

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HUNTINGTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Huntington, Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124088

Headteacher: Mrs Clare Robertson

Reporting inspector: Ms Glesni Thomas  
22248

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 January 2001

Inspection number: 197315

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stafford Road  
Huntington  
Cannock  
Staffordshire

Postcode: WS12 4PD

Telephone number: 01543 510260

Fax number: 01543 510263

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Crump

Date of previous inspection: 13 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22248	Glesni Thomas	Registered inspector	Science. Information and communication technology. Art. Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	English. Design and technology. Music. Special educational needs.	
31862	Julia Coop	Team inspector	Mathematics. Geography. History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15236	Morag Thorpe	Team inspector	Physical education. Religious education. Foundation stage. English as an additional language.	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Huntington Community Primary School is set in the village of Huntington, a former mining community, north of Cannock. Over recent years the community has experienced a considerable degree of change and so too has the school, which has had several changes of leadership since it was last inspected. At present there are 313 pupils on the school roll and an additional 70 attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Most of the children live in the immediate locality; however, some pupils from further afield attend the nursery and transfer to their local schools for the reception year. A few families who live in Huntington also transfer their children to other schools at the end of the nursery year. When they start nursery, pupils have a wide range of prior attainments and a significant proportion have language and mathematical skills which are well below those usually seen in three-year-olds. Attainment on entry is well below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school population is predominantly white and only a very small number of pupils attending the school have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that found in most schools of this size and mainly comprises pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

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

This is an improving school. Given their prior attainment, pupils' achievements are good. Because of the consistently good teaching they receive, they make good progress and their achievements are well built upon. By the time they leave the school, the standards they attain in English and mathematics are similar to those found in other schools in the country. Standards in science, music and physical education are above average. Higher attaining pupils make good progress but the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is not always good enough. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behaviour is good. The quality of teaching is good and in over a quarter of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent. Consequently, pupils' learning opportunities are good. The school is very well led and managed and the new headteacher has a very clear vision for the future direction of the school. Staff and governors share a clear commitment to high standards and continuing improvement. The school has a good level of effectiveness and gives good value for money. Attendance is not good enough.

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

- Leadership is very good.
- Teaching is good and as a result pupils achieve well, particularly in writing and science.
- Very good relationships result in good behaviour in class and around the school.
- Good assessment procedures help teachers to keep track of pupils' progress and set future targets.
- In lessons and extra-curricular activities, very good provision for PE and good provision for music promote high standards in these subjects.

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

- There are not enough planned opportunities to foster pupils' speaking skills.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to take initiative and develop independence.
- Attendance levels are too low and this has an impact on pupils' progress.
- Particularly in Key Stage 2, support for pupils with special educational needs is not good enough.
- There are weaknesses in the organisation and management of learning in the foundation stage.

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

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

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in January 1997 when it was found not to be providing a sound education for all its pupils. Greatly improved leadership provided the direction and impetus for the improvement; however, staff have drawn on their own reserves of determination and commitment to develop and maintain improvement. Governors play a more active role in managing the school and understand well its strengths and weaknesses. The recently appointed headteacher has a

well defined vision for the school's future development. There are appropriate schemes of work for all subjects, lessons are well planned and good assessment procedures help staff keep track of how well pupils are doing. Clear targets are set for individuals and groups of pupils so they know what they have to do to improve. An exception is that targets for pupils with special educational needs lack clarity, a weakness at the last inspection. Teaching has improved considerably. Teachers now have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils respond well, their attitudes to learning are now good and this is reflected in their good levels of achievement. Standards of work seen in English are broadly average and in science are above average. Mathematics standards are average in Key Stage 2 but in Key Stage 1, although improving standards are not yet in line with expectations. Nevertheless, pupils work hard and their attainment in mathematics is good. Progress in all subjects is never less than satisfactory and is usually good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards of handwriting and presentation, previously unsatisfactory, are now good. In design and technology standards have improved and are now satisfactory. The use made of reference books, unsatisfactory in 1997, has improved in class but not in school libraries. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is now provided.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	E*	E*	D	C
Science	E	E	E	E

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

In the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 assessments, the school's performance in English and mathematics was below the national average but in line with results in similar schools. In both subjects, the school's performance has improved since 1999 (mathematics in that year was in the bottom 5% nationally) but in science performance has been consistently well below average. Nevertheless, the school is improving rapidly and closing the gap between national and school averages in all three subjects. During the inspection, inspectors found that standards of work in the school were similar to those found in other schools in English, mathematics and the majority of other subjects. In science, physical education and music, standards were above average.

In the Key Stage 1 assessments, reading and mathematics standards were well below average and had been since 1998. Writing standards, below the national average, were in line with standards in similar schools. Writing standards had improved at a faster rate than in other schools; performance in reading and mathematics had kept pace with national improvement. During the inspection, inspectors found standards of reading and writing were similar to those of seven-year-olds nationally and mathematics standards, although improving, were still below average. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well in mathematics and make good progress. By the end of the foundation stage (nursery and reception classes) pupils meet the early learning goals in their creative, physical and personal and social development and exceed them in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They do not meet the goals set in communication, language and literacy or in mathematics, but make good progress. In all key stages, pupils have good listening skills but spoken language skills are too weak.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and the vast majority make good progress. As they move through the school, the incremental gains in skills, knowledge and understanding that they make are well built upon. Pupils who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress but

progress made by pupils with special educational needs is not always as good as it should be. The school sets appropriately challenging targets and is well placed to meet and, in some subjects to exceed, these targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show pride in their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and well behaved in class and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Initiative and responsibility are not strongly enough developed.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and this has an impact on standards achieved.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons, concentrate well and take pride in their work. They show care and consideration for others. Independence in learning is not strong enough. Attendance levels are too low and some pupils miss out on important learning and assessments.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very 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.*

Teaching has improved and is now good. Consequently, the quality of pupils' learning is good and sometimes very good. Almost 75% of teaching seen was good, including about 33% which was very good or excellent (in four outstanding lessons). Teaching was at least satisfactory in 97% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 3%. Good and very good teaching were found in all subjects. English and mathematics teaching is satisfactory in the foundation stage and good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Literacy and numeracy are well taught and literacy teaching is very good in Key Stage 1. Teachers motivate and inspire pupils. They plan interesting and relevant lessons and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well in their behaviour and the work they produce. Teachers have good subject knowledge and share their expertise with one another. In Key Stages 1 and 2, learning is consistently good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Learning is very good in physical education. Good learning is seen in history in Key Stage 1 and in music and geography in Key Stage 2. In the foundation stage good learning is evident in personal and social education, creative areas and knowledge and understanding of the world.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad overall with good provision for literacy and numeracy. Very good extra-curricular opportunities. More planned opportunities needed for speaking and for applying skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision is not effective enough.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is strong. Satisfactory provision for spiritual development.  Pupils lack opportunities to exercise initiative and responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good care is taken of pupils. Their progress and behaviour are well monitored. Assessment is good.

The school has made considerable progress in developing its curriculum and introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Numerous cultural opportunities and good community links enrich the curriculum. The school has a sound partnership with parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Pupils are well cared for and there are now good procedures to assess progress in learning and behaviour. There are weaknesses in support for personal development and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Very good links have been established with other schools.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. A clear educational direction is set.  There is a strong commitment to high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are conscientious and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its performance well and makes good use of the information to improve the quality of education it provides.
The strategic use of resources	The school applies best value principles and makes good use of its resources. It provides good value for money.

The leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. The school has adequate staffing and resources and spacious accommodation. It copes well with the difficulties of a split site. The new headteacher has the skills and vision to lead this dedicated and hardworking team. Management of the foundation stage is not yet effective enough.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• Parents value the nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough homework is given.</li> <li>• More extra-curricular activities would be welcome.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' findings endorse parents' positive comments. Inspectors did not concur with parents' views about homework and extra-curricular activities. The amount of homework given was found to be appropriate in view of the age and levels of maturity of the children. Extra-curricular activities were found

to be very good. The school provides a wide range of sporting, academic and musical clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school and residential visits provide further good opportunities for pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. When compared with schools in a similar context, attainment was average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Measured against earlier attainment, the school's results were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards for eleven-year-olds were well below average for all three core subjects. In English, attainment at the higher level 5 was well below that of other schools nationally but average for schools in similar contexts. In mathematics, the proportions reaching the higher level were well below the national average and average for schools with similar prior attainment. In science, results at level 5 were well below average in comparisons with schools nationally and those in similar circumstances. The school's performance dipped immediately after the last inspection but since 1999 there has been a strong upward trend with the school slowly narrowing the gap between national and school averages. The findings of the inspection confirm this trend of improvement. In English and mathematics, inspectors now judge attainment to be close to average and in science, as a result of good subject leadership and inspiring teaching at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average.
2. Attainment in the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds was well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with schools in a similar context, attainment was well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Compared with other schools nationally, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level for seven-year-olds was below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics and in teacher assessments of science. The proportion reaching the higher level 3 was above the national average in writing, below average in science and well below average in reading and mathematics. In comparisons with schools in a similar context, the proportions reaching the expected level were average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics and science. The proportions attaining the higher level 3 were very high in writing, well below average in reading and below average in mathematics and science. Following a marked dip in performance in 1998, the school has steadily improved its performance, particularly in writing. Inspection findings point to a continuing picture of improvement. The findings of the inspection are that attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and science and below average in mathematics.
3. When pupils enter the nursery, the prior attainment of the large majority is well below that expected of children in the age group. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory and they make sound progress through the foundation stage. Most, however, do not meet the agreed learning goals in communication, language and literacy or in mathematics by the end of the foundation stage. In all other areas of learning they meet the expected goals and in their knowledge and understanding of the world they exceed them and make good progress. Their computer skills are developing well and they deftly use the mouse to move items across the screen. As a result of effective science teaching, they are very curious and interested in how things work and move. Their knowledge of different cultures and beliefs is appropriate because they have participated in the celebrations of differing faith and ethnic groups.
4. By the time they leave the foundation stage, although not fully meeting the expected goals in communication, language and literacy, they make satisfactory progress. Most children have made a secure start in learning to read and a few read simple storybooks accurately and fluently. The majority recognise and write letters and sounds of the alphabet and a few can put sounds together to make words. They listen well but do not use talk to retell their experiences or sequence their ideas as well as would usually be expected in children of this age group. In mathematics, a few confidently count in tens but most are learning numbers to ten. During the

week of the inspection, about half the children in one class successfully solved a very simple addition problem. Most recognise a few common shapes, including a square and a circle. Nevertheless despite making satisfactory progress, the majority do not reach the set mathematical goals by the time they leave the reception class. In their personal and social development, children make good progress in reaching the goals set; they take turns, they share and have the expected levels of independence and confidence. They also progress well and meet the expected goals in their creative development; their drawings and paintings are appropriate for five-year-olds, their singing is well pitched and rhythmic and in role-play in the class shop, they use imagination as any five year old would. In the physical area of learning, they have some good fine motor skills, for example, when using scissors and piecing together jigsaws. Their large motor skills are not well enough developed in the nursery but by the end of the reception year their physical co-ordination and agility are good. Overall, satisfactory progress in their physical development enables children to meet the goals set for the foundation stage.

