In other situations, such as assemblies, all children show how well they can listen and behave.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Most children are likely to be above the standard expected, in this area of learning, by the time they enter Year 1. They achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment when starting school. The reception classes provide a rich learning environment in which children can develop their written and oral skills. Children are given a good range of well planned opportunities to develop their skills in discussion, sharing books and in writing opportunities. For example, all adults model clear speech when responding to children, helping them to speak clearly and correctly and there are designated reading and writing areas with a range of suitable resources. Children enjoy listening to stories and are quick to understand that text has meaning. Many labels and instructions are clearly displayed around the classroom and children are encouraged to read these. Parents give good support to their children, hearing them read regularly at home and helping them to learn groups of words which occur regularly in their reading. Children make good gains in their reading because an interesting variety of methods, games and activities are used to help them to read and write, learn their sounds and write their letters correctly. Children enjoy reading and sharing books that are well matched to their differing all levels of attainment. A lower attaining child, for example, had a basic sight vocabulary and used picture cues well, 'reading' 'Tubby toast all over the table', with considerable relish, showing a good understanding of the story. A higher attaining child read a simple text confidently and with expression, and spontaneously compared the colours of a striped millipede to 'Denis the Menace's jumper'!! Appropriate elements of the national literacy strategy are used well to prepare children for the National Curriculum. Children experience, for example, whole class reading of big books, talk about the text and then complete relevant group activities.

76. In the lesson seen in this area of learning the teaching was satisfactory overall. The teacher modelled the reading of 'The Runaway Chapati' well, fully engaging the interest of all the children. She used good questioning to increase children's understanding of conventions such as speech bubbles and to encourage them to predict what might happen. Several children were very keen to contribute, suggesting, for example, that the tiger, 'might hide him and then eat him'. However, during this and the very good use she made of a story sack to help children recall and sequence the events of the story, the teacher was not insistent enough on children not calling out and this tended to slow the pace and inhibit less confident children from contributing. The teacher had not yet had time to establish high enough expectations of children's concentration in the group activities. A higher attaining group who were writing short sentences about the story, did not work with a good sense of purpose, tending to wait for adult help instead of using the good aids, such as word banks that were readily available. Consequently, they did not complete as much work as they were capable of in the time allowed.

Mathematical development

77. Children are on course to exceed the early learning goals when they enter Year 1, achieving satisfactorily overall. Day to day use of numbers in counting familiar objects in the classroom is

well established. As a consequence of this, most children already count reliably to at least 20 and are learning to recognise odd and even numbers by saying them alternately loudly and softly. They join in with number rhymes enthusiastically. Most can recognise small numbers without counting. Well-planned sand and water activities enable children to explore and extend their ideas of number, shape and measures. The teaching that was seen was satisfactory. The teacher made good use of a practical activity to interest children and to develop their use of positional language, such as 'below', 'above', 'between' and 'next to', as they placed items in different places on a series of shelves. She made good use of errors to reinforce and extend their learning. One higher attaining child placed the items in size order correctly, building on learning from the previous week. Although the teacher took care to involve all children in her questioning, the pace of learning was slowed, as she had to stop quite frequently to quieten the children or to stop them calling out.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children achieve satisfactorily overall and by the end of the reception year, they meet the expected standards for this area of learning. They experience a wide range of activities that stimulate and interest them. Children note the changes in the seasons by observing the trees in the school grounds at regular intervals over the year. In a topic about water, they were encouraged to predict what would happen when water was put in the freezer and to observe changes as water was boiled in a kettle. With an adult scribing for them, one child recorded that, 'The steam was hot', while a higher attaining child commented that, 'the steam turned into water because it turned cold'. In a lesson about healthy eating, children could name and describe some fruits they eat but were unfamiliar with the appearance of some common vegetables. In the small amount of teaching seen, the teacher made good use of the story, 'Avocado Baby', to engage the interest of the children and questioned them well to extend their vocabulary in describing the appearance and taste of an avocado. The children were almost all keen to try the unfamiliar fruit. Children gain an appropriate understanding of their own cultures and beliefs as well as an awareness of others. For example, the teacher brought in chapatis and other Indian foods for pupils to sample and played Indian music for them to link effectively with the story they were reading that week in their literacy lessons. Although the computer was sometimes used for individual and paired activities, and the children observed operated the mouse appropriately and were familiar with the program, overall, it was not used effectively to support children's learning.

Physical development

79. Children's achievement in this area of development is satisfactory and they are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paint brushes, glue and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction equipment and play with small creative toys. During a physical education lesson in the hall, children moved safely in space at different speeds, showing appropriate awareness of others. However, some children did not co-ordinate their movements effectively when balancing bean-bags on different parts of their bodies. Although teaching and learning were satisfactory overall, the lesson lacked pace and a sense of purpose as the teacher was not insistent enough on pupils responding to instructions promptly and sensibly. The climbing and other equipment in the hall is unsuitable for young children, but this is being replaced at Easter. The children enjoy outside physical play and play well together, although the lack of their own safe, fenced area limits their opportunities for this. The school is aware of this and plans to address it. In the meantime, they minimise the impact of this by planning good opportunities to share nursery facilities and to use the large outdoor equipment in the village play park.

