

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE MARTIN WILSON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shrewsbury

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123447

Headteacher: Mr. P. Bailey

Reporting inspector: Mrs. C. A. Field  
9479

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 198681

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: New Park Road  
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Shrewsbury  
Shropshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Karen Benjamin

Date of previous inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. C. A. Field	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Teaching and learning
Mrs. J. Butler	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs. S. Brown	Team inspector	English	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Physical education	
Mr. D. Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics	Leadership and management
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
Mrs. J. Dickins	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
		Special educational needs	
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Mr. G. Warner	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Science	
		Art	
		Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in Shrewsbury, serves its local community and shares a site with a Roman Catholic primary school. Since the time of the previous inspection there have been substantial changes in management, including the appointment of a new headteacher and senior management team.

There are 196 pupils on roll: 102 boys and 94 girls aged between four and eleven years. Designated provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, some of whom live locally and others travel from further afield to receive their education. Seventy-two pupils have special educational needs, a proportion that is above the national average. Seventeen of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs in place. Twenty four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. There are no pupils currently in the school who come from homes where English is not spoken. The school provides for 34 children part-time in its nursery. At the time of the inspection five children in reception class were under five years of age. On entry to the school the attainment of children under five is below average overall.

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

Martin Wilson Primary is an effective school where a very positive ethos encourages successful learning within a happy and caring environment. Serious weaknesses reported at the time of the previous inspection have been eradicated. Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school, and together with teachers form a secure partnership in their children's education. The school's mission which asserts that 'everyone in school is important' is very much in evidence in the school's work and excellent relationships at all levels underpin the good quality of education provided. Teachers provide interesting lessons for pupils and as a result most make good progress, although sometimes work prepared for higher attaining pupils could be more demanding. The school has a good track record over recent years for improving standards and there is drive and determination to improve national test results still further. The systems in place to analyse with accuracy what works best in the school to bring about even better performance are not as effective as they could be. Nevertheless the school has good capacity to make sustained improvements and provides good value for money.

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

- Enables pupils to achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and art at Key Stage 1 and in art and physical education at Key Stage 2.
- Through good quality teaching, and effective support, enables pupils to make good progress in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art, design and technology, music and physical education throughout the school.
- Provides very effectively for children in their early years so that they get off to a very secure start and build very firm foundations for future learning.
- Makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress in learning, especially in their basic skills.
- Makes very good overall provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Maintains very good links with parents that encourage them to be involved in supporting their children's education and the life of the school.
- Has been successful in building a united team of staff and governors very effectively led by the headteacher who are working hard to give a high quality, rounded education to the pupils.

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

- Standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 are not yet high enough.
- The work set in some lessons is not challenging enough for all pupils, especially higher attaining pupils.
- School self-evaluation and improvement are not underpinned sufficiently well by involving everyone in systematic and rigorous ways of finding out what could be better and what is done well.

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

The quality of education is good and the school is a happy place of learning. Strengths far outweigh those areas identified above, though the governors will prepare an action plan that focuses on improving these, and gives attention to some minor aspects outlined in the main report.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since 1997 the school has made good progress in responding to most of the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in developing subject policies, schemes of work and assessment in core subjects. Subject management roles have been re-distributed and clarified. However the role of co-ordinator still requires developing in terms of monitoring and its impact on improving quality and raising standards. Governors are much more involved in checking for cost effectiveness in their decision-making. A useful start has been made in collecting data to help in forecasting how well pupils are likely to achieve. This information is usefully supporting the realistic targets set for English and mathematics results between now and 2002, although targets should be more challenging to reflect the school's ambition.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E*	E	E	E	well above average A
mathematics	E	E	E	E	above average B
science	D	D	C	B	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

*Similar schools are those with between 20%-35% of pupils eligible for free school meals. Caution is needed in comparing results with similar schools as Martin Wilson has a third of pupils with assessed special educational needs. Additionally the Local Education Authority has designated the school makes special provision for pupils with statements many of whom join the school in Key Stage 2.*

Trends show the school results at Key Stage 2 to be keeping pace with the National picture. Standards in English and mathematics are well below the national average and when compared to schools with a similar intake. Standards are average in science when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful in enabling pupils to work with increasing speed and accuracy and standards are lifting as a result. The school's strategy



for literacy has had a very positive impact on raising standards in English. Findings from inspection show a more positive picture than national test results. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are judged to be below average in English and mathematics and average in science. These subjects are improving. However the pace of work in some lessons is too slow and not enough high quality work is achieved especially for the most able in Year 6. Standards in information technology and religious education are average. The school has set realistic targets for the next two years that it is currently on track to meet. Standards are higher at Key Stage 1 than 2 because the nature of classes changes from Year 3 on, when many more pupils with special educational needs join those continuing in school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and try hard to do their very best work for their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils get on extremely well together and are considerate of the feelings of others. Behaviour is not quite as good at lunch and play as it is in class, and the school is trying to improve this. Four exclusions were made last year and were very much the last resort.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school and is very successfully underpinning the good learning taking place. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to take a lead in organising appropriate aspects of lessons and school life.
Attendance	Satisfactory. A significant number of pupils are late to school and this interrupts a smart start to the day in some classes.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is much improved since the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the 90 lessons observed during this inspection teaching quality was of satisfactory or better quality in 99 per cent. In 83 per cent of lessons teaching was of good or better quality and in 26 per cent of very good or excellent quality. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and results in these pupils making good progress against individual targets. Teaching is mainly good for pupils throughout the school, but there is potential for lesson planning to be better focused on ensuring that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially higher attaining pupils. The very best teaching observed during the inspection was in early years, in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and in Year 5/6. Skills of literacy are given very good attention, particularly in literacy hours and through drama, although more could be done to promote language use in some foundation subjects such as history and geography. Numeracy skills are consistently well taught and pupils do well in mathematics as a result. The practical aspects of a range of subjects are being well promoted, and as a result pupils are confident to 'have a go' at solving problems. The very best practice in teaching and learning in the school has yet to be sufficiently shared.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The pupils benefit from interesting and exciting experiences. However the organisation of the curriculum is not set up to deliver to best advantage, all of the subjects planned. The programme of extra-curricular activities is of excellent range and quality.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Early assessment is thorough and there is excellent team effort to ensure that individual needs are well responded to, especially in basic skills learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school is secure, friendly and caring and gives very good attention to pupils' cultural, moral and social development. Good opportunities are made available for their spiritual growth but assemblies are not used consistently to best advantage to promote the values of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour and pupils' personal development are very effective. Effective procedures for assessing pupils' academic learning are in place that draw well from the good knowledge staff have of individuals. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to guide curricular planning in information technology and religious education and most foundation subjects. Procedures for monitoring lateness could be tightened.
How well the school works with parents	Very good. Very effective links are promoted and a good number of parents support the school well. The school is striving to get more parents directly involved in its life and development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Since his appointment in 1998, the headteacher has given a very strong personal lead to the ethos created in school and the educational direction. All serious weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection have been eradicated and the school is rapidly improving. Staff are well bonded and the good quality education arises from their desire to give of their best to the pupils. There is a shared determination to strive for improvement, but more people need time and opportunity to undertake monitoring of work in classes so that they can play a full part in raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. A newly constituted governing body has established itself very effectively. There are clear intentions in their planned future work to move with speed in supporting the management's drive for raised standards. They uphold the principles of Best Value well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are better systems in place to check what is working well or requires improvement than at the time of the school's first inspection and the impact of these on the progress made by pupils is now more consistent.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. There is a good sufficiency of staffing, accommodation and resources. All of these are used well to support the lifting of standards and to provide an effective education for all pupils. The school gives good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That children like school, grow in confidence and do well.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching and staff's approachability.</li> <li>• The good leadership and management.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> </ul>