5. The majority of pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and, given their prior attainment, they achieve well because of the good teaching provided by the school. By the end of Year 2, most have attained standards which are close to average in reading, writing and listening but below average in speaking. The vast majority listen carefully to one another and to adults and a few describe their work well to the class but the majority lack confidence in using spoken language to explain and describe. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read accurately and with enjoyment and a few pupils read with fluency and expression. The majority of seven-year-olds express their ideas logically in writing which is usually appropriately punctuated. Most are developing a good handwriting style and work is well presented. In mathematics, an increasing proportion is working at the level expected for seven-year-olds, but the majority of pupils have not yet attained this standard. Nevertheless, given their attainment when they enter school, the achievement of the vast majority is good. They make good progress and by the end of the key stage use multiples of 10 and 2 in calculations based on shopping problems. Most pupils use apparatus to help their calculations and higher attaining pupils do these calculations in their heads. In science, the majority of pupils reach the expected standards and have a good understanding of the way in which materials can be used for specific purposes. Standards in information and communication technology ( ICT) are average. Pupils are gaining skills during their lessons in the ICT suite but do not yet apply these skills sufficiently well in their learning in other subjects. In religious education, pupils attain the standard expected for seven-year-olds and are developing an appropriate knowledge of some of the main world faiths including Christianity. In history and in physical education, pupils attain above average standards because of the particularly challenging and stimulating teaching in these subjects. In all other subjects, pupils attain the expected standards for seven-year-olds.
6. In Key Stage 2, the achievements in Key Stage 1 are well built upon. Overall, pupils continue to make good progress and to achieve well. In English, the majority reach appropriate standards in reading and writing and their listening skills are good. However, they are not yet able to articulate their views and ideas as fluently as is usually found in pupils of this age group. By the end of the key stage, the majority read with accuracy and higher attaining pupils read with fluency and expression. They write for a variety of purposes and their work is carefully presented. The majority have a well-formed joined-up style of handwriting. Punctuation and spelling are appropriate. Most express their ideas well and a few pupils express their ideas with well-chosen words and sometimes spirited language. In mathematics, as a result of the school's considerable efforts to raise standards, the attainment of the majority is now broadly in line with that expected of eleven-year-olds nationally. The majority can multiply competently and show a good understanding of decimals and fractions. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of equivalent fractions. Mental mathematics skills are improving, particularly where, each day, pupils set out to beat their own records. In science, attainment exceeds national expectations because of good science teaching overall and very good teaching at the end of the key stage. By the end of Year 6, pupils' investigative skills are above average. They plan investigations, create conditions for fair testing, carefully measure results and are aware of the need to replicate their results in order to eliminate error. Their knowledge of materials, life and physical processes is satisfactory and often exceeds that expected of eleven-year-olds. Standards in ICT are satisfactory and pupils can create, move and rotate three-dimensional geometric shapes on the screen. They access information from a

CD-ROM but do not make enough use of word processing skills. Overall, standards in religious education are appropriate and pupils have the expected level of understanding about different world faiths. This is not always reflected in their written work, however. Above average standards are seen in physical education, where because of the very good teaching they receive, pupils have high levels of control in their movements. Standards in music are high and pupils sing in three part rounds with a good awareness of pitch; in this aspect of music, pupils sometimes make very good progress. In all other subjects of the curriculum, standards are average.

7. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Because of the good teaching they receive and their positive attitudes to school, they learn well and make good progress. This is particularly evident in science. In the foundation stage, achievement is good in scientific areas of learning. Curiosity and interest in science are well developed, providing a springboard for good progress in subsequent key stages and leading to the good science standards seen at the top of the school. In general the achievement of lower attaining pupils has not kept pace with that of other pupils and this was recently highlighted in an analysis of termly test results. As a result, action has now been taken to target additional resources to these pupils. The school has a very small proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language and these pupils make appropriate and sometimes good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in Key Stage 1 with the good level of support that they receive. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not have access to the same levels of support within class and their progress through the key stage is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory progress is also the result of the lack of clear and precise targets in pupils' individual education plans which means that the work they are given does not meet their needs. This represents a finding similar to that of the previous report, when the progress of pupils with special educational needs was stated to be unsatisfactory.
9. The school has been very effective in setting targets at key stage, class and individual levels and this has proved to be an effective strategy which has contributed to the raising standards of achievement in the school. Targets have presented a good level of challenge and, this year, the school expects to exceed the mathematics targets it has set in Key Stage 2. Each half term, teachers identify a target group of pupils and also negotiate individual targets. However, teachers have not been as successful in setting the very well defined targets necessary to enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Nevertheless, the school has a culture of setting and striving to meet targets which has been a key factor in the improvement seen in pupils' achievement. The introduction of additional resources to support literacy and numeracy has had a positive impact on achievement. The school has organised additional literacy support and springboard mathematics sessions for pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2 and booster classes are held for Year 6 pupils. The school is also involved in a Family Literacy project, which helps parents to more effectively support their children's learning. All these initiatives have helped to raise pupils' achievement and improve standards of attainment.
10. The use of literacy across the curriculum is not strong. Pupils make use of their literacy skills in some subjects, including history and science. However, not enough use is made of texts related to subjects across the curriculum to promote literacy skills. In addition, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to search for the information they need in the school library. Pupils have some opportunities to use mathematics across the curriculum, most notably in science. However, pupils' abilities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in other areas of learning is not as well developed as it should be. Similarly, in ICT, while pupils are developing an appropriate and sometimes good range of skills, their application across the curriculum is limited and patchy. Pupils are able to retrieve information from discs to support their learning in geography, for instance, about the water cycle. However, their word processing skills are not well enough used. The school is aware of some of these weaknesses and has timetabled the ICT suite to enable classes to have access to support learning across the curriculum. The school has made successful efforts to raise pupils' achievement in this and other subjects; pupils now need to be given the opportunity to make better use of their skills.

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

11. Pupils' good attitudes to their work and play contribute considerably to their success in learning. Current attitudes compare well with those at the time of the previous inspection which were described as positive. The majority of pupils are keen to come to school and get very involved in the whole range of activities that the school offers. The positive attitudes to learning seen in the foundation stage are well built upon and, throughout the school, pupils concentrate very well in lessons and are well motivated learners.
12. As in the previous inspection, behaviour in class and around the school is good and this helps create a good climate for learning. Pupils are trustworthy, polite and courteous. They greet visitors cordially, opening doors and offering to guide adults around the school. They are proud of their school and take care of it. There is no vandalism or graffiti.
13. The school experiences very little bullying, sexism or racism. It is a positive benefit that learning for all can take place in a calm, caring atmosphere free from any form of oppression. The school has had no permanent or short-term exclusions for at least the previous three years. Pupils are taught to consider the impact their actions may have on others and therefore most behave with consideration for other people. They respect the views and feelings of others and realise that not all people are the same in all ways.
14. The personal development of pupils at the school is, overall, satisfactory and relationships are very good and a strength of the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. They share well in the foundation stage and as they move through the school, the pupils care for each other. When they make the difficult trip from the infant to the junior building, the bigger ones look after the small ones by holding their hands. Most pupils have the greatest respect for their teachers and other adults in the school. They know who to turn to for advice and have trust in them. This was well in evidence when, after school, one teacher had pupils queuing up to ask questions and discuss what they were doing that night. After a while, the teacher turned around and said, jokingly, "Don't any of you want to go home?"
15. A weakness is that pupils are not always allowed to develop their personal initiative sufficiently to take responsibility and therefore become independent. For example, in the nursery, children are expected to line up before moving from one part of the room to the other and do not have enough opportunity to make choices about their learning. Later in the school, pupils lack opportunities for independent study in the library, for helping themselves to resources or regularly manning the office phones at lunchtime. Nevertheless, pupils are keen to help. They collect and deliver lunchtime registers and at one Key Stage 2 assembly, two girls were responsible for operating the overhead projector. The school is considering reinstating the lapsed school council and this would be a positive step.
16. Current attendance levels are unsatisfactory. Although the school has made efforts to improve figures, attendance is not as good as it was four years ago. However, the majority of pupils do come to school and into classes on time and most lessons commence promptly. The school does not have any unexplained absence trends. Reported unauthorised absences are well below the national average but authorised absences are well above it. However, some unauthorised absences are not always accurately recorded. The unsatisfactory levels of attendance have a detrimental impact on pupils' learning and achievement.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, during the inspection, teaching was found to be good. This is a marked contrast to the findings of the 1997 inspection when there were many shortcomings in teaching. The school has worked hard to rectify this situation and in over a third of lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was very good or excellent. All but a very small proportion (3 per cent) of teaching was satisfactory or better and roughly three-quarters of teaching was good or better. Consequently, pupils' learning is good overall; they make good progress and achieve well. The high levels of good and very good teaching which pupils experience as they move through the school have a cumulative effect on their learning and achievement. Despite well below average attainment on entering the nursery, by the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly average and, in some subjects, above average.
18. In the foundation stage teaching, overall, is good. In half the lessons seen, teaching was good and was very good in about a tenth. Teaching was satisfactory in all but one of the remaining lessons, which was unsatisfactory. Overall teaching was:
  - satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and physical areas of learning;
  - good in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative areas of learning and this has a beneficial impact on children's learning in these areas.
19. Because of the good teaching in personal and social education, children are keen to come to school and eager to participate. The foundations are laid for positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. Similarly, good teaching has a positive impact on children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their emerging interest in science. In creative areas, pupils are learning well in music and visual arts; however, imaginative play is not as well developed. Learning is satisfactory in the children's mathematical, language and physical areas of development and they make appropriate progress.
20. In Key Stage 1, overall, teaching is very good. In over half the lessons seen, teaching was very good and a quarter of lessons had good teaching. The remaining proportion comprised the small number of lessons in which teaching was satisfactory or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Key Stage 1. Throughout the key stage, teaching was:
  - very good in reading, writing and physical education;
  - good in mathematics, science, ICT and history;
  - satisfactory in religious education, design and technology, music and art and design.
21. The impact of the high proportion of very good teaching is that pupils in Key stage 1 achieve well and make good, and often very good, progress in their learning in English, mathematics, science, ICT and history. In all other subjects their progress is satisfactory with the exception of physical education where they progress very well and achieve high standards. In mathematics, learning is good and, despite the fact that a significant proportion do not attain the expected standard, the achievement of the vast majority of pupils is also good.
22. In Key Stage 2, overall, teaching is good. In over a quarter of lessons, teaching was very good or excellent and good teaching was seen in almost half of Key Stage 2 lessons. The remaining lessons were satisfactory, apart from a very small proportion in which teaching was unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2 as a whole, teaching was:
  - very good in physical education;
  - good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography and music;
  - satisfactory in religious education, history, design and technology and art and design.
23. As a result of the good teaching they experience, pupils make good progress in learning in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography and music. They make very good progress in physical education because teaching is strong in this area and their satisfactory progress in all other subjects is a reflection of the satisfactory teaching which predominates in these subjects.
24. There are weaknesses in provision for pupils with special educational needs. When pupils are

withdrawn for specialist support, teaching is very tightly structured and well focused addressing on the pupils' individual difficulties. Where available, classroom support staff effectively work with pupils who have special education needs. However, effectiveness in supporting pupils is limited because individual education plans lack the detailed short-term steps that pupils need to take if they are to make adequate progress. In addition, teachers' class planning does not always fully enough identify how the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are to be met in class lessons.

25. The skill and enthusiasm of teachers in stimulating and inspiring pupils are a strength which leads to pupils being well motivated in their learning. Following an outstanding Year 6 geography lesson on the water cycle in which learning was of the highest quality, one pupil was overheard to say to the teacher, "Miss, I have worked harder and learned more in this lesson than I have all week." In a very good Year 2 history lesson on the Great Fire of London, the teacher's enthusiasm and very good use of source evidence inspired pupils and led to very good learning in their understanding of how diaries and other records provide evidence of past events.
26. Overall, very high expectations are set and as a result pupils' behaviour and achievements are good. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they take a pride in their work. Handwriting and presentation are usually of a high standard. Very high expectations are set in a Key Stage 2 music lesson in which pupils succeed in singing in three parts. They succeed in doing so because of the demands placed on them by their teacher. In Year 1, the high expectations of the class teacher in the plenary of a literacy lesson enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress in spelling.
27. A good range of teaching methods is very effectively employed. In general, teachers are extremely skilled in leading large group sessions at the start and end of lessons. They communicate effectively and give clear explanation and instructions so that pupils understand what is expected of them. They encourage and challenge, for instance, when, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, a pupil suggested a word, the teacher replied, "I think that's an ideal word, now let's see if you can write it." The challenging questions teachers ask help to extend pupils' understanding and are often designed to make pupils aware of their own learning. This was the case in a Year 1/2 lesson when, in response to their teacher's question, pupils could identify that they had been using their senses to learn about different materials including metal, glass and wood. Teachers use imaginative and interesting subject matter likely to appeal to their pupils and, during the week of the inspection, the introduction of "Verb Man" effectively promoted Year 3's literacy learning.
28. Good pace is a strong feature of the best lessons. In a religious education lesson at the top of Key Stage 2, the very good pace of teaching resulted in thorough coverage and an increase in the pupils' knowledge and understanding about the Christian ceremony of baptism. Outstanding pace in pupils' learning and concentrated physical effort was the consequence of an excellent Year 5 physical education lesson in which pupils were encouraged to evaluate their own skills. Support staff are often effectively used to aid learning. Particularly valuable are the observations they make during whole class teaching sessions. These give teachers good quality information about their own performance and the progress of their pupils and are very effectively used to improve teaching and learning. Support given to the very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language is appropriate and enables them to progress well.
29. Lessons are well planned and teachers have clearly defined learning objectives. Consequently, teaching and learning are well focused. Lesson aims are often shared with pupils and recalled at the end of the lessons. In some lessons the key facts are well highlighted. This was the case towards the end of an excellent Year 6 lesson on equivalent fractions when the highlighting of key facts enabled pupils to consolidate the good progress they had made. Teachers have good strategies to assess what pupils have learned on a day-to-day basis and they make effective use of this assessment information when planning what pupils are to learn next. Appropriate use is made of homework.
30. Literacy teaching is good overall. The majority of children entering the foundation stage have literacy skills which are well below those expected in three-year-olds. Literacy teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and children begin to develop early reading and writing skills and are

encouraged, for instance, to write invitations to a Teddy Bears' picnic. In the reception classes and through to the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, literacy teaching is good and learning is more rapid. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of the National Literacy Framework. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and writing, in particular, is well taught. However, pupils are not given the opportunity to consolidate, extend and make practical use of their literacy skills through independent study in the school library. A general weakness is that insufficient attention is given to expanding and enriching pupils' spoken language skills. Nevertheless, as a result of good literacy teaching, standards of reading and writing are improving throughout the school.