Creative development

80. No teaching was seen in this area of learning. There are regular planned opportunities for children to use play dough, paint, clay, collage and a range of materials. From the evidence of work seen, children achieve satisfactorily. They make attractive flower patterns using finger

paints and mosaic animals in a range of textures. They experiment with shape and colour in bubble paintings. In the 'Tea Room', they act out roles of cooks, waiters and customers, sometimes using the 'cakes' they have made from salt dough. The good provision of story bags enlivens stories such as, 'The Runaway Chapati', helping children to play together happily and co-operatively in role, developing both their imagination and their skills to co-operate well. Regular opportunities to sing a good variety of songs from memory and to explore simple sounds with percussion instruments are shown in planning, in sessions that are shared regularly with the nursery children. They also have the opportunity to respond to music in dance and movement.

ENGLISH

81. When children start school, their language skills are above average overall, although these vary from year to year as a result of the small intake. Evidence both from lessons, past work and school records shows that at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in English are well above average. This reflects the results from the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2. The detailed records now kept of individual progress show that boys and girls of all levels of attainment achieve well as they move through the school.
82. This shows a good improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards and achievement were described as satisfactory overall. A number of factors have contributed to this. The overall quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good and the national literacy strategy has been implemented very well and very consistently. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully identified at an early stage and the special needs co-ordinator, class teachers and skilled learning support assistants work closely together to help these pupils to do well. Individual programmes of work are used effectively for this purpose. The additional literacy strategy and early literacy strategy have been implemented well this year to support pupils identified as in need of extra help. The effectiveness of the support is seen in the high number of these pupils who reach the expected standards in English by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
83. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils achieve well overall. One reason for this is that teachers provide a good number of opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through, for example, frequent paired or group activities across the curriculum, role play and drama as well as more formal opportunities in assemblies. Another is the evident value that teachers place on pupils' responses, which encourages them to contribute in lessons. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen attentively to their teacher and increasingly to each other, responding appropriately to questions and instructions. They ask relevant questions and make thoughtful contributions to class discussions, which show good understanding of what they hear. They share their ideas and experiences clearly, for example, when discussing the impact of unkind behaviour on others. By Year 4, pupils engage in conversation with adults confidently. They respond thoughtfully and often perceptively to each other's views and begin to build on these in discussions. Good examples were seen of this several lessons, for example, in a history lesson about the plague in Tudor England.
84. Teachers successfully extend pupils' vocabulary in all subjects through their consistent emphasis on pupils understanding and using technical terms and challenging vocabulary correctly. Several Year 2 pupils, for example, could explain clearly what 'human' and 'physical' features meant in geography, while pupils in Year 4 used terms, such as, 'inference' and 'deduction', correctly as a result of the teacher's very clear explanations. This also has a positive impact on increasing pupils' sight vocabulary when reading.
85. Standards in reading are well above the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Boys and girls of levels of attainment achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. One reason for this is that phonics skills are taught well and teachers make good use of the literacy hour, as well as opportunities across the curriculum to help pupils to apply these successfully. In a well

taught lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher used well-structured questions to help pupils to infer additional information from a text about Queen Elizabeth 1, challenging them to justify their initial response, which they did successfully, often using quotes from the text. In this way, she rapidly moved their learning on. One pupil, for example, explained that Elizabeth must have been a wise queen because, 'she tried to keep Catholics and Protestants happy'. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils read an appropriate range of books with reasonable fluency and accuracy, often with good expression. They have a good sight vocabulary and use a variety of ways to tackle unfamiliar words. They show a good understanding of what they are reading in discussion, as well as by substituting sensible words for those they do not know. Some higher attaining pupils show an increasing understanding of plots and characters. One pupil, for example, could explain her evident enjoyment of a shepherd being herded into a pen by his own dog, in 'Jake in Trouble'.