The team endorses parents' positive views. The team finds homework to be satisfactory, although the school may like to publicise exactly what homework is set for each year group so that parents are clear about this.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Since the time of the previous inspection, nearly three years ago, the school has made good progress in raising standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Pupils now learn more successfully in all of these subjects as well as design and technology, geography and music than they did before. The impact of very good leadership, significantly improved teaching and a much better planned curriculum are key reasons why standards are lifting. Standards currently are higher at Key Stage 1 than 2 because the nature of classes changes from Year 3 on, when many more pupils with special educational needs join those continuing in school. It is also the case that pupils higher up the school have had less time to benefit from the good quality education now being provided. Nevertheless, standards at Key Stage 2 are not yet high enough. The school is aware of this and through its action plan has set out to raise them year on year. The school has set realistic targets for the next two years that it is currently on track to meet but these could be more challenging to reflect the school's ambition.

2. When children under five years of age join the school their attainment is below average but covers a wide range. They are given very good experiences that enable them to make good and often very good progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and personal and social development. By the time they are five years of age most are working at average levels, although a significant number achieve high standards in their physical development. The school adds significant value at this key stage of children's education because of the high quality of the learning environment, the good response to individual needs met through very good teaching and support and clear expectations that the children are all going to do as well as they can. Children in both the nursery and the reception class get off to a flying start in their education.

3. Results in National tests at Key Stage 1 have increased rapidly since 1997, rising by over twenty per cent during this period in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has annually exceeded the targets it set. In 1999 results were above the national average in reading, close to average in writing and very high in mathematics. Results compared very favourably to similar schools with no tested subject less than above average. There were no significant variations between the attainments of boys and girls.

4. Findings from inspection show standards in the work seen to be above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving well in all of these subjects though higher attaining pupils could potentially attain more in English and mathematics. Standards in science have improved dramatically due to the good planning now in place and strong subject leadership that results in confident teaching and very successful learning. Standards are average in information technology and in line with the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils generally make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art, design and technology and music. Learning though effective in religious education, geography and history is restricted by the limited opportunities for writing. Additionally, the time-tabling of these subjects is not conducive to in-depth study and although pupils' knowledge and understanding is secure, recorded work is too often hurried and poorly presented. Pupils make satisfactory progress in physical education but too little actual time

for activities curtails the level at which a few pupils work. Although the school offers pupils worthwhile experience in all these subjects the rates of progress are not as good as in the rest of subjects pupils study.

5. Trends show the school results at Key Stage 2 to be keeping pace with the National picture. Standards in English and mathematics are well below the national average and when compared to schools with a similar intake. Standards are average in science when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. The school's results have been rising by about twelve per cent each year, though mathematics results have tended to be somewhat of a roller-coaster which to some extent reflects the different academic profiles of year groups. Girls have outperformed boys in English and mathematics at this key stage in tests. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful in enabling pupils to work with increasing speed and accuracy and standards are lifting as a result. The school's strategy for literacy has had a very positive impact on raising standards in English.

6. Findings from inspection show a more positive picture than national test results. Nothing significant was noted in the achievements of boys and girls, although sometimes boys' behaviour was unsettled and this impeded learning very occasionally. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are judged to be below average in English and mathematics and average in science. It is clear that these subjects are improving, however the pace of work in some lessons is still too slow and not enough high quality work is achieved especially for the most able. During early Spring books show an accelerated pace to learning for Year 6 when setting arrangements supported the boosting of standards in core subjects. Standards in information technology and religious education are average. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art, design and technology, music and physical education. The relative weaknesses flagged up about religious education, history and geography at Key Stage 1 are in evidence at Key Stage 2. Too little planned use is made of information technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum and this requires review. A success in provision across the curriculum has been the drive to promote practical aspects in subjects. Pupils are being given plenty of opportunity to 'have a go' at organising appropriate aspects of their studies, and this has led to most developing confident attitudes and a willingness to find things out without fear of failure. This coupled with the excellent relationships in school is leading to pupils learning enthusiastically and with increasingly good results.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in developing language, literacy and numeracy skills. Some of them make very good progress and achieve well when their prior attainment is taken account of. This is because the gains they make in learning are very closely monitored and recorded. This information is very well used to assess progress towards existing targets and to set new ones. Individual education plans are well written and all staff are aware of what is in them; this ensures that work is always at the right level of challenge. These good rates of progress are seen in both academic work and behaviour. For example, individual pupils make great strides when being taught in small groups or as individuals. Older pupils whose behaviour caused considerable concern on entry to school no longer do so because of the carefully planned support they receive.

8. The school has not yet taken the same considered approach to evaluating how well potentially talented and gifted pupils are achieving. There are some very able pupils in the school who are doing well enough because of the school's desire to treat everyone as important and in so doing are responsive to individual needs. The work set for such pupils is not always demanding enough however and this is one aspect of provision that requires

more focus if the potential of all pupils is to be realised fully and standards are to be at the highest level.

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

9. The school is well ordered, friendly and caring. The school is harmonious, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs are valued for being themselves. Parents appreciate the ways in which the school fosters pupils' sense of social responsibility and maturity. Strengths regarding pupils' attitudes and behaviour reported at the time of the previous inspection, have all been sustained. Levels of attendance in the school are satisfactory and are contributing positively to the good quality of education provided.

10. Pupils are happy in school and are keen to attend. The quality of relationships at all levels is excellent and everyone tries hard to do their best for one another. Playtime behaviour during breaks and lunchtime is not always of the same good quality that prevails in classes; this is one area the school has planned to improve. Bullying instances are taken seriously and are responded to effectively. There have been four exclusions in the last twelve months, one being made permanent. Exclusion is seen very much as the last resort and record keeping shows this to be the case.

11. Children under five have made a very settled start to their education and show confident attitudes to work, one another and adults. They work with good effort and for prolonged periods, and show immense pride when they are told how well they have done something. By the time they are five most share nicely, co-operate successfully and behave very responsibly.

12. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to learning are good and this is a key reason why standards are rising. Pupils with special educational needs show very good levels of interest due to the very good support given to them, and because their efforts are praised and recognised. Pupils work with diligence and perseverance; for example, in design and technology when trying to handle knives, graters and peelers to cut and shape fruit into neat parcels. Pupils work with good effort and imagination; for example, when drawing scaled up parts of a Tudor painting they could see through a small view-finder.

13. Behaviour in the great majority of lessons is good. In a small number of lessons in Key Stage 1, pupils were observed to fuss and depend too much on the teacher but this was due in part to the behaviour management strategies being used. Occasionally in Key Stage 2 a handful of pupils, usually boys, show challenging behaviour and seek attention, and this results in them interrupting the concentration of others. The school has developed a very effective system of giving pupils 'time-out' in other classes when they are finding it difficult to cope. At breaks and lunchtime, behaviour can sometimes become a little too boisterous, and noise levels in the dining room are too high.

14. Pupils respond well to the code of conduct and know well the effect their actions have on others. Most are well motivated by the award of merits for good work and effort. Personal and social education lessons are used very positively for pupils to think about others' feelings and to share ideas about special things for example. Pupils know very clearly what is right and wrong, and show respect for one another and their teachers. When given the opportunity, pupils take on roles of responsibility well. For example, two Year 6 boys have started to collect stamps for the Samaritans charity. Other charities are also

supported directly by pupils' own fund-raising endeavours. A school council is in place but has not met for some time.