31. Numeracy teaching is good and often very good. In the foundation stage appropriate provision is made to support children's number recognition and early addition and subtraction. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers are using the National Numeracy Strategy with growing confidence and pupils are learning to become increasingly proficient in using mental methods of calculation. Science teaching is good and enables pupils to gain in knowledge and understanding from the nursery to Year 6. The good nursery experiences for scientific exploration are well consolidated and extended in the reception class where very good teaching promotes children's skills of enquiry. This was seen during the week of the inspection when children investigated how objects could be moved without being touched. Scientific knowledge is consistently built and pupils' skills of enquiry are developed particularly well at the end of key Stage 2.
32. Teachers' good subject knowledge in physical education is a strong feature throughout the school and is evident in the well structured lessons and the guidance given which enables pupils to refine and improve their skills. In Year 5 and 6 music lessons and Key Stage 2 extra-curricular activities, the creative effort of pupils is well promoted by the good subject knowledge of their teacher. Good subject knowledge is also evident in ICT and the enthusiasm and confidence of teachers is well communicated to pupils. For example, following a demonstration of a new ICT technique, one child's enthusiasm was expressed in her comment, "That's fun".

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

33. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are broadly satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriately linked to the National Curriculum, the national guidance for the foundation stage and the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage has been appropriately revised in line with the new early learning goals, however, in the nursery, insufficient use is made of the outdoor play facilities. This hampers children's physical development and in particular their gross motor skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2 an appropriate length of time is allocated to each subject and design and technology is now appropriately planned for, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Some foundation subjects, however, although broadly following the required Programmes of Study are not sufficiently well balanced. For example, in Key Stage 2, planning in history and geography includes too many topics. This limits the depth of study and as a consequence pupils' skills are not systematically developed. Pupils in general are only aware of basic facts and have limited opportunities to research independently and examine topics in more detail. The school has placed a heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy and now recognises the need to develop key skills in other subjects.
34. Considerable time and effort has gone into curriculum planning and the National Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively, resulting in a slow but steady rise in standards. The school has recently identified a group of Year 5 pupils needing extra help and has implemented an appropriate additional numeracy strategy to support these pupils. Although in its early stages, this has already improved the confidence of these pupils. There is a need now to consider how best to support the needs of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who are also experiencing difficulties in grasping basic mathematical concepts. Many of these pupils do, however, benefit from the support of an additional literacy strategy, which is effective in supporting

their needs and is accelerating their progress. The use of booster classes in the spring term is also having a positive impact on pupils' progress and achievements in basic skills. The school tries hard to ensure that pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for additional mathematics or language work do not miss the foundation subjects.

35. Since the school was last inspected, the provision for pupils with special educational needs has not improved sufficiently and remains unsatisfactory overall. The school has established a policy and there are individual education plans (IEPs) for each pupil on the Register of Special Educational Needs. The targets in the IEPs are satisfactory but are insufficiently specific as short-term learning goals. Classroom support staff provide positive support for pupils with special needs in lessons and teachers generally have a clear understanding of how their skills can be harnessed to work with the pupils. However, teachers do not make reference to the IEPs in their planning and overall they are not used sufficiently on a day-to-day basis as a key element in providing specific, planned activities. Wherever possible, pupils with special educational needs have full access to the full National Curriculum
36. Extra-curricular activities are very popular and take place at lunchtimes and after school, thus affording all pupils the opportunity to attend. Provision is very good and includes a wide range of sporting, academic and musical opportunities, for example, choirs, wind band, recorder groups, netball, football and library. Study classes in the ICT suite in particular are popular with pupils who are positive about the impact this is having on their achievements. A good range of outings, visitors and residential visits gives pupils good opportunities to develop social skills as well as enriching the curriculum.
37. Pupils in general have equal access to the curriculum and additional cultural experiences. All activities are open to girls and boys and the additional support strategies for English and mathematics cater well for lower attaining pupils. Access to the curriculum is restricted slightly because some pupils miss aspects of numeracy, for example, when returning late from additional literacy sessions, while other pupils miss lessons to attend music tuition. The school is aware of this and makes every effort to adapt timetables appropriately.
38. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There is in place a suitable policy for sex and drug education, which is approached through science and supported by outside agencies and visits by mothers with young babies. The physical education curriculum supports health education. Circle time is used appropriately to enhance pupils' social and moral development and gives suitable opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect upon issues relevant to them. While this is an improvement since the last inspection, there still is not a coherent approach to this curriculum area and there remains no policy to provide this consistency. Pupils' social development is supported through an appropriate behaviour policy but this places an emphasis on sanctions and does not sufficiently support and guide staff who work with small groups of pupils who show more immature social behaviour.
39. Links to the community are good and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents support many curriculum areas and the Family Literacy Strategy in particular has been especially effective at enhancing the skills and developing the confidence of parents who attend, who in turn feel better able to support their children's learning at home. The older members of the community also make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Relationships with partner institutions are very good. Pupils in Year 6, for example, benefit from a special project set each year by teachers in the local comprehensive while the school benefits from the support from students from the local Further Education College. The school has taken part in local arts projects and is used by other schools for courses.
40. Overall the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; a finding similar to that reported in the 1998 HMI inspection. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are generally satisfactory. The school provides an environment where all pupils are valued. Collective worship is used appropriately to create a spiritual atmosphere of prayer and reflection. This was particularly effective in the recently introduced, weekly, whole school

assembly which created a very powerful ethos in its uplifting celebration of pupils' personal, social and academic achievements. Circle time gives opportunities for sharing thoughts, concerns and feelings and, as a result, pupils treat one another with sensitivity and respect.

41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Collective worship is used to encourage pupils to be caring, reflective and to appreciate the world around them. The school rules, developed co-operatively with staff, pupils and parents, reflect the positive ethos of the school. The reward of house points and praise helps raise pupils' self esteem and encourages them to help each other and endeavour always to do their best. For example, in a Year 6 class, the very good relationships and supportive ethos encourage pupils to help one another and enabled all pupils to experience success in a challenging geography lesson seen during the inspection. Increasingly as pupils move through the school, they gain secure awareness of right and wrong and are willing to take responsibility for their actions.
42. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. It values all pupils and fosters an atmosphere of consideration and caring. Adults around the school present good role models in terms of care, consideration, reliability and good manners. During extra-curricular activities, including netball practice, they often provide models of good sportsmanship. Pupils' involvement in charity work raises their social awareness. The house system encourages pupils to work together as a team and residential visits and regular outings help foster good relationships. These opportunities have a direct bearing on pupils' good behaviour around the school. Although pupils have informal opportunities to take responsibility and to take initiative, helping tidy their classrooms, for example, in general there are limited planned strategies to promote this aspect of social development.
43. The provision for cultural development is good and the school provides many worthwhile experiences for pupils, especially in the arts, for example, visits by theatre workshops, artists and multi-cultural dance groups and frequent visits to areas of interest. This provides good opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the world around them. Celebrations of the diversity of cultural backgrounds are promoted through assemblies when, for example, the traditions of Chinese New Year are explained. Other cultures are the focus of stories in R.E lessons, where in one class, pupils were able to reflect upon and compare the Hindu practice of immersion in the River Ganges with Christian baptism.

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

44. The sensitive and caring way that the school looks after its pupils clearly has a positive effect upon their learning. There are good procedures for ensuring the protection and well-being of pupils and this is a significant improvement on the previous inspection when the school was not fully complying with statutory requirements for child protection and other safety issues. The school has successfully addressed these weaknesses. There is a written child protection policy and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. New members of staff receive training as part of their induction process.
45. Since the previous inspection, the school has compiled a detailed health and safety policy. Working with the health and safety governor and the site manager, the headteacher has carried out a very comprehensive risk assessment, which is now being appropriately addressed. There are very efficient and sensitive procedures for dealing with and reporting accidents and administering medicines. Several members of staff are 'in date' trained first aiders. Fire exercises are held regularly and appropriately recorded and good safety procedures have been adopted. Governors have made appropriate arrangements for sex education. As part of the school's personal, social and health education, the local police talk to the children about drugs and alcohol abuse.
46. Although the school's attendance is unsatisfactory, it works hard to improve these figures and its current procedures for monitoring and improving them are broadly satisfactory. Registers are marked in accordance with current procedures but some unauthorised absences are currently

being recorded as authorised and this is a weakness. Details of absences and lateness are recorded weekly and are collated with the visiting educational welfare officer. Should it be necessary, parents receive information about lateness and poor attendance. Pupils receive awards certificates for good attendance. However, too many parents take their children on holiday, during term times, over and above the allowed period.

47. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. All teachers use praise well and the children respond accordingly and assembly times are well used to reinforce good behaviour. Each class has written a set of rules which are often referred to at circle time. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good and clearly account for the school's very good record in this area. The school's anti-bullying policy provides clear guidelines on dealing with possible incidents.
48. The school has unsatisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and this is a weakness. Some elements of personal, social and health education are provided incidentally through the general curriculum, at circle times, in assemblies and through visits from the police and school nurse. Nevertheless there is currently no cohesive policy or planned programme for this area of learning. Pupils have neither an individual portfolio nor a record of achievement. The school is aware of this weakness and plans to introduce improvements by the summer of this year.
49. The school has worked hard in its approach to monitoring pupils' academic performance and this has led to a significant improvement since the previous inspection. It now has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These include assessments on entry to the nursery and reception classes, regular tests in English, mathematics and science, national tests and optional National Curriculum tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. The analysis of the national tests is thorough and is used to set targets for pupils in English and mathematics. Assessment in the other subjects of the curriculum is easily manageable and effective where recorded regularly.
50. Good use is made of the information from statutory and non-statutory tests; for instance, assessment is used to monitor attainment by gender and previous ability and to give pupils the opportunity for booster classes and Additional Literacy Support. Individual targets are set within groups and the school is considering ways of improving the systems in order to make them more individual and personal to each pupil. The guidance given by the school to support pupils' learning is good.
51. The headteacher and co-ordinators are involved in monitoring, work sampling and target setting. The assessment co-ordinator has prepared detailed guidance for assessment, recording and reporting. Pupils' assessments in the core and foundation subjects are transferred to the report, which in its graphical form is easy to understand. The school plans to include records for pupils for whom English is an additional language when they are required.
52. Where it is available, the help given in the classroom by support staff has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Training has equipped support staff with the skills they need to provide effective help. They have a good awareness of the personal as well as the academic needs of their pupils and the good relationships they have with the pupils provides a positive context for encouragement and guidance. The Local Education Authority satisfactorily conducts assessments, and provides advice and support for pupils with specific difficulties.

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

53. The majority of parents of children at Huntington Primary School believe that this is a good school for their children. In the opinion of parents, children like school and make good progress. They believe behaviour is good and that the school expects their children to work hard. In addition, they say that they would not feel uncomfortable at approaching the school with a question or a problem. A significant minority of parents do not think that their children receive sufficient

homework or that the school provides an interesting range of activities out of school. Inspection findings do not substantiate these adverse comments but the positive views expressed are endorsed by the inspection team.