86. By the end of Year 4, pupils read quite challenging books, clearly and with expression. Pupils apply their reading skills very effectively to retrieve information from a wide variety of sources, including books and the internet. They make good use of dictionaries and thesauri. This is largely due to a consistent approach to the teaching of research skills across the school and frequent opportunities and encouragement to apply them, both in classwork and in following personal interests in subjects across the curriculum. A good example of this was the research about bubonic plague carried out by several higher attaining pupils in Year 4. This has a positive impact on pupils' standard of work and progress in other subjects, including information and communication technology and history. Teachers keep careful records of pupils' progress in reading, which makes a good contribution to their rate of learning.
87. The number of pupils meeting the expected standards in writing at the end of Year 2 is well above average and above average at the end of Year 4. One reason for this difference is that the improvements arising from the introduction of the literacy hour have not yet had time to impact fully on standards at the end of Year 4. Another is that teachers do not insist on high enough standards of presentation and handwriting, especially in Years 3 and 4 and this is reflected in the careless errors in spelling and punctuation evident in their past work. Although not as many pupils by the end of Year 2 reach the higher levels in writing as they do in reading, baseline assessments show that all pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. By the end of Year 2, most pupils write in simple sentences, using generally well-formed letters and reasonably accurate spelling. They write in a variety of forms, including poems, letters and stories. They begin to include relevant details and to use capital letters and full stops correctly. Some higher attaining pupils begin to use more structured sentences of varying length, with interesting vocabulary, such as, 'The blue sea was very transparent'.
88. By the end of Year 4, pupils write in a good variety of forms and extend their ideas by adding description or explanation. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use more complex sentences confidently, although they do not yet always use the range of vocabulary that they do in oral work. Pupils often make good progress in literacy lessons in learning a good range of strategies and techniques for improving their writing, including the use of recognised authors as models. However, the quality of pupils' finished work is marred by untidy presentation and handwriting that often varies from page to page in style and size and is rarely joined. The same word is sometimes spelt differently within the same piece of work and careless errors in spelling and punctuation go uncorrected. For example, while an average attaining pupil was rightly praised for the content of her work, when writing as one of Robin Hood's band, the teacher made no reference in the marking to a number of spelling inaccuracies, such as, 'cach', 'becaus' and 'verry scillfull'. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 do not model a cursive style of handwriting consistently.
89. The quality of teaching is good overall. At times it is very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and a key factor in the rise in standards and the good overall achievement of pupils. This was illustrated in a very well taught lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils were beginning to apply what they had learnt in a previous reading focus on traditional tales to their own writing. Using a traditional Chinese tale, the teacher made very effective use of stick puppets and pupils' facial expressions to increase their understanding of the main

characters. Both the learning support assistant and the student, who were present, noted pupils' responses and the effectiveness with which the class teacher uses such assessments and her knowledge of individual pupils was reflected in her very well targeted questioning. The lesson was planned very well to help pupils build on previous learning, with the learning objectives for the group activities appropriately taking in account the different ages of the pupils in the class as well their differing levels of attainment. The teacher made good use of paired discussions to help pupils articulate their ideas, so that they knew exactly what they wanted to write. This had a clear impact on the way that they settled down quickly and sensibly to their written task. The teacher modelled the writing task very well indeed, integrating text and word level work very effectively to enhance pupils' learning. She continually pushed and challenged them to improve the accuracy and quality of their suggestions further - 'Is there a better word for nice?' - 'How could we explain why he is kind?' 'Why do I read it through again?' 'Spell 'because' for me'. The impact of this was seen as pupils worked on their own writing, in the way that they carefully checked that what they had written made sense, used dictionaries and word books to check their spelling and tried to include interesting words. This led to sentences from average attaining pupils, such as, 'Yim Sung is kind because he releases the turtle'. Their work clearly showed how well they had improved their writing by successfully applying what they had learnt. This was reinforced well at the end of the lesson when pupils gave examples of how they had improved their writing, such as, 'I had missed the 'h' out of 'when', and 'I changed 'some' to 'three' to make it more like the story'. It also showed good knowledge of their own learning.

90. Teachers show a very good understanding of the national literacy strategy. This is evident in their skilful and challenging questioning seen in lessons. This is made particularly effective by the very good knowledge teachers have of each pupils' learning as a result of the detailed assessments they make. They use this so their questions are pitched at just the right level for pupils of all levels of attainment. Several good examples were seen of lessons plans being adjusted in the light of pupils' responses in the previous lesson, where teachers felt pupils needed more consolidation or greater challenge. Teachers share the learning objectives of each lesson very clearly with them. These often take good account of pupils' different ages in each class as well as their differing levels of skills. These features contribute well to the very good progress that pupils often make in lessons.
91. Teachers take care to provide interesting contexts for pupils' learning, often by making very relevant links with other subjects such as history and religious education. This has a clear impact on pupils' enthusiasm and interest in their work and on the quality of their learning. They make good use of work in other subjects to extend the range of pupils' reading and writing. They provide some opportunities for pupils to word-process their work, but in general they do not make enough use information and communication technology to support pupils' language development. However, although teachers set relevant targets for pupils to work on, they do not yet use these to full effect in lessons to help pupils focus on areas for improvement.
92. Written marking comments in general do not help pupils to know precisely what to do to improve their work, although good examples were seen in lessons of teachers intervening with useful suggestions. Some lessons were less effective, although satisfactory, because the tasks were not as challenging or as well matched to pupils' differing needs. This led to the pace dropping, or pupils taking longer to settle to their tasks.
93. The co-ordinator, who is on maternity leave at present, is a leading literacy teacher and manages the subject very well. The results of this can be seen in the improvements in standards since the last inspection as well as the very consistent approach to teaching the national literacy strategy, which helps pupils to build effectively on previous learning. There is good range of termly and annual assessments that is used increasingly well to track pupils' progress across the school and to identify those in need additional support as well as to identify and address relative areas of weakness in the curriculum. Teachers plan carefully to provide relevant and stimulating activities that motivate and interest pupils very well. The rich curriculum makes a strong contribution to the very positive attitudes pupils have towards their work and their good behaviour in lessons. It also makes a good contribution to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