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

15. Teaching is much improved since the time of the previous inspection. Weaknesses identified in science, geography and design and technology have all been attended to. Teachers are confident to teach all of these subjects now and the planning in place to support lessons is thorough, and gives good coverage to all the required elements. The school has given a good push to encouraging pupils to 'learn by doing', and this approach has helped boost standards in the practical and investigative aspects of science and other subjects such as mathematics and design and technology. Issues concerning homework identified then have been resolved and satisfactory provision is now made, though more communication about homework with parents would be useful.

16. Teaching is now mainly good for pupils throughout the school, but there is potential for lesson planning to be better focused on ensuring that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially higher attaining pupils. Assessment is usefully assisting teachers' planning in English, mathematics and science and to good effect as demonstrated by rapidly improving standards. Assessment is less precise in other subjects. A good start has been made in tracking individual progress, and in setting targets but insufficient use is made of these to support teaching and learning.

17. The very best teaching observed during the inspection was in early years, in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and in Year 5/6. Skills of literacy are given very good attention, particularly in literacy hours and through drama, although more could be done to promote writing in some subjects such as history and geography. Numeracy skills are consistently well taught and pupils are working more accurately and speedily as a result. The practical aspects of a range of subjects are being well promoted, and in consequence pupils are confident at solving problems. Professional development has been very successful in supporting all staff as they successfully implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Some teachers have been chosen to lead on literacy and numeracy initiatives in the County because of their skills in teaching successfully. Too little use is made of information technology to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

18. Teaching is good overall and results in pupils learning effectively, and making good progress in most subjects, by the time they leave at eleven years. In the 90 lessons observed during this inspection teaching quality was of satisfactory or better quality in 99 per cent. The one unsatisfactory lesson was in physical education in Key Stage 1 and was because the teacher spent too long sorting out unsettled behaviour and too little progress was made by the pupils. In 83 per cent of lessons teaching was of good or better quality and in 26 per cent of very good or excellent quality. The teaching of children under five is very good, and provides a very firm foundation for their later learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall with many very good features. In some one to one sessions, pupils were observed to make great strides forward in learning because of the excellent attention given to supporting very good rates of progress against the individual targets set. The excellent quality of relationships in the school is successfully underpinning the good standards being achieved. Teachers enjoy being with the pupils and vice-versa and this shows.

19. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and often is very good and excellent in one to one, and in small group situations. This high quality reflects the exceptional work of the well-trained support staff and the well-focused individual education plans with the next steps in learning clearly set down. Because targets are specific and measurable, and planning and assessment are effective, resulting in good progress in learning.

20. Children under five benefit from very good teaching and get off to a flying start in their education as a result. The staff work together well as a team. They understand the needs of young children well and provide a varied range of learning experiences that help children develop a good all round education and get into productive work habits from an early age.

21. Teaching is mostly good because teachers ensure that pupils at the school have good quality learning opportunities that provide a rich and stimulating diet. They hold high expectations of what pupils can do, and are supported by effective long and medium term planning in most subjects. Teachers generally plan lessons appropriately, maintain a productive and purposeful ethos, manage behaviour well, use a good range of interesting materials and largely structure lessons well to make best use of time, resources and the accommodation. There are problems associated with the arrangements in place to deliver some foundation subjects and religious education, and too much is expected to be done with insufficient time available. This is impeding potentially very high quality teaching and learning.

22. Teachers show good levels of expectation about how well pupils should be doing and most set demanding and challenging work for the range of pupils as a consequence. Most teachers know full well what they want pupils to achieve but written lesson plans are not always specific enough to ensure that pupils' learning is as well targeted as it could be. There is variable use of time targets to aid the pace of individuals' learning when the teacher's attention is elsewhere. In some marking the teacher sets clear goals for the pupils to aim for but in others there is too much emphasis on effort and not enough on targeting improvements. This means that pupils' knowledge of their own learning is under-developed.

23. The very best practice in teaching and learning in the school has yet to be sufficiently shared. Teachers at the school are reflective about their work and constantly seek ways to improve their practice. A timetable of monitoring and evaluation has been established and the next step is to involve more people in observing work in classrooms.

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

24. In the previous inspection the curriculum, together with planning were identified as key issues for action. Since then, there has been considerable improvement to the curriculum offered to pupils and curricular provision is now good. A broad and balanced curriculum is now in place offering pupils exciting and stimulating opportunities for learning. The school has done well to ensure that the richness of the expressive arts is retained whilst giving full attention to the many initiatives such as National literacy and numeracy strategies. The criticisms in the previous report relating to the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum have all been addressed. The structure for teaching numeracy is now firmly in place. The balance of time devoted to each subject has been amended to ensure a more appropriate allocation particularly in mathematics, where previously there were wide variations within key stages and classes. Planning has improved and co-ordinators of key subjects such as English and mathematics have a clear and accurate



overview of their subject. Time allocated to some foundation subjects remains as an issue to address as part of the school's planning for Curriculum 2000.

25. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and provide a clear structure which ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Statutory requirements are met. Religious education is taught appropriately according to the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus.

26. Whilst the school has made great progress with the curriculum minor areas for development remain, including a more balanced approach to the use of information technology in the classroom to support all areas of the curriculum. The school is aware that schemes of work in several subjects, such as history, geography and religious education are in need of review. Planning now builds more effectively on what pupils know, understand and can do, but does not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in the school, hence progress for these higher attainers is sometimes limited. Teachers work hard to ensure that work provided is adapted to meet all ages within the mixed year classes in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but work in books shows accelerated learning when older pupils were taught in sets as part of the preparation aimed at boosting attainment in national tests.

27. The National Literacy Strategy has been very well implemented and is having a noticeable effect on raising standards particularly through text work and the attention now being given to spelling patterns. Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has also been successful. The impact of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in other curricular areas has yet to be realised in some subjects. For instance, written work in religious education, history and geography is not extended and is limited in the vocabulary used with inconsistencies in the presentation of work.

28. Pupils with statements of special educational need and those at stages 1 to 4 of the Code of Practice have full access to the same rich and exciting curriculum as their peers. Although they are often taught in small groups care is taken to ensure they are following the same curriculum as the rest of the class. Pupils with statements are sometimes withdrawn for individual support but this is carefully monitored and the school can demonstrate that this does not result in them missing parts of the curriculum. They sing in the choir, explore their feelings in drama, and create art and models along with their fellow pupils and some show exceptional talent. Pupils have good access to the excellent range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, particularly those which run at lunch-time.

29. An excellent range of after school clubs is very well supported by pupils. The curriculum is richly enhanced by activities such as information technology, French, library, chess, art and poetry clubs and a range of sporting and musical activities. Teachers work with great commitment and enthusiasm, in their own time to enable these to take place. A very good programme of visits including residential experiences for older pupils to Arthog and Stiperstones supports the curriculum well and provides rich contribution to pupils' learning. Such experiences make a very effective contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, a sense of empathy and caring, reflecting well the very positive ethos of the school. The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education permeates the curriculum and also underpins pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sex education and drugs awareness education form part of studies in science and health education. The parental right to withdraw from these and from religious education is made clear in the school's prospectus. The school enjoys good links with the local cluster of schools and is building good relationships with the neighbouring

Catholic school particularly in a shared approach to outdoor facilities and the shared site.