54. The school provides its parents with good information, including regular newsletters and a home/school agreement. Reports to parents on their children's progress are very good. There are regular 'meet the teacher evenings', where parents can discuss their children's progress and any problems that they have. The school also adopts an open door policy for any urgent problems which may arise. Currently, with the help of a local college, the school is running a Family Literacy group and those who attend find it helps them understand how their children learn and what they can do to help at home. This has the potential to enhance pupils' learning.
55. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents and parents make a sound contribution to children's learning by helping with computer work, literacy, numeracy and design and technology. Parents also help on outings and take pupils to netball games. The school has a very energetic Parent Teachers Association, which runs discos and arranges a variety of other social events. Funds raised by the Association have helped to purchase computer ware, new curtains and a classroom sink unit. The help that parents provide has a positive impact on the work of the school.
56. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The parents are invited to reviews of those pupils on the Register of Special Needs and are informed when the school wants to involve outside specialists.

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

57. The school is very well led and managed. In her short time at the school, the headteacher has been able to identify key strengths and weaknesses. She is committed to high standards, has a very clear vision of the direction that the school now needs to take and has begun to share her vision with the entire school community. In recent years, the school's management structures have been strengthened; there is now a secure basis for the school's continuing development under its new leadership.
58. Since the last inspection in 1997 when the management of the school was found to be weak, there have been four changes in leadership. A significant contribution to the improved management of the school has been made by the deputy head and other key teachers who provided an important element of continuity and stability in a changing situation and who effectively helped to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided by the school. During the start of the academic year, the deputy took on the role of acting head, effectively maintaining the improvements that had been introduced and providing leadership during a period of change. The senior teachers now make a good contribution to the management of the school and curriculum co-ordinators provide appropriate and sometimes good leadership in their subject areas.
59. The school has a very positive ethos and, during the week of the inspection, its commitment to high standards of achievement and behaviour were made explicit in the very good whole school assembly which celebrated pupils' academic, social and personal achievements. Evidence of the staff's commitment to improvement is found in their positive response to change and their enthusiastic approach to their work. Teaching and non-teaching staff work well together and there are good systems in place to ensure that new members of staff are well supported and paired with mentor teachers. There is every indication that the school has a good capacity to bring about further improvements.
60. The school monitors its performance well and makes good use of the knowledge it gains in order to improve the quality of education it provides. This has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching, which has risen very substantially since the 1997 inspection. The monitoring of teaching is very well carried out and is a well-established practice in this school, which is

constantly seeking to improve what it does. As well as the headteacher, curriculum leaders are actively involved in monitoring. They regularly monitor planning and provide written feedback for teachers, examine pupils' work and, when given the opportunity, monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms. As a result, curriculum leaders have a good overview of the progress made in their subjects. Senior staff effectively keep track of pupils' learning. The progress made by older pupils in the core subjects is regularly monitored by termly standardised tests. Test data has recently been more carefully analysed and resulting action has led to additional resources being provided for identified groups of pupils.

61. The school has successfully introduced the foundation stage curriculum but there are weaknesses in the way learning and teaching is organised for the youngest pupils. There is now a good opportunity for the management to develop a more consistent approach to learning and teaching throughout the foundation stage. Currently, liaison between the nursery and reception classes is difficult because of the geography of the buildings.
62. Since the last inspection when the provision for pupils with special educational needs was judged to be unsatisfactory, the special needs co-ordinator has produced a policy that meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and clearly outlines for all staff the processes involved. The quality of support staff is satisfactory although there is insufficient support for pupils in Key Stage 2. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly with the full involvement of school staff and parents.
63. There is a good strategy for monitoring and evaluating staff performance and, in view of her recent appointment, appropriate arrangements have been made by the governors' Performance Management Committee to review the headteacher's performance.
64. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, give good support to the school and have a well developed view of its strengths and weaknesses. Many help in the school on a regular basis and are conscientious in their individual responsibilities. There are appropriate governors' committees with responsibility for personnel, finance, the curriculum and other aspects of the school's work. Through these and in other ways, including in the appointments it makes, the governing body is able to exercise well its role in shaping the direction of the school. One governor, who said, "We've got a good crew round us now", sums up governors' confidence and optimism about the school's future.
65. The school sets appropriate targets for itself and has instituted a good level of improvement since the last inspection. It has rectified the vast majority of weaknesses identified at the time of the 1997 inspection by improving the quality of teaching, adopting effective schemes of work and introducing good assessment procedures. As a result, given their attainment when they enter school, pupils' achievement is now judged to be good and standards are steadily rising.
66. The school's most recent plan for development is very full and includes many elements well targeted to bring about improvement. There are sound success criteria and appropriate arrangements for resourcing, evaluating and monitoring are identified. However, a weakness is that the school has not prioritised sufficiently well between action needed to bring about genuine development and tasks which are necessary to maintain current practice.
67. Target setting is well used in the school, for instance, teachers identify target groups each half term and this has made a good contribution to the improved achievements of pupils. Finances are well allocated to enable the school's priorities to be achieved and the principles of best value are applied when spending decisions are under consideration.
68. The school administration is satisfactory. Identified priorities are well supported by the necessary financial resources and there are sound financial systems in place. The school secretary makes appropriate use of information technology for budgetary purposes and support is provided by the LEA's financial services. However, some office procedures are over-officious and need to be reviewed to ensure that, from the onset, the school's values are effectively communicated to parents.

69. The school occupies two sites divided by a main road and this considerably constrains the school's development as a single community. In addition, the nursery building is not easily accessible from the infant department and liaison with and management of three separate units presents a high degree of challenge. Pupils are well supervised on the few occasions that they cross from one site to the other.
70. Despite these shortcomings, the school sites provide generous outdoor play areas and spacious classrooms which are bright, cheerful and cleaned to a high standard. Resources are at a satisfactory level but are not always fully accessible to pupils. The school has a high degree of effectiveness and gives good value for money.

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

- (1) Provide regular planned opportunities to increase pupils' confidence and competence in expressing their ideas and feelings through spoken language.  
*Paragraphs 4,5,6,30,76,77,89.*
- (2) Foster initiative and independence in pupils throughout the school by:-
- giving pupils opportunities to use their creative, technological, academic and other skills with increasing independence;
  - encouraging pupils to take greater responsibility in their own learning;
  - expecting pupils to play an increasing role in the day-to-day life of the school;
  - providing a forum for pupils to express their ideas;
  - introducing a policy for personal development;
  - monitoring pupils' personal development.
- Paragraphs 10,15,30,42,48,99,106,109,117,124,136,139,141*
- (3) Raise levels of attendance by;
- keeping accurate records of authorised and unauthorised attendance;
  - providing parents with appropriate information about attendance;
  - introducing initiatives to encourage more regular attendance.
- Paragraphs 16,46.*
- (4) Improve support for pupils with special educational needs by :-
- making use of specified criteria to identify pupils with special needs;
  - ensuring that individual education plans include learning targets which are specific, measurable and achievable within a set time span;
  - ensuring that class planning incorporates pupils with special needs;
  - providing appropriate levels of in class support, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Paragraphs 8,24,35,62,96,98,106,118,134.*
- (5) Further develop the work of the foundation stage by improving opportunities for the key stage leader to shape and co-ordinate a consistent approach to learning and teaching in the nursery and reception classes.  
*Paragraphs 33, 61,71,74,76.*

**The following should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan**

- Ensure the school development plan reflects development priorities. *Paragraph 66.*
- Make better use of the school libraries. *Paragraphs 30, 102.*
- Give pupils access to a wider range of materials in their art programme. *Paragraphs 84,124.*
- Ensure pupils' written work in religious education covers the appropriate range of world faiths. *Paragraphs 158,162.*
- Give greater prominence to teaching skills in history and geography. *Paragraphs 33,132,136*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6.2	26.2	41.5	23	3	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	35	277
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	42

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	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.9	School data	0.1
National comparative data	4.3	National comparative data	0.3

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	18	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	12
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	24	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (72)	81 (75)	77 (72)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	11	12	11
	Total	23	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (69)	77 (72)	74 (67)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	27	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	17
	Girls	11	9	14
	Total	24	22	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (49)	50 (33)	70 (51)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	25	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (46)	57 (45)	61 (45)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	229
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: Y1 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	27.7

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.7
--------------------------------	------

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	531642
Total expenditure	534983
Expenditure per pupil	2066
Balance brought forward from previous year	26750
Balance carried forward to next year	23409

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	310
Number of questionnaires returned	40

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	42	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	48	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	49	16	0	0
The teaching is good.	62	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	38	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	62	5	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	55	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	50	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	42	29	3	3

## **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**

71. The satisfactory provision for children in the foundation stage, reported at the time of the last inspection, has been maintained and knowledge and understanding of the world continues to be developed well. Nevertheless, the organisation and management of the work of the foundation stage are at an early stage of development and a cohesive approach to teaching and learning in nursery and reception classes has not yet been fully developed. The co-ordinator meets nursery practitioners regularly but there are no established systems of monitoring teaching and learning. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the foundation stage but by the time they leave the reception class, however, most are some way short of reaching the early learning goals in communications, language and literacy, and mathematics. In other areas of development, they achieve the goals and in knowledge and understanding of the world they exceed them.
72. Children enter the nursery in the September following their third birthdays and attend part-time for either a morning or afternoon session before transferring to one of the two reception classes to start full-time attendance at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. Some children from surrounding communities attend the nursery and transfer to their local schools for the reception year. The induction processes to both the nursery and the reception years are well managed and supported by a well-graduated attendance system at the beginning of the nursery year and appropriate opportunities for children from the nursery to work with the reception classes. These arrangements help children to settle into school well. Under the leadership of the supervisory nursery nurse, the nursery staff establish very good relationships with parents. Throughout the foundation stage, parents help their children select books from the library, which has been financed by the Parents in Partnership Association.
73. Since the last inspection a co-ordinator for the foundation stage has been appointed and planning in both the nursery and the two reception classes has been revised to incorporate the early learning goals for the foundation stage. Assessment and record keeping systems keep track of the progression and continuity of work for children through the foundation stage. In the nursery, an appropriate assessment on entry is carried out and in the reception classes, information from a baseline assessment, completed early in the first half term, is used to plan work.
74. In general, teaching is good throughout the foundation stage but the quality of teaching is stronger in the reception classes. Strengths are in the teachers' knowledge and understanding, relationships with children and effective use of support staff. The curriculum is rich and relevant and planning is related to the early learning goals. Stimulating and imaginative learning activities maintain children's interest and help them to make good progress. A high level of priority is given to personal and social education and there are good opportunities for children to find out about the world around them. A weakness is that there are not enough times when nursery children can focus on their own interests and select their own activities. In the nursery, there are insufficient opportunities for outdoor play; the range of outside activities on offer is limited and some outdoor equipment is in a poor state of repair. There is a wide range of indoor equipment in the foundation stage. However, the organisation of the daily routine in the nursery limits children's full access to the equipment and does not make best use of the generous space in the nursery.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

75. Children attain the expected goals by the time they leave the reception class. They enjoy coming to school; they follow routines and join in activities with enthusiasm. The good relationships which are established by staff inspire children's confidence. In the nursery, children relate well to adults and answer questions, share their discoveries and take part in group investigations. During the inspection they took their responsibilities seriously when making bird cake. Throughout the foundation stage, children know the daily routines and readily help to tidy their areas after

activities and listen attentively. However, opportunities for making choices are sometimes limited by the set nursery routines. In the nursery, good adult support enables children to become independent in personal hygiene and dressing skills as they prepare for outside play or get ready for painting activities. In the reception classes, children collaborate well, handle equipment carefully and share resources. They are well motivated, for instance, are eager to use a magnifier to explore their environment. However, in one reception class, where children were not always given challenging work, some were not sufficiently well occupied throughout the lesson and became restless. In both the nursery and reception classes, all adults show care and consideration for the needs of individuals and are very good role models. Behaviour is good and on the very few occasions when behaviour slips below the expected standard, adults take time to discuss how poor behaviour may affect others. As children progress through the reception classes, they adapt confidently to the brisker pace of lessons and become increasingly independent.