94. There have been significant improvements in the subject since the last inspection. Past work and lesson observations show that standards are now well above average at the end of Years 2 and 4. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, the standards at the end of Year 2 were above average overall. This was because, in that particular small year group, slightly fewer pupils reached the higher Level 3, although all pupils reached at least Level 2B. Taking the three years 1999-2001 together, the performance of pupils in mathematics has consistently exceeded the national average for their age group.
95. This improvement since the last inspection has been brought about because strong leadership and management in the school have raised the teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge more effectively than they did in 1997. Additionally, pupils are taught how to use key mathematical vocabulary in the shared mental and oral elements of the mathematics lessons very well. The national numeracy strategy has been used very successfully so that the structure of lessons supports effective teaching. Pupils now have opportunities to develop their mathematics in the solving of every day problems. Good use is made of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their numeracy skills across the curriculum, for example, when drawing timelines in history, doing traffic tallies in geography or measuring in design and technology.
96. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 4 make good advances in their learning and achieve well. In Year 2, all pupils do well, with a significant proportion working at the higher Level 3. Pupils manipulate number with great confidence. They have a secure knowledge of place value up to 100. They count upwards in 5s from 11 to 156, and they are able to solve problems such as Ann is 5 years older than Fred, Fred is 6, and so Ann is 11. They name simple two- and three-dimensional shapes correctly, and higher attaining pupils identify properties of those shapes such as the number of faces, edges and vertices. They gather and classify data using tally charts and present their findings in simple block graphs.
97. In Year 4, pupils have very good knowledge of the 2, 3, 4 and 5 times tables. In one lesson observed, they responded with considerable enthusiasm during the mental mathematics session as they calculated the amount of money dropped into a tin. They had very good knowledge of money values. During group activities on multiplication, Year 4 pupils were able to partition numbers and evaluate their answers as they explained the learning steps to visitors. They counted in 20s and 50s in a series of numbers such as 618, 668, 718, 768. They achieve well as they acquire a firm grasp of measurements, weights and time.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good aspects of teaching in Years 1 and 2. Pupils learn effectively because of the support given by their teachers. Teachers know their pupils very well, and especially in Years 1 and 2, because of the good quality of the assessment information they collect. Learning support assistants keep a daily record of assessment information during lessons and this is used effectively to target particular pupils to help them improve their work and reach higher levels of attainment. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their work and respond well because teachers challenge them in their learning. Teachers plan their lessons well, with work that is well matched for pupils of differing levels of attainment and ensuring that pupils build upon their knowledge in a systematic and consistent way. The teachers' management of pupils is good, and pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and these create a pleasant, purposeful atmosphere in which pupils feel comfortable about learning. In a very well taught lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher created a vibrant working environment in which her very clear explanations and the well structured activities helped pupils to understand some of the properties of three dimensional shapes. This resulted in a brisk session where pupils concentrated well and worked hard. However, as yet teachers do not make enough use of information and communication technology to help pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. The presentation of pupils' work is often very untidy.

99. The leadership and management of mathematics is very good. The co-ordinator provides very clear leadership and guidance for colleagues in order to raise standards. The curriculum is well planned, pupils' achievements are regularly assessed and the monitoring of teaching, which is evolving, is good. It is constructive and contributes to the positive way in which teachers are committed to ongoing improvements in the subject.

SCIENCE

100. Standards of work seen in lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection indicate that attainment throughout the school have improved since the last inspection, and overall standards by the end of Years 2 and 4 are above average. This reflects the teacher assessments in the national tests in 2001. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment at the end of the reception year.
101. Pupils are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and also achieve well in investigative science. They are acquiring correct scientific vocabulary because teachers emphasise this consistently. They develop a secure understanding of what constitutes a fair test as a result of good opportunities for practical investigations. For example, Year 2 pupils researched materials and conducted their experiments in the school hall, identifying various materials as they moved from one corner of the hall to the other. They brought different items from their homes to display as examples of different materials. Pupils also retain a careful record of sounds, which they have encountered in the school and its precincts. In a very good, vibrant Year 2 lesson on forces, all pupils made very good gains in their learning as a result of skilful classroom management and the high expectations set by the teacher. They participated in energetic experiments based on the theme of forces. They pushed a rubber ball and marbles on the classroom floor, repeating their experiments on several occasions in order to show that a force can speed up, slow down, change shape and change the direction of an object. Several higher attaining pupils proceeded to research the topic of force and friction on the computer and in the school library.
102. Year 4 pupils investigate the conditions needed for plant growth and the properties of different materials. They describe the effects of rusting well and relate it to their own experiences. In a well-planned investigation in the school grounds related to this, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their observational skills well. With the help of worksheets, which were well matched to their differing levels of attainment, they recorded their findings well. They were suitably classified and with appropriate scientific language. Pupils throughout the school enjoy practical science and relish opportunities to undertake investigations in and around the school. They plan and carry out a fair test using simple equipment and develop the use of scientific language through the good emphasis teachers consistently place on this. One Year 2 pupil explained enthusiastically that 'observe' means, 'to watch carefully'. Most pupils do watch carefully and make reasonable predictions about likely events. They record their findings in words, tables and diagrams, but their standard of presentation is often untidy.
103. Pupils achieve well because the quality of the teaching is good overall. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is often very good. When the teaching is good or better, teachers use their subject knowledge well to pose probing questions to extend or consolidate pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking to others in order to clarify their understanding. Teachers use good management skills based on positive relationships to encourage pupils to put forward their own ideas and to explore possibilities with confidence. In Years 1 and 2, learning support assistants are well deployed to focus on gathering assessment information, which is then used to inform curriculum planning. Lesson objectives are usually shared with the pupils and the outcomes of the lessons are evaluated. However, although good examples were seen in lessons of teachers matching work to pupils' ages and level of attainment, this was less evident in some of their previous work, which is one reason that standards are not yet as high as they are in English and mathematics.
104. The co-ordinator has made a good start in managing the subject. The curriculum is effectively