30. Good spiritual development is fostered through an awareness and appreciation of beauty in art, music and poetry, and time to think about and wonder at the mysteries of life. In religious education pupils are given plenty of opportunity to reflect on human characteristics and ideals as well as comparing different beliefs and practices. The display of 'One Amazing Day' at the Millennium dome illustrates well the ways in which pupils are encouraged to marvel at the world around them. However there are sometimes missed opportunities in collective worship, when spiritual reflection is not planned into the activity.

31. Moral development is very good, in an environment where all adults provide excellent role models and children learn the difference between right and wrong from their earliest years. As they grow older, the more complex moral dilemmas are discussed sensitively through personal and social education lessons.

32. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' social development. Older pupils are encouraged to mix with and help those in Key Stage 1, and there are also many instances of pupils learning to understand and support their own peers, with very good integration of those who have special needs. Paired work and teamwork for various aspects of their studies, as well as the social benefits of residential trips to Arthog and Stiperstones are noteworthy features of the provision. Wider social awareness is encouraged by visits from charity workers, and pupils sometimes initiate their own fund-raising activities for the less fortunate.

33. The school is rightly proud of its reputation for teaching the arts, and indeed cultural provision through art, music, poetry and drama continue to be a strength. The balance of curriculum time has now improved and a more structured approach to cultural provision has been effected through schemes of work and the new personal, social and health education policy. This contains the teaching areas for multi-cultural awareness, enhanced by visits to places of worship by members of other faiths, as well as the rich tapestry of cultural differences experienced in art and music. The Key Stage 1 art club's work on Aboriginal painting forms a stunning display to illustrate this awareness.

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

34. This is a school which demonstrates a very high level of care for the happiness, welfare and support of its pupils. The policies for health and safety and for child protection are followed carefully and monitored to ensure full compliance with guidelines. All the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are fully conversant with procedures. In the previous inspection report, assessment and monitoring were identified as key issues to be addressed. In the three years since that time, very good progress has been made in establishing procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science. These have yet to be extended to embrace other subjects in the curriculum.

35. For many children, their first taste of life at Martin Wilson school comes in the pre-school playgroup and the lunch club which begins to develop their social skills. A full programme of home-visits ensures that all children and their families are well known to the staff before they enter the nursery. In this way the individual needs of pupils, both for their personal and academic development, are understood and met. Throughout the school teachers and classroom assistants provide a sensitive and consistent approach to the guidance that children need in order to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to reach their academic potential.

36. Pupils with statements of special educational need and those at stages 1 to 4 of the Code of Practice are well cared for. Their academic and personal progress is exceptionally well monitored this ensures staff always have up-to-date knowledge of how pupils are doing. This information is shared and very well used to plan new work. Statemented pupils in particular benefit from careful support and guidance because the staff know how important this is in ensuring they gain the most from their time at school. Staff give high priority to ensuring the welfare of their pupils and know when to be vigilant for signs of distress.

37. Procedures for promoting and monitoring pupils' personal development are very good, especially with those pupils whose special educational needs may have involved them transferring to the school during Key Stages 1 or 2. The staff help pupils to become self-controlled and considerate for others. The school ensures that there is extra support provided for those children whose home circumstances are particularly difficult, for instance where support for reading homework may not be possible. The incentive for all pupils to win merits for good work or good behaviour, leading to certificates, as well as celebration in weekly assemblies, is an effective feature.

38. The personal, social and health education programme is central to the school's provision for developing the whole child and it forms a very worthwhile framework which class teachers use well. The healthy eating project in Year 6 proved a particularly memorable and tasty illustration of the interesting ways in which teachers encourage pupils to investigate and acquire healthy attitudes.

39. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good attendance are satisfactory, and benefit from a regular, detailed discussions with the educational welfare officer. However, the early morning procedure is not sufficiently tight to ensure good punctuality for all pupils.

40. Educational support and guidance has improved considerably since the last inspection. Good use is made of analysis data in English, mathematics and science, following statutory assessment tests and other assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in particular areas. For example, weaknesses identified in spelling have resulted in a school focused on spelling patterns which is beginning to improve these skills. Outcomes of this analyses are used well to inform teachers' planning, although plans often lack precise details for stretching the higher attainers. The school also takes part in the optional assessments in other year groups. Underachievement by boys has been identified by the school and strategies put in place, for example, appropriate reading material aimed at boys in an effort to address this issue. It is also discussed through the cluster group, sharing ideas and practice.

41. Individual targets are set for all pupils on a termly basis in English, mathematics, science and cover learning goals and behavioural ones. These targets are regularly reviewed with pupils and new targets agreed. They are not yet recorded clearly in pupils' books in order for pupils to remind themselves of what they need to improve or used to any great extent in lessons. Termly targets for pupils with special educational needs are used well by teachers and support staff, who take them from individual education plans in order to plan effectively work matched to specific needs. These, too, are regularly reviewed. Teachers maintain their own records of progress in some subjects. Detailed records of reading are maintained to which pupils, teachers and parents contribute. These records are well maintained with both evaluative and diagnostic comments to help pupils improve.

42. Portfolios of levelled work in English, mathematics and science provide guidance to teachers when assessing pupils' progress. Marking of pupils' work is good in English and mathematics, with constructive advice for improving work. In other subjects marking is inconsistent. Good procedures have been developed for monitoring pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science. Procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are also good. The school recognises further work is needed to extend these good practices to other areas of the curriculum.

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

43. The school has worked extremely hard in the last two years to rebuild its partnership with parents and carers, many of whom had become unhappy with its provision. The rewards have been significant and parents and carers' views of the school are now very good. Parents and carers have been well informed of all the new developments in school, and of the progress made in meeting targets for school improvement. Their opinions have been sought through a Forum, through questionnaires and through the less formal setting of the Friends' Association. Parents and carers now feel that the school works closely with them and they are very comfortable with approaching the school should a problem arise.

44. By maintaining very good communications between school and home, the school has formed a very effective partnership which encourages those who look after children to become more involved in their children's education and the life of the school. Most parents and carers give good support to pupils by hearing reading and taking an interest in homework tasks. There are some parents and carers who would like greater clarity about the expectations of the homework timetable but generally they give good support to pupils by hearing reading and taking an interest in homework tasks. The pupils' progress is communicated both through termly meetings, at which targets for improvement are reviewed, and through the detailed and helpful written annual progress reports. These include areas for improvement and give both pupils and parents and carers an opportunity to comment on the year's progress. The headteacher and staff make every effort to communicate any problems of personal or academic development with a pupil's parents or carers, and also draw attention to the possibility of a child not working to his or her full potential. Communication with parents and carers whose children have special needs is also very good.

45. The impact of parents and friends on the life and work of the school is very good. There is generous support for the fund-raising and social activities of the Friends' Association, which provides a significant contribution to the stock of learning resources. About 20 parents and a few other adult volunteers help in school on a regular basis, giving valuable assistance in classes, extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities.

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

46. School management was in a state of change at the time of the previous inspection. A number of serious shortcomings were identified in standards, rates of progress, the curriculum and teaching that were the result of weaknesses in management. In addition, specific factors of management were considered to be unsatisfactory. These included the role of subject co-ordinators, monitoring procedures, management of planning and the curriculum and the comparative lack of impact the school development plan had on school improvement. At the same time, the inspection team judged that the then acting head teacher had made a good start to improvement and had established clear and effective guidance during the few weeks that he had been in the school. In 1998, at the time of the revisit by Her Majesty's inspectors, it was judged that satisfactory progress had been made

with all aspects of the action plan and that there was an evident climate of improvement in school. The promising start has been maintained and the current headteacher who has been in post for just over two years, has eliminated for the most part what was wrong, and has promoted improved management structures and procedures to bring good management and very strong, determined and capable leadership.