76. Overall, teaching in this area is good and as a result children make good progress. Nevertheless, in the nursery, and occasionally in one reception class, children are not given sufficient opportunities to frame their own questions or respond in an individual and informal way to learning. In many activities, children listen carefully, are learning to work at given tasks but do not have sufficient opportunities to learn independently, make choices and share their findings informally with partners. Especially in the nursery, too many activities tend to be adult-guided, sometimes repetitive and with many of the large pieces of equipment not available. This applies particularly where one group of children is confined to a small space for too long a time.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

77. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of their learning throughout the foundation stage. Despite this, the majority of children do not reach the expected learning goals before they leave the reception class. In the nursery and reception classes, emphasis is placed on good communication through stories, songs and rhymes. They dress up as The Three Bears and Goldilocks and recognise the large, medium and small bowls. They use the language which has been taught and words from the story of the week which are displayed; they make important links between the written and spoken vocabulary. However, in the nursery and one reception class children have insufficient opportunities to share books and discuss the pictures. Their listening skills are good and this helps them to respond well to questions. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to extend their speaking skills by talking about matters of interest and relevance. For instance, during a taped listening activity in the nursery, children's eager talk about their experiences of being immunised was halted so that the listening activity could continue. Opportunities to help children explore and extend their language skills are lost. Throughout the foundation stage there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop spoken language through role-play. In the nursery especially, staff move the children from one activity to another with insufficient opportunities for choice; nevertheless, in their language learning, children's concentration and behaviour are good
78. In the nursery, most children handle books appropriately, turn pages carefully and recognise the title page. Most children in the reception classes have made a sure start with reading and recognise key words on sight but need a great deal of support reading short sentences. Higher attaining children read accurately and fluently and enjoy books with repetitive texts. As a result of good teaching, many reception children recognise letter shapes, can hear and say initial sounds and higher attaining children blend sounds into words.
79. Before they move to the reception classes, most nursery children recognise their names and some write their names. They have good pencil control and many are making good attempts at writing letter shapes. There are writing areas in each room and children are encouraged to think of themselves as writers from an early age. During the week of the inspection, nursery children each wrote an invitation to the Teddy Bears' Picnic, put the letter in an envelope, sealed it and shared it with their family. In the reception classes, appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of literacy skills. Lessons are planned following the Literacy Strategy guidelines; there is an appropriate emphasis on learning about the letters of the alphabet and the related sounds. The

majority of children are still learning to form letters correctly and in most cases letters are legible but inconsistent in size. The quality of teaching for this area is satisfactory, a judgement which reflects variations in approaches to nurturing children's communication, language and literacy development across this key stage.

### **Mathematical development**

80. Children make satisfactory progress in mathematics, but do not reach the set early learning goals. In the nursery, they enthusiastically join in number rhymes and songs, reinforcing their knowledge of the order of numbers to five and sometimes to 10. Through practical activities they learn to use vocabulary such as "small", "medium", "large", "full" and "empty" accurately. However, too much time is spent on number rhymes and songs to the detriment of planned opportunities for children to choose mathematical activities and use equipment. There were some good examples where children made bird cake, remembered the ingredients and used phrases such as "a handful" and "equal". In another activity, children guided a programmable robot using directions "start" and "stop" and chose a number to five and this enhanced their numeracy and computer skills. However, during the period of the inspection there were insufficient opportunities for the reinforcement of mathematical knowledge by regular opportunities for counting and comparing length, shape and weight and practising the mathematical language that they have learned. In the reception classes, appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of numeracy skills and lessons are planned following the Numeracy Strategy guidelines. There is a wide range of ability, from a small group of higher attaining children who are confident in understanding numbers over 10 and who can count in 10's to the majority who are learning numbers to 10. Children recognise repeating patterns and some two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and rectangles and three-dimensional shapes such as cubes and cylinders. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and the quality of teaching in one reception class is good. This is reflected in challenging activities and the level of new learning. For example, during the week of the inspection, children were involved in early addition activities and made good progress in understanding, for instance that two boats and one boat made three altogether. The quality of teacher discussion was a strength and children were given time to formulate their own questions, to count and justify their answers. In the other class, however, the teaching observed was unsatisfactory because the activities chosen and the pace of learning did not focus on the skills of the higher attaining children and the activities for the lower attaining children did not increase their mathematical understanding. In this lesson, the teacher and the support staff were involved with groups to the exclusion of the remaining children and this impacted adversely on their progress.

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

81. In the reception classes, children's attainment is above the standards expected and the quality of learning throughout the foundation stage is good. In the nursery, children's knowledge and understanding are well developed through a wide range of activities and visits. A walk near the school, focusing on different types of houses, resulted in children identifying different types of housing, including a residential home for old people. They understood that many old people lived in the larger house because they needed to be cared for. Their science learning is good. The nursery staff have made an attractive butterfly garden which is well used as children find out about their environment. An activity involving ice balloons resulted in children considering the different temperatures inside and outside the school buildings and the effect that warm water might have on ice. Children enjoy their activities in this area of learning. They experience success in getting a torch to light by positioning the battery and bulb correctly and make good progress in their early scientific understanding.
82. This level of investigation is well developed in the reception class through many exciting challenges and children respond well. A very good example was seen during a science lesson where children found successful methods for making a range of toys move without touching them. In another group, children predicted and observed the effect of ramps on the distance travelled by toy cars. On special days, particularly birthdays, Christian festivals and the Hindu festival of Diwali, children extend their understanding of celebrations. However, books and posters on

display do not reflect the wide range of cultures and religions found in the United Kingdom. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is further enhanced by well-planned visits. Nursery children visit a farm and those in the reception class visit Tamworth Castle. The computers in both the nursery and reception classes are used regularly and most children have good mouse control especially when using an art program. Computer skills are extended in the reception classes as children confidently move images on the screen and explore simple number games.

### **Physical development**

83. Children make satisfactory progress in most aspects of physical development. Strengths are in hand and eye co-ordination, skilful use of scissors and increasing accuracy with pencil and brush. In the nursery, children make good progress and their good manipulative skills are evident as they complete jigsaws and use small table-top construction toys. However, most of this work is repetitive and is used too often. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Although there is a secure outdoor play area and a verandah, children have insufficient opportunities to use this space and the large equipment, including bicycles, which are available. There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop large motor skills, such as running, jumping and pedalling or the necessary range of throwing and catching skills. However, in the reception classes children showed a high level of agility in all movements: running and moving within a limited area and in stretching and curling. They understood the importance of warming-up and cooling-down activities at levels well above the expectation for children of this age. Their hand and eye co-ordination in using pencils, paints and modelling materials shows a significant level of improvement from the nursery class. Throughout the foundation stage pupils behave well and enjoy their learning.

### **Creative development**

84. Children are well placed to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. Teaching and learning are good and children enjoy and respond well to their creative activities. In the nursery and reception classes the children's drawings and paintings show appropriate development and in one of the reception classes children make good progress in combining materials with skill and imagination to create robot models. In the nursery, children's creative development is limited because they do not have sufficient access to a wide range of materials including modelling materials.
85. In both nursery and reception classes children make good progress in music and by the age of five sing with accurate pitch and a good feel for rhythm and use instruments well in the class lessons. During the inspection, there was an over-emphasis on nursery rhymes, an appropriate emphasis on counting songs and those for 'joining-in' but insufficient opportunities for listening to and singing songs from a sufficiently wide range of lifestyles and cultures.
86. Children's imaginative play is better developed in the reception classes than in the nursery because teachers provide more stimulating and challenging opportunities and spend time in developing ideas with them, rather than instructing them to move from one activity to another. In the reception class, two children make sound use of the role-play area, sometimes at the telephone earnestly in conversation. In the nursery, children have opportunities to use puppets and table-top toys for role-play. Teaching in this area of learning is sound in the nursery and good in the reception classes and in one class the range of very good activities captures pupils' imagination, sustains their interest and promotes well their creative development.

### **ENGLISH**

87. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the school's results in reading were well below national averages and below average in writing; when compared with similar schools, pupils' performance in reading was well below average and close to the average in writing. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in reading was well below the national average but above the national average in writing. Trends in average results over the past

five years indicate a steady improvement in reading and a sharp rise in writing. The achievements of boys in reading indicate that they are less successful than the girls but in writing achievements of boys and girls are closer. Inspection evidence for the current Year 2 pupils indicates attainment that is close to the average in reading, writing and listening skills but below average in speaking. In relation to their prior below average attainment, progress is good. The rate of progress is similar for both boys and girls.

88. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, results were below average when compared with the national average and average when compared with similar schools. When measured against their earlier attainment, their achievements are above average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools but close to the average when measured against their previous achievements. Trends over the five years from 1996 to 2000 indicate a rise in standards last year after a decline in previous years. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are in line with the average except in speaking where standards are below average. This is an improvement from the below average standards at the time of the last inspection. In relation to their low prior attainment, pupils continue to make good progress overall although it is inconsistent as the pupils move through the school. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, however, do not progress as well as they should through the key stage.
89. Pupils' skills are underdeveloped in speaking in both key stages and pupils do not attain levels expected for their age. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 lack confidence when speaking and have a limited range of vocabulary. Pupils generally listen carefully to their teachers, other adults and the other pupils. In Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils listen attentively and take turns to contribute to discussions. They reply appropriately to teachers' questions in lessons but their expressive vocabulary is limited. A few pupils gain confidence in speaking to a larger audience when describing their work during the closing discussion sessions in lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils listen attentively and take turns to contribute to discussions; for example, they shared their ideas about their work in a writing lesson in the Year 6 class willingly. They reply appropriately to teachers' questions and have acquired a sufficient subject vocabulary to express their thoughts and ideas in most subjects but their wider expressive vocabulary is more limited. Pupils gain confidence in speaking to a larger audience when describing their work in closing discussion sessions in literacy lessons but with the exception of a small proportion of higher attaining pupils, many of the oldest pupils give short explanations and do not expand sufficiently upon their ideas and answers.
90. In reading, pupils in Key Stage 1 build on the skills, knowledge and understanding gained in the reception class so that by the end of the key stage, overall standards are close to those expected for their age. Pupils in Year 1 are interested in books and are beginning to recognise familiar words. The above average reader reads accurately and fluently from a simple text and uses the knowledge of basic phonics to work out unfamiliar words. The average and below average readers are hesitant and make errors when reading from their books. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils express an interest and enjoyment in books and reading. The higher attaining and average pupils can explain the plot of their books and have acquired a satisfactory sight vocabulary; they read accurately but generally without expression. These pupils are aware of their mistakes and correct themselves. Higher attaining pupils talk about the book and respond to the characters and the plot. They read fluently and are developing expression in their reading. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in developing a basic understanding of letter sounds and how to use phonic skills to read simple words and books.

91. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils who are by the school's standards, above average, read with accuracy, fluency and expression. They recognise many words and use a range of strategies when meeting words new to them and most use their knowledge of phonics and use contextual clues effectively. They discuss both their current books and a wider range of books in depth. Pupils of average or below average attainment read accurately but without expression; they recognise many words and discuss the plot of the stories and characters well. They enjoy reading and show understanding of texts from non-fiction. They use the contents and index pages correctly when finding out information. However, pupils of all abilities have little knowledge of how the school's non-fiction library is organised and have not yet acquired sufficient skills in using the reference library.
92. The pupils' attainment in writing in both key stages is in line with that expected with some good features in both key stages. Standards of presentation and handwriting have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall throughout the school.
93. At the end of Key Stage 1, in writing, pupils of all abilities can communicate some meaning, though this is often limited for the lower attaining pupils. In their writing, the majority of pupils use sentences to extend their ideas in a logical sequence of events, can write in a range of different formats and can write for different purposes such as retelling traditional tales, imaginative narrative prose, dialogue and poetry. The average and higher attaining pupils develop an understanding of how to use full stops and capital letters to denote sentences and use these securely. Pupils spell simple common words correctly and in the majority of cases, errors are phonetically logical. They make good progress in their handwriting and by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are beginning to develop a cursive style; however, this is not generally used in their independent work. Higher attaining and average pupils make simple plans when writing a story, identifying the plot, characters and setting. The higher attaining pupils use adjectives and other writing devices such as quotation marks to add interest to their stories which they write with a clear sense of narrative; they use a satisfactory range of vocabulary and their use of punctuation and spelling is satisfactory.
94. Pupils' attainment in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with that expected overall, with several pupils achieving at the higher levels. There is variation across the key stage in the quality of pupils' writing and presentation which not only reflects the variation in the cohorts but also the teachers' expectations of the basic skills of presentation. Consequently, pupils' progress is uneven as they move through the key stage. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils write well using a joined up style with good letter formation; they present their work well. The pupils write for a variety of purposes such as stories, poetry, play scripts and diaries and vary the style to match the audience; higher attaining pupils' writing is comparatively lively and thoughtful. The pupils develop their ideas well and are developing a more adventurous vocabulary to add life and vitality. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops to denote sentences appropriately; the higher attaining and average attaining pupils use a range of punctuation including commas, exclamation and speech marks correctly within their work and the higher attaining pupils are beginning to write in paragraphs. Most common words are spelt correctly. Words are chosen carefully but from a limited vocabulary. The lower attaining pupils use full stops and capital letters accurately in sentence construction but do not use other conventions.
95. Pupils enter statutory education from the Early Years Unit having received a good grounding in language skills although their attainment is below average overall. Standards in writing at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations, which indicates that pupils are making good progress over time. In individual lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of pupils' learning and the progress made were at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In speaking and listening in each key stage this depended very much upon the way in which teachers' questioning stimulated responses and the way in which their preparation engaged interest. In reading, while an improvement has clearly been achieved through the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and its shared and focused reading elements, progress is still slower than that achieved in writing. Greater emphasis has been placed upon developing pupils' skills in writing and this has had a marked impact on the standards that the pupils achieve. Pupils are developing good strategies that will enable them to produce more interesting and varied work. A significant

improvement to pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school is in handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work.

96. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2 their progress is overall unsatisfactory. This is due in part to the lack of adequate extra support in these classes and also to the unsatisfactory quality of pupils' individual education plans which lack clear progressive steps to enable teachers to plan work which is more clearly matched to individual pupils' needs. The school has recently identified pupils in need of more support in English and provided additional support groups to help them.
97. The pupils have good attitudes towards their work in English and the formal structure of the Literacy Hour. They generally concentrate well on tasks in independent or group work. The best attitudes are demonstrated when the teachers communicate their enthusiasm for what is being done, as in a Year 1 lesson when learning how to write in sentences; this lesson was transformed into a lively and enjoyable experience in which pupils made good progress. As well as providing enjoyment, the lesson was organised well and conducted at a brisk pace so that pupils did not have a chance to consider misbehaviour.
98. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages with some examples of very good teaching in Key Stage 1. Across the school there are particular strengths in the whole class elements of the lessons and the teaching of writing. There is a consistent, whole school approach to the teachers' planning with all elements of the National Literacy Strategy included in lessons; the week's activities are planned against a background of appropriate weekly objectives drawn from the strategy document. The activities teachers use in the whole class elements of the lessons to develop these basic skills are varied and generally of good quality. This is reflected in the improving standards of reading and writing throughout the school. However, teachers' planning does not address the needs of pupils with special educational needs with sufficient detail to ensure that the work they are given is sufficiently well matched to their individual needs. Teachers have consistently secure knowledge of the subject; they have adapted the format of the strategy well to include a structured approach designed to help pupils apply to their writing the skills learned in the literacy sessions. Lesson objectives are usually made clear to the pupils at the start of lessons and teachers generally use questioning well to develop pupils' understanding and knowledge. Relationships in classes are generally good and pupils work well together in pairs and in groups. Teachers manage the pupils well and pupils generally concentrate well during these lessons. Marking is satisfactory with some examples of good practice which give clear suggestions for improvement; in some instances however, marking involves little more than bland praise. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the presentation of pupils' work in most classes although in a few classes this is not sufficiently emphasised. Teachers' expectations of attainment are satisfactory overall with some teachers providing opportunities for high achievement, driving pupils with further challenges, as in a Year 6 class. Time, support staff and resources are used well. Homework is used satisfactorily to develop pupils' reading and spelling.
99. The pupils have adequate opportunities to use their literacy skills in some subjects such as history and science but the use of other subjects as the source for the texts for literacy is insufficiently developed. Although information technology is taught, it is not yet used as an integral part of the literacy lessons as a teaching and presentational tool.
100. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are satisfactory. Assessment procedures for assessing standards of reading and writing are satisfactory and used to set whole school and individual pupil targets but there is no whole school approach to assessing pupils' progress in speaking and listening, or to raising standards in this strand of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
101. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator who has recently left the school and senior management team have given a very positive lead and direction to the development of the subject, especially the development of pupils' writing. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced as the basis for the curriculum so it meets statutory requirements in terms of balance and relevance but there are insufficient planned opportunities in the school to develop pupils' speaking

and listening skills through drama, role-play and debate, for example. The previous co-ordinator carried out a planned and rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching and learning and this is to be continued by the recently appointed headteacher who is now the subject co-ordinator. The school has started to evaluate its performance in national tests and used this to identify areas for improvement in its provision.

102. Resources for the teaching of literacy are good. The school library, however, is inadequate; the school has recently started to develop the non-fiction library but as yet this is not fully organised or used as a learning resource. The development of the fiction library and opportunities for pupils to take these books home has recently been introduced. The school provides good accommodation with adequate space for teaching small groups and individuals and displays in classroom and around the school are used well to celebrate pupils' written work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

103. Results in the end of Key Stage 2 assessments in 2000, show a continuing trend of improvement and although attainment was still below national expectations, results were close to the average found in similar schools. The school has worked hard to support pupils' mathematical development. As a result of challenging teaching in Year 6, additional booster classes and after school study groups, the findings of the inspection are that there are already 10% more pupils working at the expected level 4, than the school predicted when it set its targets. It is therefore considered that attainment is now broadly in line with national expectations. However, there remains further room for improvement and the school has to consider the needs of younger pupils who are struggling with basic mathematical concepts, in addition to the already identified and targeted pupils in Year 5, if this steady rise in standards is to be maintained.
104. In the Key Stage 1 assessments for 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining expected standards was well below the national average and well below those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3, whilst improved, was still below the national average. The school's results do show a rising trend of improvement but this has barely kept pace with the overall improving national trends. Nevertheless, inspection evidence suggests that this steady improvement in standards has been maintained and because of very effective teaching, pupils achieve well and the number of pupils in Year 2 working at national expectations is already higher than previous years. However, because of the very low attainment on entry to the school in mathematical skills and despite the hard work of staff, a significant proportion of pupils still remain working below expectations and consequently standards, overall, are below average. Nevertheless, the achievements of these pupils are good.
105. Pupils make good progress in their learning in Key Stage 1 and build on the relevant practical experiences they receive in the reception class. Pupils in Year 1 count accurately, recognise number patterns and correctly add ten to numbers. They make totals with 1p 2p and 5p coins. By the age of 7, high attaining pupils have made good progress and add multiples of ten and two to make a hundred. In their work with money, they use coins up to £1 for totalling and are beginning to use appropriate mental strategies to calculate change. Pupils of average and low ability frequently rely on apparatus when calculating but because they are encouraged to develop their own strategies, use mental methods with increasing confidence. Teachers make good use of whole class teaching and plenary sessions at the end of lessons to make mathematics fun, to develop pupils' mental arithmetic skills and to check their progress in understanding and learning.
106. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress. The oldest pupils in the key stage, including many lower ability pupils, can multiply competently and show a good understanding of decimals and fractions. Higher attaining pupils understand equivalent fractions, analyse them and order these by size using a multiplication square. Competence in mental arithmetic is developing well and is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' response times are improving because of well-planned and brisk activities and in particular when they are set time challenges, as in one Year 6 class when each day pupils attempt to beat their own record. There are many pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, who remain working at very low levels and have limited

understanding of basic number concepts. For example, some pupils in Year 4 remain unable to grasp the concept that a 2p coin has the same value as two 1p coins while a significant proportion of pupils in Year 3 do not recognise the basic properties of a square or rectangle. Lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 5 would benefit from additional support such as the booster classes which successfully enhance the progress made by groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress because the targets set on their individual education plans in addition, are not specific or detailed enough to support teaching and learning. Overall, in the drive to raise standards, teachers have concentrated on number, shape and measure. Throughout the school, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their skills to solve mathematical problems and, across the curriculum, the use and application of mathematical skills are underdeveloped.

107. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Overall, teaching is now good with a significant proportion of very good teaching observed in Key Stage 1 and some very good and excellent teaching in upper Key Stage 2. A good feature of teaching is a brisk pace which leads to pupils who are interested and keen. For example younger pupils were thoroughly engaged by some pacy, warm-up mental games. Occasionally, however, the pace of lessons is too slow and teachers spend too long explaining tasks to individual groups. This leads to other pupils wasting time and not being actively involved in learning. In the best lessons, teachers use visual and oral means to teach and make imaginative use of resources. During the week of the inspection, in one well-planned lesson, the teacher supplied real products to make a shopping activity more true to life. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 the very good use of an overhead projector, demonstration and interactive techniques consistently required pupils to explain their thinking; in consequence, they used their mathematical language in context and made very good progress in their understanding of the relationships between fractions.
108. Teachers are growing in confidence in using the Numeracy Strategy and the three-part lesson is generally well established, although sometimes the oral starter is too long and not sufficiently focused on rehearsing and sharpening pupils' mental skills.
109. Pupils' ability to use information and technology skills to support their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding is in the early stages of development and very limited evidence of this was observed. They produce good symmetrical designs, using reflective and rotational symmetry and when handling data, select and draw appropriate graphs and charts. Pupils make limited use of their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. Nevertheless, in a science lesson pupils accurately measured the temperature and volume of water to ensure fair testing in an experiment on dissolving.
110. Teachers use informal observations and regular tests to assess attainment and results are used to inform planning. One recent outcome was the identification of a group of Year 5 pupils who would benefit from additional help. These pupils now have additional teaching twice weekly in Springboard Maths lessons. Assessment is used well to track progress and to identify the progress of individual pupils and cohorts as they move through the school.
111. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching for over eighteen months and has used this to support colleagues by identifying appropriate training. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school has reviewed and improved the curriculum, teaching has improved and most teachers have developed in confidence. As a result, standards are now improving and, provided all lower attaining pupils are appropriately supported, this trend can be maintained.

## SCIENCE

112. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards above those expected for their ages and standards in Year 2 are broadly average. This is a marked improvement on the results of the 2000 end of key stage assessments of science, when standards were judged to be well below average in comparison with schools nationally and in a similar context. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were found to be unsatisfactory.
113. The improvements noted by inspectors can be attributed to: -
- general improvements in teaching quality
  - the impact of a new subject co-ordinator
  - increased focus on practical elements of the science curriculum
  - very good science teaching at the end of both key stages
114. During the course of a Year 6 lesson seen during the inspection, pupils' good investigative skills became evident. In response to very good science teaching they identify and investigate factors which could have an impact on the length of time solids take to dissolve. They understand what a fair test means, create fair test conditions and select equipment appropriate for their investigations. Guided by their teacher's words "I want very definite measurement - measure temperature and count stirs," they work carefully, making good use of measuring containers, timers and thermometers and counting carefully the number of stirs required to help sugar form a solution in water. Most impressive was their well established understanding of the need to test the reliability of their results by repeating the investigation. "What can you do when you've got a result?" asked the teacher. "Try it again" replied the class. The quality, thoroughness and care that pupils take in their practical work is reflected in their well presented written work.
115. Overall in Key Stage 2, learning is good and pupils make good though sometimes uneven progress. When pupils have opportunities to participate in practical tasks they learn more rapidly. This was the case in a Year 3 lesson seen during the week of the inspection when pupils of all abilities made good progress identifying materials which are good or poor conductors of electricity. Moving through the key stage the majority of pupils make good progress in learning about classifying materials and understand how the pitch of sounds can be altered. They learn about the life cycle of plants and know that humans need to take exercise and eat the right sort of food in order to stay healthy. The progress they make in developing investigative skills is most marked at the start and end of Key Stage 2 where teaching in the subject is stronger.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils identify well the characteristics of a range of materials. They know that materials can be hard, magnetic, rigid, flexible, transparent or smooth. In response to challenging questions they articulate their views about why a book shelf is held together with screws and know that metal is a good material to hold wood together because "it's strong" and "it's not flexible". In a Year 1/2 class, pupils talk about their learning; they know that they have used their senses to explore materials and understand that a rough branch and a smooth wooden building block are made of the same material. Early in the key stage, learning is satisfactory and pupils make steady progress in their ability to recognise a range of materials.
117. Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes to science. Their behaviour in class is good and in Key Stage 1, behaviour is very good. The vast majority use equipment with a good degree of respect and care. They collaborate well in lessons. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson they share ideas well in their small groups and later arrive at a decision about the investigation they will pursue. When some groups cannot agree, their teacher challenges them saying "You have to find a compromise - in life you often have to compromise," and they rise well to the challenge. A weakness often seen is that pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to exercise choice and to help themselves independently to the equipment and materials they need. The exception to this is in Year 6, where pupils respond well to the teacher's high expectations and select the materials they need for their work. Throughout the school, pupils are attentive and have good listening skills. The majority concentrate well, work with care and take pride in their finished work.