planned to ensure progression and continuity of knowledge and skills for the classes of mixed ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection. While there has been some monitoring of science, the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring teaching and learning in class and spreading good practice has not been yet fully developed. The use of information and communication technology in science needs to be further developed in order to consolidate scientific ideas. However, the shared commitment among the teachers to improve the subject is clear.

ART AND DESIGN

105. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, so no overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils show that, by the end of Year 2 and 4, standards are average and pupils' achievement, including that of pupils' with special educational needs is satisfactory. This indicates that standards have been at least maintained since the last inspection, although pupils do not yet achieve as well as they do in English and mathematics.
106. In Year 2, pupils use sketchbooks and work with a variety of media such as charcoal and pastel. They produce successful portraits in the style of Picasso and mood paintings inspired by Paul Klee. Shape and colour patterns are often based on the work of Matisse. Teachers make effective links with literacy, for example, when pupils produced an author-portfolio with drawings based on Michael Rosen's poetry and Dick King-Smith's fiction.
107. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigate shape, colour and pattern through mixing colours, using paint and making effective use of line drawings to illustrate leaves. They develop good shading techniques when drawing faces and fruits. They improve their skills of drawing faces by exploring the visual language in portraits. For example, they draw 'myself as a Tudor girl' and investigate the style of Hans Holbein. There are good colour designs based on Anglo-Saxon jewellery, and line drawings inspired by Van Gogh's paintings. In the school hall, there is one particularly attractive clay sculpture with symbols depicting the life and times of the Vikings. This was produced in collaboration with a local artist and sculptor.
108. In the one lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, pupils made good progress because the teaching was good, and there was effective class management. The teacher shared the objectives well with pupils so that they were clear about the particular skills that they were trying to develop. She used the learning support assistant appropriately to ensure that all groups of pupils were supported in their learning. She made effective links with numeracy, as pupils demonstrated their accurate measuring skills. The good links with their on-going historical work on the Tudors, increased pupils' enthusiasm for their task.
109. The co-ordinator has begun to raise the profile of the subject in the school. There is a policy and scheme of work for art and design, and resources are satisfactory, although. There is little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support artwork throughout the school. The assessment procedures need to be reviewed to identify clearly pupils' achievements, particularly their skills and techniques, to inform teaching and learning. Pupils' evaluation of their own work is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. No lessons were observed in design and technology during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff indicates that standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 and 4 are average and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
111. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 design Easter eggs, and they use textiles to design and make purses. There is careful analysis of the fabric and sound use of a variety of tools such as scissors and

needles. The finished product displays an appropriate fitness for purpose. These pupils have also constructed cube and cuboid shapes, and these are proudly displayed as part of their work in mathematics and design and technology. Year 2 pupils show a sound understanding of hygiene during their preparations for cooking. There is also evidence to show that they have developed winching mechanisms as part of their lessons on 'the rescue party'.

112. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have designed a variety of sandwiches, with different breads and fillings. They retain a record of their weekly diets and relate this to their work on dental health in science. Their workbooks also show that they have conducted a series of interviews with the school cook. They prepared specific questions about hygiene and the sterilisation of foods. In Year 4, pupils have designed and constructed Tudor houses, and this demonstrates effective links with current work in history. Their design skills display a good knowledge of appropriate vocabulary, with references to beams, elevation, wattle and daub and leaded windows.
113. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. There is an appropriate scheme of work and a subject policy in place. Assessment procedures are under developed, as they do not provide teachers with sufficient information to adjust their planning or to set targets. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject. Resources in design and technology are adequate.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Only one geography lesson was taught during the inspection week, so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. However, evidence from that lesson, discussions with staff, scrutiny of planning, displays and previous work across the school indicate that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily, but not as well as they do in English and mathematics. These judgements are similar to those in the last inspection.
115. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to distinguish different types and features of buildings during walks around Bishopswood and by comparing them with buildings in different countries. They build upon earlier experiences of making pictorial maps of the village and of their route to school, by using simple keys when making a map of 'Rosie's Walk', which also supports their work in literacy lessons well.
116. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a sound knowledge of the features of their own locality. When considering the impact on the environment of proposed developments such as a new sports centre, they show a satisfactory understanding of its possible advantages and disadvantages. The context in which the teacher set this work, namely for pupils to write newspaper reports of 'interviews' with interested parties, clearly captured their enthusiasm. It also provided a good opportunity for pupils to develop their literacy skills. One higher attaining pupil, for example, wrote a graphic article of opposing points of view using 'quotes' from the 'interviewees' to illustrate the points. Pupils develop appropriate mapping skills and can describe, for example, some of the main characteristics of different climate zones in the world. They increase their knowledge of different locations in the world by researching news items from a variety of countries. They make appropriate use of their skills in information and communication technology to obtain additional relevant information from the Internet. However, in the written work that follows, the geographical knowledge and skills obtained are not always clear and show little development from younger to older pupils in the class and the presentation is often untidy. One reason for this is that assessment procedures are not developed sufficiently to promote this.
117. In the lesson seen for Years 1 and 2 pupils, the quality of teaching was good. The teacher varied the lesson objectives to take good account of the different ages and levels of attainment of pupils in the class. For example, most pupils in Year 1 made three-dimensional models of important features of the Isle of Struay, with the help of a voluntary helper from the local community. Year 2 pupils and some higher attaining Year 1 pupils drew sketch maps to show human and physical features and identified these with a key. This careful planning helped pupils

to build systematically on previous learning. The teacher also gave good attention to extending pupils' vocabulary by ensuring that they both understood and used terminology such as 'human features and physical features' correctly. She also reinforced their phonic skills, for example, when resolving some confusion over 'loch' and 'lock'. She used skilful questioning to help them identify examples of each, extending their thinking through the use of less obvious examples. A pupil with special educational needs suggested, for example, that grass could be a human feature, 'because some people plant it in their garden'.

118. The subject is not a current focus for development and the co-ordinator manages it satisfactorily. The curriculum is planned carefully on a two year rolling programme to ensure that all pupils have full access to it. Good liaison with the local middle school ensures that the curriculum is covered in full for pupils between Years 3 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers make good use of the school grounds, for example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 identify features that they find attractive and unattractive, such as the circular pond or an old shed. They also make good use of the locality to enrich the curriculum and make it relevant to the pupils. This contributes well to their very positive attitudes to learning. As well making good use of visits to places such as Cannock Chase and Rugeley Power Station, teachers use Weston Park for orienteering work to improve pupils' map reading skills. They use the nearby view of the A5 to teach older pupils how to use investigations and comparisons, such as traffic levels on trunk and minor roads, to raise and answer appropriate geographical questions. While teachers use opportunities appropriately in geography for pupils to practise their computer skills, such as using a paint program to draw a map, they do not make full use of information and communication technology to enhance their geographical skills and knowledge. This is mainly because, until the new computer suite becomes operational, the present resources are not sufficient for this.

HISTORY

119. Only one history lesson was taught during the inspection week, so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. Judgements are based on the evidence from that lesson, discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of planning, displays and previous work across the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection, although there have been improvements. For example, a broad and relevant curriculum has been developed and pupils' written work now shows depth and evidence of their own investigations, although this is not always neatly presented. A scrutiny of previous work indicates, for example, that pupils in Year 2 have used a CD-Rom to search for details on toys through the ages. By the end of Year 4, pupils attain standards that are above average and achieve well. This is because of the good quality of the teaching.
120. In Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of life, people and events in the past. They have constructed appropriate time-lines and they have acquired a sound understanding of 'then' and 'now'. They have good recall and use appropriate historical vocabulary to describe recent work such as their study of St. David and Guy Fawkes. They have a sound knowledge of the locality, visiting the local church and Weston Park to help them learn about this.
121. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have good chronological skills. They know about the Roman, Viking, Anglo-Saxon, Norman and the Tudor periods and identify some features that distinguish them. They are able to place the Tudor monarchs in correct chronological order and give some reasons for their ideas. Their knowledge of local history is developed well from that of younger pupils, drawing on well-planned local visits to places such as Boscobel House. A strong feature of the work in history is the way in which extra-curricular activities are used to reinforce pupils' learning. Regular events such as Roman, Viking and Tudor days help to create a sense of period and to stimulate the pupils' imagination.
122. In the one lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, the teaching was outstanding. The work was meticulously planned and the collection of resources was exemplary. There were very good links with literacy, science and drama in this lesson on the conditions of the poor in Tudor

England. Very skilful use of considerable subject knowledge and very effective class management ensured that all pupils learnt very effectively in this model lesson. A Tudor doctor, suitably attired in period costume, complete with beak, visited the homes of the sick patients suffering from the plague. Several pupils were clothed in contemporary dress, and this served to heighten the excitement and drama in the lesson. A real sense of awe and wonder was created as pupils were transported into a different time and place. Throughout the lesson, the teacher challenged all the pupils with probing historical questions. The use of Tudor language strengthened the pupils' awareness of the period and reinforced their understanding of social conditions in sixteenth-century England. Carefully prepared worksheets, which matched the learning needs of the pupils, stimulated investigative activities based on the lesson themes.