47. The headteacher is the foundation on which the successes of the school are built. When he was appointed in 1997 the staff were hardworking but lacked direction, morale was shattered and systems and procedures lacked rigour, consistency and focus. The head was quick to isolate weakness and to start building for success. The energies, talents and untapped strengths of staff were harnessed well to promote one overriding priority, the lifting of standards. Inspectors saw many instances in lessons, meetings and other activities, of how the staff form a team welded together with the best interests of the pupils at heart. The deputy headteacher gives full support to the headteacher and is also an effective a manager and leader. Although absent during the inspection, and for a time before it, her presence and considerable success was evident in terms of the continued smooth running of those aspects for which she is responsible.

48. Senior and middle managers carry out their duties well and have made good improvements to their subjects and aspects since the last inspection. However, it is very evident that they are ready for the greater challenge that wider responsibility will now bring. This is especially the case with their monitoring role which is fairly low level at present. Elsewhere in this report there are issues of inconsistent practice flagged, these include assessment, target setting, challenge for the highest achievers and the range of information technology experiences. Informal monitoring is successful, but enhanced formal monitoring would ensure that such inconsistencies are checked early and corrected quickly. Nonetheless, it is also very evident that co-ordinators have good success levels, as shown in the high quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs, good calibre teaching and generally improving standards.

49. The main reason why the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good is because of the consistently high quality leadership provided by the special need co-ordinator (SENCO), head teacher and governing body. The management of special education needs by the SENCO is excellent because she is highly effective in harnessing the resources, staff, time and money, to deliver very good provision. The deployment of the SENCO ensures that she is in a very good position to ensure that provision is very well monitored and pupil progress and attainment are closely scrutinised. As a result individual education plans are always up-to-date and pupils are working at the right level for them. The school is aware that it has yet to turn its attention to ensuring that very able pupils are afforded the same high quality provision as that of pupils with special educational needs at the other end of the academic continuum.

50. The SENCO meets regularly with the support staff and ensures they are kept up-to-date with school and pupil development. Although there is no formal appraisal system in place there are good opportunities for support staff to discuss their development needs and they have full access to training and staff meetings.

51. As a member of the senior management team the SENCO is able to ensure debates at the heart of the school management benefit from her knowledge of individual pupils, groups and staff. The head teacher and governing body are well informed about special educational needs and this ensures they are well positioned to fulfill their statutory duties very effectively. The school is well able to demonstrate how the considerable income it receives in respect of special educational needs is spent and adds additional funds from

its own resources. This last provides for some continuity of support during the school year. The heavy investment in a fulltime SENCO and the large number of highly effective support staff represents very good value for money because the quality of provision is very good and pupils make good progress.

52. The governors are a very effective body. They know clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they are so involved and have systems and structures that link teaching, support and administrative staff to individual governors, their committees and the governing body as a whole. Information flows freely, it is interpreted very well, analysed carefully and put to good use in guiding the school. Standards are to the fore in the governors' rating of school cost effectiveness and they uphold the principles of best value well. Governors have not yet set targets for the headteacher nor begun to formulate the performance management policy required to allow management to prepare properly for the evolving changes to terms of staff employment. This is a priority area not yet addressed in the school's development plan.

53. School managers and governors have adopted the right priorities for the school at the right time. These centre on raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Everyone pursues these well, and the successes are clear. A strength is the way in which other things are generally held in good balance, so that, for example, Early Years education is well served in school and good expectation of behaviour results in orderly learning. Provision for religious education and some foundation subjects require enhancement and should be included on the next school development plan in order to plan effectively for the revised curriculum due in the autumn term. Information technology has received good attention and the information technology suite is an asset. Nevertheless more use needs to be made of technology to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils are expected to show their strengths and to rise to challenge. They do this well and take a rightful part in the smooth running of the school.

54. The school is very well served by its staff who put in much effort and time to ensure that pupils achieve well. There are enough teachers and a good number of support staff, the accommodation is spacious, highly attractive and very well maintained and cleaned. The school secretary undertakes her duties very well and has very good knowledge of school procedures and systems. There are ample learning resources for pupils. On the whole, all these resources are used very effectively.

55. Finance is budgeted very well and set against clearly demarcated priorities. Additional funding is targeted carefully on those for whom it is intended. Financial management and control are secure. The school has an above average amount to spend on each pupil. When weighting is given to the levels of attainment on entry, children's flying start in the Early Years, their good progress and standards in Key Stage 1 and the very effective ways in which the school caters for the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs who join in Key Stage 2, it is very evident that this is money well spent and that parents and taxpayers get good value for the money they invest in the school. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are right for this school currently. More than that, they are improving well and set to lift in the future.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. What should the school do to improve further

- (1) Continue to raise standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.  
(Paragraphs: 1, 4, 8, 55, 70, 78, 80)
- (2) Extend monitoring and evaluation practices so that:
  - more staff have the necessary skills, time and opportunity to undertake classroom observations to check on quality and standards in the subjects they co-ordinate so that they can play a full part in school evaluation and improvement;
  - the best teaching that results in the best learning is identified and shared more.(Paragraphs: 23, 48, 52, 77, 97, 112, 116, 122, 129, 137)
- (3) Improve the consistency of lesson planning by:
  - ensuring that all lesson plans have clear and detailed objectives for the range of pupils in the class, especially higher attaining pupils;
  - setting clear targets for lessons based on accurate assessment of prior learning that are shared with pupils;
  - extending the use of time targets that indicate the amount and quality of work to be completed;
  - ensuring that marking consistently recognises effort and shows clearly how work may be improved;
  - setting clear expectations for standards of presentation in all subjects.(Paragraphs: 16, 23, 26, 27, 34, 41, 42, 49, 70, 74, 76, 77, 80, 81, 85-87, 108, 109, 112, 113, 116, 119, 131, 136, 137, 141)

Although not identified as separate issues, in preparing their action plan, the Governing Body should also pay attention to the following:

- establishing an attendance policy aimed at improving punctuality and giving a better start to the day (Paragraph: 39)
- review time allocations to subjects and their organisation as integral to preparing for Curriculum 2000 (Paragraphs: 21, 24)
- look at how to promote information technology across the curriculum and improve ventilation in the information technology suite (Paragraphs: 17, 26, 117)
- raise the status of religious education in the school by re-considering it as a priority in the school's development plan and for management. (Paragraph: 137)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

90

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	20	57	16	1	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	17	182
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	72

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	11	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	9
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	18	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (77)	85 (79)	100 (89)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	10	11	10
	Total	18	20	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (76)	100 (90)	95 (84)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	18	18	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	8	15
	Girls	12	11	16
	Total	17	19	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (45)	53 (40)	86 (63)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	16
	Girls	12	10	16
	Total	19	17	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (56)	49 (33)	89 (63)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	182
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	3	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	24.5

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

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	243

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	533 600
Total expenditure	513 553
Expenditure per pupil	2 389
Balance brought forward from previous year	16 845
Balance carried forward to next year	36 892

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	107

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	38	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	53	8	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	34	17	7	6
The teaching is good.	58	33	6	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	36	14	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	48	36	9	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	62	30	6	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	36	6	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	36	5	1	4

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

57. The strengths identified in the provision for children under five at the last inspection have been successfully built upon. Very good provision at this stage gives children a flying start to their education so that they are given a very firm foundation for their later school years. The good coverage of all of the areas of learning meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. The good curriculum and high quality of teaching has a positive impact on standards whether children are working in nursery or the reception class.