118. Overall, science teaching is good in both key stages. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in three classes, very good science teaching was observed. The ability to motivate pupils is a strong feature of the teaching throughout the school and in the best lessons teaching is inspirational. As a result, pupils are enthused and challenged and make very good progress. Teachers' high expectations have a positive impact on the standards pupils attain and on their attitudes to learning. Other strengths in teaching include clear objectives which, in the best lessons, are linked with well planned activities and good resources. Challenging questions are very well used to extend pupils' understanding and are often sharply targeted - "This is Sofia's question" or "Let me ask David, he's sitting patiently at the back". In some classes non-teaching assistants are extremely well deployed to observe pupils' responses. These observations help teachers to sharpen and improve their own performance and are a good means of monitoring pupils' learning and behaviour and consequently serve to raise standards of teaching and learning. Teachers make pupils aware of their own learning; they share lesson objectives, encourage them to think about what they learn through their senses and sensitively reinforce understanding. For instance, when a child from Key Stage 1 said, "It doesn't matter what shape it is," the teacher responded with, "That's right, you have to think of the material it's made of". Pupils are well managed and as a result behaviour in class is good. A weakness seen in some classes was that tasks were not well matched to pupils' abilities and, as a consequence, pupils with special educational needs did not always make the progress of which they were capable.
119. The curriculum is well planned and there are good arrangements for assessment. The subject is well led and recent initiatives by the curriculum leader to ensure that pupils experience more investigative work are proving to be beneficial. In Key Stage 1, teachers have begun to collaborate more effectively by planning a two year cycle of topics and this has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The enthusiasm of teachers in the school indicates that there is a very good capacity for further improvement in the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

120. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to see a limited number of art lessons being taught. However, evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' past work and lesson observations indicates that attainment at the end of both key stages is as expected for pupils in these age groups. Standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
121. Year 6 pupils use colour well in their decorative patterns and shoe collages inspired by Andy Warhol's work. They learn about Roy Liechtenstein and master the technique of enlarging cartoon drawings in order to create pictures in the style of Liechtenstein. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils build up a range of skills; their observational skills are well developed in their portrait studies and plant drawings. Pupils in Year 3 demonstrate good control of paint and pastel in their lively class portraits. Those drawn with pastel crayons show an awareness of proportion and an eye for detail; the painted works have confident brush strokes and show sensitive use of a limited colour range. Some good use of colour is evident in Year 4's flower studies. However, several lack sufficient care and detail for a finished piece of work. Year 5's plant observations are carefully drawn and in the best, the use of line is well developed. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and good progress in developing drawing skills.
122. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach appropriate standards. Their effective snow pictures are carefully drawn in white chalk on black paper and this visual contrast is echoed in their pictures made by blowing white paint on black paper. Good paint control is evident in the vibrant portraits displayed throughout the key stage. In Year 1, pupils make good progress in developing drawing skills and these are further promoted later in the key stage in carefully designed extensions to a Christmas card.
123. Pupils have positive attitudes to art and, in the lesson observed, demonstrated this by spontaneously applauding their teacher's demonstration of a technique for enlargement. They listened attentively and worked with a good sense of purpose. On the whole, completed work

seen throughout the school showed evidence of care and pride, which are well reinforced by the thoughtful and attractive manner in which pupils' work is displayed.

124. Teaching is satisfactory and there is some evidence of good teaching. Weaknesses are that pupils do not have experience of working with a wide enough range of materials. Nor do they always have sufficient opportunity to use the skills they have learned to express their individual ideas and feelings.
125. Teachers have good subject knowledge and select work which will interest and motivate pupils. The curriculum is broadly linked to national guidance and assessment procedures are satisfactory. The curriculum leader is new to the post. She has good subject knowledge, monitors planning and is aware of the weaknesses in the subject but has not been in post long enough to have had an impact on teaching and learning. The school has a good capacity for improvement in this area.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

126. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly in line with those expected in both key stages. Although only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1, a number of lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on those lessons, the scrutiny of teachers' planning, photographs of previous work and displays and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator.
127. In Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils design and make puppets using a range of materials. They compare methods of joining materials such as fabric or card, investigating which methods are appropriate for the materials being handled. They experiment using a range of tools and materials such as glue, hole punches and sewing materials and make simple evaluations of the success of their work in discussion.
128. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have opportunities to develop their skills in the subject. Pupils in Year 4 learn how to make moving joints using moving and linkage type mechanisms. The pupils in Year 6 experiment with materials when testing how to make a strong framework for a shelter; they investigate how to make the joints strong enough for the structures to be stable. They handle the materials and tools such as hammers and saws appropriately. The pupils have a good understanding of the process of making and record the results of their investigations, noting the effectiveness of the types of joins made and materials used.
129. Pupils' learning is satisfactory across the school in the development of skills in handling a range of materials but the skills of evaluation using criteria such as form, function and construction are underdeveloped. These findings indicate an improvement since the last inspection, with improvement in provision of the subject throughout the school.
130. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory overall in terms of developing pupils' skills and understanding of the designing and making elements. Teachers manage the pupils well and used question and discussions both to assess what the pupils know and to develop their understanding further. This was particularly effective in a good lesson observed in Year 6 where the teacher ensured that the pupils considered and understood the elements in making a strong framework before attempting the task. In the lessons observed, the pupils responded well to the tasks and worked with enthusiasm and perseverance. They worked well together, using the materials provided appropriately.

131. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and as yet had insufficient time to make a full impact on the development of the subject. She monitors the teachers' planning and provides support but as yet has not carried out any monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has recently adopted the QCA recommendations for the subject which ensures that pupils progressively develop skills and knowledge of using materials and tools. The school has recognised the need to develop this subject further. The teachers have received training in the subject since the last inspection and are generally more confident in teaching the making elements but are less secure in the design and evaluation elements. The range and quality of resources are satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were judged to reach standards in line with those expected nationally. In the current inspection it was not possible to observe teaching in Key Stage 1 and only limited teaching could be observed in Key Stage 2. The evidence of the planning and analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils continue to reach standards in line with national expectations in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, limited work was available, due to the cyclical planning of this subject with history. Evidence indicates that standards remain broadly in line with national expectations, although in Key Stage 2, the analysis of work suggests that the geographical analysis of topics studied and progression in the development of skills remain inconsistent overall.
133. In work seen in Key Stage 1, teachers have used fieldwork in the local area to good effect. This has ensured that pupils are gaining a satisfactory understanding of the features in the locality. They are able to sort according to physical features and say in simple terms what they like and dislike about the area around the school. Their geographical skills have been appropriately developed and most pupils can follow a simple route and record their route to school using pictorial representations. Older pupils in year 2 can compare their local area with that of an island in Scotland developing simple research skills by looking at books to discover what 'Benjamin Bear' saw in Scotland. Although no direct teaching was observed, the range of interesting displays and pupils' work indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory with an appropriate emphasis placed on interesting fieldwork and activities that stimulate pupils' growing sense of enquiry.
134. Early in Key Stage 2, through their study of water use, pupils are developing their skills of geographical enquiry. High attaining pupils challenged by teachers to use their notes to answer key geographical questions were able to locate significant features on a plan of the school. However, lower attaining pupils struggled with this task and made little progress in their knowledge and understanding because work was not suitably matched to their needs. In other year groups, although planning indicates that pupils have studied an economically deprived area, very little evidence was recorded in their books and when asked, pupils could not recall this work in any detail. This indicates that in some classes topics have been studied superficially. However, this was not the case in Year 6 when, in an exemplary lesson, stimulating and exciting teaching motivated and challenged all pupils and created an exciting and exhilarating atmosphere. In this class, pupils were attaining high standards, could identify and use correct terminology in relation to a river system explaining with growing confidence the meanings of terms such as meander, erosion and tributary. This was because of very effective questions and use of resources such as a model of a river system and the very good use of an interactive display. Clearly stimulated, pupils could hardly stop working to go out to play, with one pupil stating, "I have worked harder and learned more in this lesson than I have all week".
135. The management of the subject although satisfactory, has been affected by the departure of the previous co-ordinator. Currently, the deputy headteacher has taken a caretaker role until the future management of the subject is decided. The scheme of work, although broadly balanced, requires further revision in order to fully comply with the revised curriculum orders. Further consideration is required in order to ensure that teaching is consistent and that, in all classes, topics studied conform not only to the revised orders but are taught in sufficient depth to ensure continuity and

progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Although assessments are carried out in relation to the topics covered, these are not always used consistently to ensure that work set is matched to pupils' abilities, while marking does not always indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve.

## HISTORY

136. Standards in history have improved in Key Stage 1, where pupils' attainment is now good. This is due to consistently good teaching that uses interesting resources and activities that stimulate and challenge pupils. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Evidence indicates that this is due to teaching that in general remains focused on the acquisition of basic factual knowledge, with limited opportunities for pupils to research, analyse and interpret the significance of the facts known.
137. In Key Stage 1, pupils have been stimulated by the very good use of resources, focused open-ended questioning and a variety of interesting tasks that are clearly matched to the abilities of pupils. These challenge younger pupils to think about the facts and ensure they are motivated and stimulated. In one very good lesson in Year 2, about the Fire of London, all these elements were effectively combined. High attaining pupils were challenged to work co-operatively to devise questions that they would ask of a person in that time, while their partner wrote the answers. All pupils recognised the pertinent facts and could produce simple time lines to describe the sequence of events but because the teacher had encouraged them to consider the causes, most were beginning to analyse these facts to make interesting deductions. For example, one group discussing the events thought very hard and considered, "It wasn't just because the houses were made of wood that they caught fire but they were so close together because there were no big lorries in those days so that's why the fire spread quickly". While others, when asked what they would save, stated confidently, "My wines and fine cheeses because I wouldn't have a computer then, there was no electricity." All pupils could identify that knowledge about the past could be gained from different sources and recognised changes over time.
138. In Key Stage 2, despite studying a broad range of topics, pupils' knowledge is superficial, while work in some books shows that all pupils have written the same words which suggests that teaching has not stimulated or challenged pupils. In general across the key stage, pupils are secure in their factual knowledge of the periods they have studied and can explain important events, life styles, living conditions and clothing; they are less secure about distinguishing between fact and opinion and recognising bias in the evidence. For example, when discussing the life of Henry V111, pupils confidently related the facts but could not discuss the motives or consequences of the events. Pupils have had limited opportunities for independent research, many pupils stating, "the teacher told us". In lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory but often failed to develop a sense of enquiry. When teaching did attempt to use interesting resources to stimulate pupils as in a Year 3 lesson about the history of the local area, pupils' immature behaviour and poor concentration meant that learning was not as effective as usual.
139. The subject is well led. Resources, visits and visitors effectively support the curriculum. The scheme of work has been adapted to the new curriculum orders but the co-ordinator has had insufficient time to monitor teaching and standards in Key Stage 2. Further consideration of the scheme of work is required in Key Stage 2 in order to ensure a continuation and progression from the good standards attained in Key Stage 1. In particular, there is a need to consider the choice of topics in this key stage, to ensure the best use of limited resources and to ensure topics are covered in sufficient depth to enable pupils to develop their independent research skills, so that they may consider the facts, motives and consequences of the events.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