123. The subject co-ordinator has been in this role for just six months and is beginning to make a significant impact on standards. Resources are generally adequate. The frequent well-planned visits to areas of historical interest help to extend pupils' enquiry skills. For example, pupils in Year 4, who have studied the Romans, recorded the new facts they have found as a result of a visit to Chester. The co-ordinator recognises that monitoring of standards is an area for development. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress need to be reviewed and updated, so that work is consistently matched to pupils needs. A priority for development is the planned use of information and communication technology in all classes to support work in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. No direct teaching was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on an analysis of previous work, on teachers' planning, on the observation of pupils using computers during some lessons, on discussions with staff, pupils and other members of the inspection team. These show that standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. This is similar to the judgements in the previous report.
125. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a Roamer to plan movements satisfactorily. Most pupils display appropriate mouse and keyboard skills. Year 2 pupils have used word-processing skills to produce stories and Christmas cards. They have used horizontal and vertical bar graphs to show the different ways they travel to school. Year 4 pupils use flexi-trees as part of their on-going work on 'Story Keepers'. They achieve soundly as they continue to work on branching databases. Pupils make confident use of their word processing skills, for example, when writing their news as a newspaper article. They show some knowledge of control and modelling. They do not have sufficient opportunities to research information in a range of subjects. Although older pupils have been taught how to send an e-mail message and understand how this speeds communications, few pupils are able to explain how to organize and send a message with an attachment. The few pupils who can explain have usually developed their knowledge at home.
126. Some use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum. For example, in a science lesson which was observed in Year 2, high attaining pupils made satisfactory progress as they operated a program to extend their knowledge and understanding of forces and friction. Similarly, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used a music program to support their learning in music. Overall, however, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum. Discussions with pupils indicate that there are too few opportunities to practise their skills in lessons across the curriculum. Few lessons were observed where information and communication technology was planned to further pupils' learning.
127. The present curriculum is carefully planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, at present, pupils' opportunities to practise and extend their skills are limited by the small number of computers available to them. The school has worked hard to provide a computer suite, which is almost complete. This will significantly increase in the number of computers that will be accessible to pupils. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic to see an improvement in standards. With colleagues, she is already ready planning how to use the suite most effectively to support pupils' learning and to improve their skills. Assessment is

at an early stage of development. The school recognises the need to develop appropriate and purposeful assessment strategies in order to improve pupils' learning. They are also mindful of the need to monitor the new developments in the subject carefully so as to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, learning and of the subject curriculum.

MUSIC

128. Only one lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 was seen during the inspection period and there was very little written evidence of pupils' work. Consequently, no overall judgements can be made about standards, pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching. The judgements made are based on the lesson seen, scrutiny of planning, some evidence of singing and discussions with teachers.
129. Singing in assemblies indicates that standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 in this aspect of the subject and pupils achieve satisfactorily. A variety of hymns, such as 'Allelu, Allelu', and 'I'm happy that I'm me', were sung tunefully, with enthusiasm, an appropriate sense of rhythm and generally clear diction but with few dynamics. Pupils particularly enjoyed singing hymns with a simple percussion accompaniment.
130. From the lesson seen, standards in the composing, listening and appraising aspects of the subject are broadly average at the end of Year 2. The quality of teaching was satisfactory. During the introductory session, pupils were learning new songs from a tape, but the teacher did not provide specific guidance on how to improve their singing or give them the opportunity to practise small sections that they found difficult. In a more familiar song, they made a crisp entry but did not hold the notes for long enough. However, in the main part of the lesson, pupils built well on earlier learning, where they had used a computer program to compose patterns with high and low notes. They first composed short, repeated musical patterns in pairs, with notes of different duration and recorded them with simple graphic notation. Most made good progress in playing their compositions on a chime bar, differentiating the duration of the notes appropriately. They were helped in this by the care with which they listened to and observed each other and responded to the teacher's suggestions, clearly learning and improving their own performance as a result of this.
131. Scrutiny of planning shows that all aspects of the subject required by the National Curriculum are taught, but assessment procedures are not yet precise enough to enable teachers to monitor pupils' developing skills and to use this in planning for focused improvements. The subject is due to be reviewed and teaching monitored this year, as part of the school development plan, but this is likely to be delayed as the co-ordinator is currently on maternity leave.
132. Pupils have several opportunities to extend their musical interests in, for example, the recorder club or through violin, guitar or keyboard lessons taught weekly by a visiting teacher. Pupils learning to play instruments have opportunities to play with others and practise their skills in school concerts and the weekly celebration assembly. All pupils have opportunities to perform singing at annual events such as the Harvest Festival in the local church and in the annual Christmas concert. The local education authority music service provides concerts for pupils. Such activities promote their social and cultural development well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. During the inspection period, only one gymnastics lesson was taught and this was for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, no judgements can be made about overall standards in the subject, pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching. The judgements made are based on the lesson seen, scrutiny of planning and discussions with teachers.
134. From the lesson seen, standards in gymnastics are broadly average at the end of Year 2. The quality of teaching was satisfactory. The teacher organised and managed the pupils well so that they responded promptly to her instructions, including those appropriately stressing safe