58. Provision for children under five is made in nursery for most and for five pupils in the reception class. A few children who have special needs sometimes work in nursery and sometimes in reception class. This is possible because the work of both classes is interchangeable. The nursery and reception class teacher work together very successfully and ensure equal access to all children to all areas of learning. Provision for the early years is very well managed by the nursery teacher. There is a team ethos with the nursery nurse and other support staff giving positive support to all activities. At the time of the inspection there were thirty-three children on the nursery class roll, with twenty attending in the morning and thirteen in the afternoon sessions. Apart from this there were five children under the age of five in the reception class. The needs of the children in reception class were being met effectively. The children in nursery are visited at home before entry to nursery when the informal process of profiling their ability begins. This continues extensively when they begin attending nursery. Baseline assessment based on the local authority system is undertaken. This shows that children's attainment on entry is below average in the areas of learning that are assessed. These are in language and literacy and mathematics. Assessment practice is appropriately supported by a system of profiling carried out by the school, which confirms below average attainment in all other areas of learning on entry to nursery.

59. Inspection findings show that children's attainment on entry is below average, and covers a wide range. The children make rapid gains in learning so that they enter statutory schooling at an average level of attainment in all areas of learning except in physical development where they are above average.

#### ***Personal and social development***

60. Teaching of personal and social skills is very good because all adults act as good role models for the children by the way that they interact with one another and give one another their support. The children under five follow this lead and make very good progress in their personal and social development by the age of five and reach average attainment as a result. The staff place sensitive emphasis upon their approaches to children in order to ensure that they have a settled routine. Many of the children have had some pre-school experience, some of which is in the playgroup housed on the school site. Good liaison exists between the two settings and as a result children transfer very smoothly. The continuing liaison when children move into reception class is equally good so that personal development needs are met in an on going basis. Children are happy to come to school because of the enjoyment and pleasure that they have in the wide range of activities in which they become involved. They work together in small groups in the sand and water trays in school. In the pleasant outside area they take great care of one another as they use the bikes and other wheeled toys. They take Teddy outside to enjoy the warmth from the sunshine and "read" a book to him so that he enjoys the time as much as they do. Their

ability to sustain concentration is encouraged as they make sandwiches for the time when they eat and have a drink together before they leave nursery. They have good measures of confidence in taking appropriate responsibility for their own learning when, for example, they use computers in the computer suite or when using apparatus in physical development lessons in the school hall. This is continued in reception class when they make their own choices of some of their activities that are connected to the activities that the older children are following. Relationships with all adults are so good because the teachers have planned very carefully, resourced effectively and given very good support to children as well as deploying the support staff very efficiently.

### ***Language and literacy***

61. Attainment is level with what is expected by the time that children reach statutory school age. This reflects good progress from the below average start made by most. Children are well prepared for future learning with the reception class teacher taking particular care to give special work to younger children that is related to the work with older ones when they are working towards the literacy hour requirements. In consequence whether children are in nursery or reception class they make very good progress in literacy development as a result of the very good range of activities. They listen with delight to a story from a big book in nursery after they have shown their understanding of what makes a story by bringing work from home that are illustrations of stories together with some words. These have sometimes been done jointly with parents, many of whom take a great interest in the children's work because they are always welcomed by staff who work with these young children. They continue to learn the logical sequence of story telling, as they are encouraged to 'read' books to Teddy in the story corner. They enjoy sharing books with one another as well and in so doing confirm their understanding of how a book goes from front to back and how pictures can help to understand the story. Their speaking and listening skills are encouraged on a daily basis and reach satisfactory levels by the age of five. They sometimes have difficulty in using correct words but because adults are sympathetic to their needs they are usually able to eventually talk about the things that they want to use. Many of the children can recognise whole words because they know the initial sounds of letters. They recognise their own names as they are expected to find them and place them in a transparent envelope so that adults know they have chosen correctly. Many are able to write their own names on their recorded work in legible and reasonably well formed letters. This is enhanced by the work at home on making up stories. The teachers and support staff recognise the vital importance of developing language and literacy skills and this impacts very positively on the progress that the children make.

### ***Mathematics***

62. The children attain at the level expected by the time that they reach statutory school age having entered nursery at a below average level. The development of their skills in this area of learning begins as soon as their day in school begins. In Nursery registration time is used for consolidating understanding of numbers up to twenty. They can take two away and know that this means eighteen left and can also reverse this process. The teacher asks open-ended questions to ensure this understanding and involves the nursery nurse in confirming the correct answers being given. Learning about numbers is then also linked to understanding of shape and space as children work with the teachers in small groups. Teachers prepare learning very well with both large and small apparatus so that size when counting to ten supported by different size resources for example. They use the language of mathematics such as "Oh that's bigger" with accuracy so that adults understand what they are doing. The children enjoy their activities and so have very good attitudes to learning in mathematics.

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

63. Children have below average attainment in this area of learning on entry to nursery but by the time that they reach statutory school age their attainment is average. They reach this level because of the interesting and exciting range of activities that they follow both in nursery and Reception class. They show understanding of their immediate world as they explore the changes in the daily weather. They discover more about creatures as they give concentrated attention to the worms' way of moving and their speed in direction. They build constructively to different heights as the teacher asks them to build to their knees at first and then to make their building blocks higher or lower. They use accurate vocabulary to describe what they have built. They assemble materials as they cut and stick to successfully make a ladybird. They use the computer with particular skill as they use the 'My world' program. They can control the mouse well and make accurate illustrations of dressing and undressing the three bears and Goldilocks. They talk with confidence about how they can change the colours in this program and so change the whole picture that they are creating. They understand the differences in time as they say, 'That's an old teddy' when they are looking at toys with their teacher. The teachers have planned very thoroughly and resourced these activities very well so that the children have very good attitudes to their learning. The very good deployment of support helps the children to sustain their interest and enjoyment of their activities.

### ***Physical development***

64. Although children are below average on entry they are above average in their attainment by the time that they become statutory school age. Particularly effective teaching and participation by all adults in this area of learning encourages children to attain to a high level. The quality of the outdoor play environment for children under five is very good and makes a very positive contribution to the good standards achieved. The outstanding teaching of physical skills ensures that children are very aware of space when they use the large space in the hall. This allows them the freedom to express themselves as they move to a high standard. Their movement is further enhanced by the use of apparatus when they move in a variety of ways. They move very effectively along the floor through a tunnel made by chairs, they balance along a bench and land with precision at the end because they are being given such good support and encouragement. They participate in all activities within a very well organised carousel arrangement. There is excellent control of learning so that all safety measures are securely covered. They have very good opportunities to transfer these skills in outdoor play when they use wheeled toys that help them to develop these skills fully. Their finer physical skills are well developed in the cutting and constructing activities that are an on going part of their regular, everyday activities. Excellent progress is made as a result of the high levels of enjoyment and wide range of well-resourced activities.