140. Standards attained by pupils in both key stages are satisfactory and this is an improvement on the previous inspection, which found standards to be unsatisfactory. Pupils make good progress and are achieving well. By the time they leave the school, they have well-developed skills in their ability to use control devices and can access information from a CD-ROM appropriately. Their text handling skills are weaker.
141. Year 6 pupils make good use of ICT to present information and download text and pictures from a CD-ROM for their work in geography. They are familiar with control devices including a sensor and smart box and incorporate these into their designs for a model lighthouse. Their modelling skills are developing well and most are able to move, rotate and resize objects. Because of good class organisation and high expectations of their teacher, their learning is well focused. They arrive at the ICT suite having identified their learning intentions and these are recorded in their notebooks which are referred to and added to throughout the lesson. Their use of ICT for processing text and exchanging ideas via E-mail is less well developed. Throughout the key stage, pupils make good progress in their ICT lessons; however, the use of ICT to support learning in other curriculum areas is not well enough established.
142. In Key Stage 1, the skills pupils have developed in the foundation stage are effectively built upon. Pupils visit the ICT suite in the Key Stage 2 building each week and their learning is effectively enhanced by this very good resource. The vast majority can use the mouse to select and move pictures and captions and activate a voice program to play back a selected sentence. They know how to close down programs and can shut down the computers. There is some evidence that ICT is used in classrooms to support learning in other areas, particularly science but this is not yet well enough developed. Good use is made of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs in their science learning.
143. ICT teaching is good and teachers have very good subject knowledge. Their clear learning objectives and well-organised lessons enable pupils to make good progress in acquiring ICT skills. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils underpin the good behaviour seen in ICT lessons. Teachers are very enthusiastic and the enthusiasm is well communicated to pupils who are very well motivated and confident learners. When asked by an inspector how a process was carried out, one child replied "I don't know, that's what I'm going to find out".
144. The subject is very well led by a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Relatively new in post, she has made very good use of the opportunities she has been given to develop the subject. The QCA scheme of work has been modified to accommodate the mixed age classes in the school, non-teaching staff have received training and teachers have taken the opportunity to observe the co-ordinator teach. Teaching and learning have been effectively monitored by the co-ordinator. The very good assessment procedures include monitoring pupils' floppy discs and hard copy and these are effectively used in planning. The ICT suite is a very good resource but resources elsewhere in the school need updating; the co-ordinator is aware of weaknesses in hardware and availability of programs. Because of the enthusiasm and knowledge of the co-ordinator and other key staff, there is every indication that standards in ICT will rise. Good community use is made of the ICT suite in partnership with Cannock College and other local schools join in the termly training sessions for non-teaching staff that the school arranges for its staff.

## **MUSIC**

145. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected in Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. The standard of singing throughout the school is above expectations and in this aspect pupils make good and sometimes very good progress.

146. Pupils' singing is tuneful, rhythmic and well controlled; when required, they are able to produce a powerful volume. Their singing is of a high standard; they confidently sing in two parts and produce clear harmonies because they are well taught. They practise purposefully to improve their performance, singing with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Pupils listen with concentration to musical patterns and consequently learn new songs quickly.
147. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing familiar songs in tune and also in a higher or lower pitch. They listen well to "The Carnival of the Animals" and evaluate well the pattern made by part of the music. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop their awareness of pitch and quality of tone. They sing in two and three-part rounds with an awareness of harmony. They accompany the singing using pitched percussion and play the flute, keyboards and trumpets using phrases of the melody and follow rhythmic phrases from notation. Most pupils show good to excellent attitudes to music. They enjoy the opportunities it provides, which are extended in extra-curricular activities of the school choir and recorder groups and instrumental tuition. The choir performs in special events including in the region's Proms concert.
148. The quality of teaching is good overall with strengths in the teaching of the older classes of Key Stage 2 pupils. Very good teaching is characterised by high expectations with challenging and achievable targets set for the pupils, which holds their attention. The pace of these lessons is good and includes a wide variety of experiences for pupils, which reinforce one musical idea and provide further challenges. Most teachers teach music and they have a secure subject knowledge so that pupils learn to speak easily about music using the proper terms. Good use is made of songs from different cultures.
149. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for this subject. Through her own love of music and expertise she has generated an interest and enthusiasm for the subject. The school follows its own scheme of work, which takes account of the QCA recommendations and the new national initiatives. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and provides support for teachers but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning; this is planned for in the near future. The subject is well supported through extra-curricular provision for choral singing and recorder playing. About forty pupils take lessons from peripatetic music teachers of brass and other instruments, including flute, clarinet and keyboard. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection and provision has improved. Resources are satisfactory and include a range of instruments from other cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

150. Attainment at the end of both key stages is above national expectations and pupils have high levels of agility and athleticism. This reflects a significant improvement in all aspects of physical education since the previous inspection. Learning was very good in the games, dance and swimming lessons seen during the inspection and pupils' achievements are very good. The full range of physical education activities also includes athletics, gymnastics, outdoor adventurous activities, including orienteering, and life skills using the local environment and a residential centre. Three main factors contribute to the very good progress made and the high standards pupils achieve. These are: -
- very high quality teaching;
  - excellent leadership and management;
  - very effective use of the good accommodation and resources.
151. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve high standards. During the inspection, in a dance lesson based on the theme of "fire" pupils sequenced a range of well-controlled movements using space and direction very effectively. They showed awareness of pace and levels and in their hands and arms movements, created the flicker of flames. They combined movements to develop a sequence of a fire from its beginning to the height of its power and its eventual dying down. In their performance, pupils show very high levels of control and fluency in their interpretation of the mood and rhythm of the music. They increase their physical skills by running, balancing and

controlling themselves in the space available. Pupils develop confidence, co-operative skills and spatial awareness to levels higher than those expected of pupils of this age as they use imaginative ways to move. By watching the performance of others and with the teacher's guidance, pupils learn to evaluate other pupils' work, compare this to their own and improve their own performance.

152. By the time they are 11, pupils have refined the ways in which they move in dance to a very high level. They compose a set of movements and develop them into more challenging sequences. A particularly good example of this was a Year 3 dance lesson where, inspired by good teaching and contemporary music, pupils devised sequences to reflect automatic, machine-like movement and attained standards expected of older pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve levels of attainment in games above those expected for the end of Key Stage 2 and they use racquets very effectively. Their very good games skills include agility and the ability to throw, catch, pass and retrieve. Year 5 pupils made very good progress in learning the skills of volleyball. The majority of pupils in Year 5 are well placed to achieve levels in swimming above those expected for pupils of their age, with a small group of pupils attaining very high levels.
153. Pupils understand the link between exercise and good health. This develops from Year 2, where pupils know that warming-up and cooling-down exercises have an effect on muscles and breathing. By Year 6, pupils explain the advantages of exercise in terms of muscular development, general agility, weight loss and cardiovascular needs. They know physical activity is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.
154. Pupils enjoy all their lessons, behave impeccably and try hard to achieve and perform to the best of their abilities. They are eager to learn from one another and the teachers and are confident in demonstrating their skills. All pupils are conscious of safety when moving in a confined space and realise the importance of following the teachers' instructions promptly and obediently. An outstanding feature of this was a games lesson which, because of adverse weather conditions, was taken in the gymnasium. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. In all lessons, they show very high standards of physical, intellectual and creative effort and this contributes to their rapid pace of learning and high standards of achievement.
155. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. All lessons begin and end in a very orderly manner and contain very well planned warm-up and cool-down activities. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are well organised and very effectively planned, enabling pupils to develop advanced skills in a safe working environment. On-going assessment leads to very high quality and relevant learning. Teachers set challenges which make pupils think and extend their imagination, creative skills and physical abilities. They also provide very clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to refine and improve their personal skills and group activities. All pupils leave their lessons understanding the gains in knowledge and skills that they have acquired and what they need to do to improve further. Lessons move at a rapid pace and teachers' management of pupils in all aspects of the lessons is very good. Relationships with pupils are consistently very good.
156. In all lessons observed, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the high levels of awareness of the personal, social and learning skills of the teachers and very effective strategies for encouragement which results in their inclusion in all activities. These teaching skills also contribute to the very good progress made by pupils for whom English is an additional language.
157. The co-ordinator is the pivotal point of development in the subject. Her dynamic and committed approach to physical education and her personal skills of leadership in all aspects of the subject ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced and enriching. There are imaginative and manageable systems for assessment. Facilities are very good. The school makes good use of its two multi-purpose halls and wide range of grassed and hard surface areas. The wide range of good quality equipment is very effectively used and contributes to pupils' extremely rich and varied curriculum. All staff have benefited from in-service training and this, together with the very effective support of classroom assistants and swimming instructors, enhances pupils' attainment.

and progress. The very good extra-curricular activities, including outward bound courses, enhance the quality of pupils' education in this subject. This very good provision leads to pupils' high levels of attainment and contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

158. It was only possible to see a limited number of lessons during the inspection. However, scrutiny of pupils' previous work, examination of plans, discussion with the co-ordinator and lesson observations indicate that standards in the subject for pupils at the end of both key stages are in line with those expected for the pupils by the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus and reflect an improvement compared to those found at the time of the last inspection. There is still, however, a high emphasis on Christianity, social, moral and community aspects of religious education, as well as pupils' personal activities, especially hobbies and this is reflected in written recording to the detriment of sufficient recording of aspects of the other world faiths being studied.
159. In Year 2, pupils know some of the main features of the Christian faith. They know that Jesus is a special person whom Christians believe is God's Son and explain in detail the range of events related to the Christmas story. They understand that some events described in the Bible relate to the history of that part of the world before Jesus' birth. They also know that Christians worship in church and identify special features in a church, including the altar and font. Pupils are familiar with some important Christian festivals, including Christmas and Easter. They explain the importance of water as a symbol for Christians and its ritual importance to Muslims in thoroughly cleansing their bodies before handling the Qu'ran. Pupils have a very clear understanding about moral values such as kindness and honesty and distinguish between right and wrong.
160. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of world faiths have developed satisfactorily. They know that the Bible contains the Old and New Testaments and use this understanding accurately to describe events of Biblical times; for example, they know parables of Jesus and some of the events of the Old Testament in detail. Pupils learn some of the beliefs, rituals and places of worship central to other faiths, such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. During a Year 5/6 lesson on baptism, pupils used homework effectively to describe their parents' memories of important events in their lives when they were very young and in some cases this included christening. This theme developed throughout the lesson into a detailed and informative discussion about christenings with the pupils considering the roles and responsibilities of the priest, the godparents, parents and other members of the family. They understood the importance of water in the ceremony and this lesson enhanced their social and moral understanding of christenings as well as the spiritual dimension.
161. Pupils' learning at both key stages is satisfactory, a good feature being their knowledge and understanding of Christianity. As pupils progress through the school, they develop a deeper and wider understanding of Christian festivals and other religious festivals, traditions and symbols and relate many stories and situations to their own experiences and to the origins of the religions. A particularly good feature observed was in a Year 2 lesson on the Chinese New Year where nearly all pupils remembered the story of the giant who tried to shape the world. The pupils realised that this was the way in which people from a different culture tried to explain the Creation. Although, overall, satisfactory progress is made, pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not build on the secure foundation of pupils in Year 2, especially in the quality and quantity of written recording. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in religious education and in a Year 2 lesson observed. made very good progress because of well planned activities and very effective use of the classroom assistant.
162. There are two contributory factors to pupils' attainment and progress in religious education. One is the quality of teaching and the other the leadership and management, each of these has strengths and weaknesses. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good, especially in the creation of a classroom atmosphere that was highly appropriate for religious education. Teachers' have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and the

spiritual, personal and social elements. They are sensitive to pupils' feelings and encourage them to discuss them freely in order that adult views and ideas do not dominate the discussions. Activities are well matched to pupils' experiences and abilities and include a high level of new learning. This was particularly evident in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were learning about the Chinese New Year in an atmosphere of respect for people of other cultures. The teacher used a wide range of well planned activities for pupils of all abilities and this resulted in pupils leaving the lesson with a wide range of new experiences and learning. A very high level of challenge was extended in the Year 5 and 6 class where pupils envisaged themselves with the responsibilities and opinions of other people. Although the two lessons observed were very good, the analysis of pupils' work reflects satisfactory teaching overall and insufficient recording of pupils' learning of faiths other than Christianity.

163. The curriculum co-ordinator has addressed the unsatisfactory aspects found in the previous inspection. The curriculum is now broad and balanced and, in planning, fully meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Medium-term planning is very detailed and the policy and scheme give teachers security in understanding the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including those associated with the world faiths being studied and they are used to support lessons. Although the co-ordinator monitors planning, she has not, at this stage, examined pupils' work in detail and has therefore not satisfactorily assessed the effectiveness of the planning on pupils' attainment and progress.