practices. Pupils built well on earlier learning, to improve their chosen ways of travelling on hands and feet with several showing initiative in the way that they adapted their movements. The teacher encouraged pupils to practise and refine different ways of jumping and then their sequences, as they linked movements together. This helped pupils to improve their performance. The teacher made appropriate use of pupils to demonstrate as they transferred their sequences to apparatus, drawing attention to successful changes in height, direction and balance. However, pupils were not given the opportunity to evaluate each other's performance themselves and some lost concentration because a few of the demonstrations, when most pupils were inactive, were too long.

135. Scrutiny of planning and discussions with staff show that pupils have full access to the breadth of physical activities required in the National Curriculum. Outdoor and adventurous activities are taught using facilities at nearby Weston Park. Good liaison with the middle school ensures that the swimming activities are taught during Years 5 and 6. In addition to this, pupils have a good number of opportunities, especially in view of the small size of the school, to take part in after school activities such as football club and coaching in a range of sports, including Rugby and cricket. Some pupils also take part in some competitive sport against other local schools. This makes a good contribution to their social development. Some aspects of gymnastics are limited, as much of the large equipment in the hall is unsuitable for the age groups of the pupils. However, this will be rectified when it is replaced at Easter with new, suitable apparatus.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Evidence from the lessons seen during the inspection, together with discussions with staff, scrutiny of planning, displays and previous work indicate that standards broadly meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Boys and girls of all levels of attainment achieve satisfactorily overall, but not as well as they do in mathematics and English as they move through the school. They develop a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Standards are similar to those described in the previous report.
137. By the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with the events of the Christian celebrations of Easter and Christmas. Some higher attaining pupils show a detailed knowledge of the events leading up to the Resurrection, for example, of the way that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to compare aspects of Christianity with features of other world religions, such as Lent and Ramadan. Pupils list some of the features of Christian places of worship when visiting the village church and compare these with pictures of mosques and synagogues. By the end of Year 4, pupils are familiar with many of the stories from the Old and New Testaments. They show a sound understanding of the importance of, for example, special foods or the symbolism of light, in the festivals and customs of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some that is good. A particular strength in the lessons seen was the way that teachers modelled good listening skills very well and used carefully structured and targeted questions to help pupils to clarify their ideas and feelings. This was reflected in the way that pupils listened carefully to the teacher and to each other. It helped pupils to improve their oracy skills as well as promoting their personal and spiritual development. In a well taught lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, skilful questioning resulted in several pupils giving clear explanations of why particular possessions are precious to them. In the group activities, they showed a good awareness of moral issues in the appropriate examples of good and evil they chose, giving reasons for their opinions. At the end of the lesson, the teacher again used good questioning to help pupils make good links between their own ideas and Christian teachings in a way that promoted their moral development very well.
139. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers mean that pupils of all levels of attainment are confident in sharing their ideas and feelings, secure in the knowledge that both teachers and their peers will value and respect what they have to say. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in understanding and expressing their thoughts and emotions as they move through the school. This makes a very

good contribution to their personal and spiritual development. A good example of this was seen in a period of focused reflection during a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils sustained several minutes of thoughtful stillness very well. Sensitive questioning from the teacher then helped many of them to explore and explain their feelings over actions that they now regretted, such as, 'I'm sorry I was nasty to my little sister and it made me feel upset as well'.

140. While teachers used their knowledge of individual pupils well in targeting questions in oral work and discussions, in the lessons seen and in the scrutiny of pupils' past work, the same written tasks are generally given to all pupils, irrespective of their level of attainment. Although teachers provide appropriate support for lower attaining pupils, this resulted in the pace of learning slowing and pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress in lessons. One reason that teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils or set well matched work is because assessment is underdeveloped in the subject and consequently they do not always take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning. Teachers generally use the subject well to reinforce or extend pupils' literacy skills, for example, by giving extra opportunities for writing in a variety of forms, although they do not always insist on high enough standards of presentation. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding.
141. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, manages the subject well, ensuring that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are met. The curriculum is enriched well in a number of ways. Weekly visits from local ministers make a very useful contribution to pupils' learning, as well as visits to the village church and to workshops at Lichfield Cathedral and Brewood Church. The pupils particularly enjoy the regular visits from the 'Storytellers' group from the local community, who use drama and role-play with them to explore the meaning of Bible stories. This contributes well to pupils' good knowledge and understanding of Christianity. As yet, pupils have not had the opportunity to extend their experience through visits to places of worship of other religions that they study. The subject makes a good contribution to the personal, spiritual, moral social and cultural development of the pupils, for example in fostering respect for the values and beliefs of others and in forming their own. The school places evident value on worship and Christian values, reflecting its aims as a Church school well. Assemblies often include themes that support topics in religious education lessons and teachers make good links with these.