### ***Creative development***

65. Attainment is below average on entry in this area of learning but most pupils make good progress and their attainment is average by the time they become statutory school age. Teachers plan very carefully to ensure very good teaching takes place from themselves and support staff. Children explore the use of a single colour and effectively demonstrate their ability to be accurate in defining line in their work. They can mix media together to produce a very pleasing illustration in two dimensional art of a favourite story when they use paint and a range of materials to depict the different materials used by the three little pigs to build their houses. They make very attractive ladybirds out of different coloured papers. In making the ladybirds they also develop their cutting and sticking skills as they join different papers together very carefully. They work in three-dimensional art when they make a big boot to stand outside the nursery and a letter tree outside their class room area. This attractive work also ensures that the children are totally involved in the

creation of their own bright and stimulating learning environment. They sing tunefully as they join in enthusiastically in the action songs that are a regular part of their learning and that sometimes arise quite spontaneously. The children copy adults as they make loud and soft sounds and obtain good pitch through the movements that they make to their action songs. They listen and appraise music through first of all listening to a sounds tape. They draw good conclusions about how these are high and low, quiet and loud and soft and hard to make an imaginative picture of the sea. This is then matched to the music that they listen to with good levels of appreciation.

## **ENGLISH**

66. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in English were low and progress unsatisfactory. Whilst speaking and listening skills were considered average, reading standards at both key stages were below the national average with the majority of pupils in Year 6 reading below the national average for eleven-year-olds. Standards in spelling, handwriting and writing were below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils did not have enough opportunities to write for a wide range of purpose and audience and insufficient attention was given to the systematic acquisition of basic skills.

67. Since then the National Literacy Strategy, introduced at the time of the previous inspection, has been successfully implemented resulting in a much more focused approach by teachers to the teaching of English. High quality resources have been developed alongside this, with large amounts of money dedicated to extending the quality and range of books. These have been very well organised to provide boxes for shared reading and stimuli for writing matched carefully to the literacy strategy and changed each term. A well-organised literacy room houses resources in a very accessible system and also provides a working area for groups and individuals. The well-located non-fiction library has been carefully classified, effectively resourced, and provides additional working space for group withdrawal and personal research. Extensive training by the Local Education Authority Literacy consultant and support from the school's two co-ordinators has ensured that teachers are confident and well-equipped to teach the literacy strategy. Planning has been improved and assessment data is undertaken to identify areas of weakness and action taken to address these. Monitoring in a variety of forms has been introduced and a portfolio of levelled work supports teacher assessment. Other initiatives, such as booster classes, additional literacy support and volunteer reading support have been established. Work in books shows that older pupils made good strides forward in writing when taught in sets for the core subjects during the Spring term. Individual and school target setting, strand tracking, close liaison with the special educational needs co-ordinator, and careful attention to targets in individual education plans, have all contributed to the good level of improvement seen in English.

68. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show a marked improvement in Key Stage 1 where reading at Level 2 and the higher Level 3 is above the national average. Attainment in writing is close to the national average at Level 2 and well above the national average at Level 2B. The higher Level 3 attainment was also above the national average. When compared to similar schools pupils' attainment in reading and writing is well above average at Key Stage 1.

69. The influx of pupils to Key Stage 2 from a range of schools presents a different picture in terms of standards at the end of the key stage. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show English standards to be well below the national average and well below that of similar schools. However, the 1999 cohort of pupils comprised a very high

proportion of pupils having special educational needs, many with a statement of need to support their significant learning difficulties. Caution is needed therefore when making such direct comparisons. Nevertheless, results do indicate fewer pupils gained the higher Level 5 than did so nationally. Results over the last three years show girls outperforming boys at both key stages, although inspection evidence showed no reason for this.

70. Findings from inspection show that standards in English today at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are below average. Results are improving steadily in this key stage, although sometimes work planned for the most able pupils in Year 6 is not always demanding enough and not enough emphasis is placed on high quality work from such pupils.

71. The standards of speaking and listening are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils generally listen carefully to their teachers and each other following instructions without fuss and make a satisfactory contribution to discussions. The good opportunities provided for speaking and listening, for instance when discussing their work or in the plenary session at the end of the literacy hour develop confidence in speaking aloud and explaining their work. In Key Stage 2 the competence with which many pupils explain themselves or make viewpoints is limited by a narrow vocabulary. A significant number of the younger pupils in Key Stage 2 find it difficult to engage in more extended conversations. Most pupils listen carefully, but many need help, including those with special educational needs, to encourage them to expand beyond one-word answers. Excellent opportunities are provided for drama and role-play in Year 6 that extend the speaking skills of those who take part. In addition, to the very good focus on drama within lessons, such as history through drama, the drama club meets regularly after school and is well attended by a good number of pupils in Key Stage 2. Other occasions for speaking aloud occur through assemblies, productions and within literacy hours through debates and interviews.

72. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in reading are average with the majority of pupils having secure phonic skills and a sound understanding of what the need. High attaining readers read with fluency and good expression. They have a good range of strategies to help them and are confident in their approach to reading. Pupils are able to discuss their reading and predict what might happen although conversation skills are not extended with average pupils. Lower attainers are developing sound phonic awareness and are able to build common high frequency words but reading is mechanical and lacks fluency as pupils hesitate in their effort to build vocabulary. Most pupils understand terms such as contents, page, index and can identify author, illustrator and title. Reading standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average. Standards are affected by the large proportion of pupils having special educational needs joining the school at Key Stage 2. High attainers read fluently and expressively but the highest attainers are not always sufficiently challenged with demanding texts. Average and below average readers are sometimes hesitant and do not always show that they understand what they have read. Most work hard at phonic skills and indicate favourite authors and reading preferences. Lower attainers have more limited phonic skills and struggle with more complex vocabulary. All have a good knowledge of library and research skills and make good use of these in school. All can identify authors and explain the role of illustrator and publisher but discussion about reading is at a low level for average and lower attainers. Reading diaries are well maintained by pupils in Key Stage 2 with comments from teachers indicating where pupils need to improve and praising effort. Parents also comment in these books but contributions are inconsistent



as is the support for reading at home. Where this support is good it is often reflected in pupils' interest and enjoyment in reading.

73. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. There is evidence of an increasing range and purpose for writing by the end of the key stage, although the range of writing is too narrow in some classes. Pupils write confidently about their news, retell story, make glossaries and write about personal experiences. There is a good focus in both key stages on non-fiction writing. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make information books, draw diagrams and label plant parts in their seed investigation and write simple poetry about colours, for example. Good links are made with other subjects, for instance, when pupils in Year 2 write instructions for making masks. They have a good understanding of texts used in the literacy hour, reflected in follow-up worksheets. There is a good focus on spelling patterns such as 'ea' and 'ee' and skills in grammar and punctuation are developed systematically. Inconsistencies remain in handwriting and presentation skills and the neat style of some pupils in their practice book is not always reflected in other work. Skills in developing a legible cursive style are developing.

74. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in writing are below average although there is an improving trend in classes at the beginning of the key stage. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive effect on raising standards that are improving as pupils move through the school. However, for the oldest pupils, standards overall remain below average, with weaknesses in spelling a major drawback for most pupils, including a significant number of higher attainers. Pupils write for a good range of purpose and audience and are presented with imaginative and purposeful tasks. These include personal writing, formal accounts such as the visit to the Millennium Dome, stories, poetry, formal and informal letters. Throughout the school there is a very good focus on writing to present an argument, encouraging pupils to think more deeply and express opinions. There is also a good focus on the development of library and research skills. The majority of pupils confidently locate and retrieve information. Additional time provided for extended writing is encouraging pupils to write at greater length, but choice of vocabulary is limited for many pupils, and results in mundane and unexciting language. Writing on display shows good attention to other cultures with Indian story writing such as 'Manu's Magic Garden' and African texts, for example 'Bringing the rain to Kapiti Plain'. Good use is made of information technology to support pupils' writing and re-drafting of their work. There is a good focus on poetry writing and on a range of genres including non-fiction and some higher attaining skills such as note taking. Most pupils write in a cursive style but standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent, with a significant number of pupils having weaknesses in these skills. Many pupils work carelessly and with a lack of pride in their work.

75. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and in spite of difficulties make good progress towards their targets in individual education plans. In both key stages, pupils are making good progress, given prior levels of attainment on entry to school and when pupils join the school in Key Stage 2. In some of the withdrawal group work to focus on literacy skills, pupils are taught very well and make significant leaps forward in meeting their individual targets. One to one work to support spelling and phonic skills is very successfully helping these pupils gain considerably in their language and literacy skills.

76. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their work in literacy sessions. They respond with enthusiasm and most are keen to learn. Behaviour and attitudes are good, many pupils working with sustained concentration. Pupils are able to work together well in groups and are helpful towards others in the group. When the tasks are interesting and demanding,

this is reflected in the quality of pupils' work. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. It is good at Key Stage 2. In both key stages, good teaching was observed and on occasions teaching in Key Stage 2 was excellent. In the excellent practice observed in a drama lesson, the teaching methods inspired pupils to learn very successfully. The lively pace and exciting tasks motivated pupils well. In this lesson, the teacher's very high expectations led to exciting performance and excellent response from pupils. Very good links with history brought Egyptian history alive. Pupils entered the role of archaeologists and explorers with conviction and commitment. Imaginations were stretched and excellent learning resulted from their 'hands-on' experience inside a pyramid. The teacher's well-targeted questioning extended discussion, promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills very effectively. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in English but at times pace is an issue, with pupils not moved on at a sufficient rate, particularly higher attainers and pupils not working with a sense of urgency.

77. Very good subject co-ordination is a contributory factor to the improving standards in English. The two teachers work co-operatively and to good effect. Their knowledge and expertise is used well to support teaching and learning. Assessment strategies are securely in place and, through careful analysis of data from national tests and other information, teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do and the progress they are making. The setting of individual targets that incorporate weaknesses identified through assessment, are also helping to raise standards, although these are not much used to support learning across the curriculum. Targets are referred to through marking, but are not clearly indicated in pupils' work books. The standard of marking in English is very good in most cases, providing pupils with positive encouragement and indicating where they need to improve their work. The use of literacy across the curriculum varies between subjects, with a good focus on language but not enough attention to more extended writing skills, for example in history, geography and religious education. Resources are excellent for the literacy hour and contribute effectively to its success. The high standards of work on display celebrates pupils' achievements and enhances learning environments. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through drama, and sensitive attention to moral and social issues.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. The 1997 inspection report identified that standards in mathematics were below the expected level at the end of both key stages. In addition, few pupils attained the higher levels and most were slow to calculate problems mentally. The curriculum had gaps and teachers' subject knowledge was a weakness. Taken together, this led to problems in meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and inconsistent development of skills and knowledge. The school recognised and acted quickly on these weaknesses and when the school was revisited in late 1998 by Her Majesty's inspectors, steady improvement was noted. Today, most of the shortcomings have been eliminated and mathematics education is a developing strength of the school.

79. In the 1999 National tests, pupils' attainment was well below the average of all schools at the end of Key Stage 2. The situation was the same in relation to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. This pattern of attainment on paper was erratic over the two preceding years, although in real terms, the rate of improvement in Key Stage 2 mathematics national test results was similar to that found in most schools. At Key Stage 1, in 1999, standards in mathematics were well above the average found in all schools and in those of similar background. The year on year improvement in standards at

Key Stage 1 has been much sharper than found in most other schools and standards have risen from well below to well above average in the period from 1997 to 1999.

80. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher levels in national tests is below average in Key Stage 2 and well above average in Key Stage 1. The overall pattern of attainment reflects the different nature of classes in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In the latter stage, there is an influx of pupils with special educational needs which results in about a half of some classes having identified special needs. This impacts profoundly on standards, especially on the proportion of pupils who attain level 5. There are a few very capable mathematicians in school. Provision for them is generally satisfactory, although some teachers have difficulty in maintaining a consistent level of challenge because there is little formal guidance or policy in place to support these higher attainers.

81. The achievement of boys and girls is very similar at Key Stage 1, but there are significant differences in national test results at Key Stage 2. Overall, girls do rather better than the boys in this key stage, though both genders attain at lower than the expected level. Inspectors did not see too many signs of girls out-performing the boys, though on occasion, older boys are more easily distracted and their concentration lessens. This means they do not always make ideal progress.

82. During the inspection, there was much evidence to show how the school has worked tirelessly and very effectively to boost standards. Work done by the oldest pupils as they prepared for the national tests show a good progress and good standards in numeracy. Mathematics lessons are purposeful times of learning and pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates on the whole. Attainment is above the level found in most schools at the end of Key Stage 1. Whilst it is not as strong at the end of Key Stage 2, being below average overall, standards are appropriate at the age of eleven considering the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

83. The school has revised its targets for mathematics upwards this year to a challenging level. The targets for next academic year look to two thirds of all pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected level in mathematics. This will be in a year when just under a half of the pupils, on present count, will have special educational needs, including around a quarter with statements. In itself, this is good indication of the level of expectation. There is every possibility that it will meet these targets and in future years, converge on the national standard at the end of Key Stage 2. The support given to pupils with special educational needs by the support staff is of very good calibre and makes a positive contribution to their achievement.

84. The introduction and consolidation of the numeracy hour has brought many benefits to school, not least, the firm and systematic structure to work from class to class. It is evident that standards of basic numeracy are improving, though speed of calculation is not as hot as it could be. Teachers set few time-targets for completion of the work and few activities are done against the clock. On the other hand, there is clear focus on the method of working as well as the final result. This has advantages, as pupils are developing useful flexibility in calculation and the confidence to 'have a go'.

85. The mathematics curriculum is very well balanced and its breadth meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is particular emphasis on using and applying mathematics and pupils build problem solving and investigation skills well. Teachers are adept at creating good learning conditions in class and the overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Expectations are good, as shown in the work scrutiny which illustrated the consistent development of skills and knowledge through the school

and the sheer amount of work produced. There are no problems of teachers' subject knowledge or of class control, and all teachers teach with confidence and determination. Planning follows closely the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy to provide a cohesive programme of work. However, many teachers do not identify precisely enough what knowledge, skills and understanding are to be learned in lessons. The focus is more often on what will be done or what will be taught. This makes it harder to ensure that learning stays on track, that progress is uniform and good, and that attainment is at the highest level. Teachers do not often share the objectives for learning with the pupils and only very rarely do they review them in plenary sessions at the end of the lesson.

86. All forms of assessment are good, whether on a day-to-day basis or in formal end of section tests. The information produced by assessment is used well to make adjustment to the programme of work to keep it focused on all pupils' needs. This was seen in a Year 5/6 lesson where the teacher spent longer than originally planned on explaining the workings of the 24 hour clock because pupils had encountered many problems with timetables the previous day. Another indicator of the usefulness and impact of good assessment is to be found in the support given to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The support staff do a sterling job in helping, encouraging, urging and reinforcing the work of these pupils. The result is to be seen in the good progress made by these pupils and the good personal standard of work that they achieve. The setting and sharing of targets with pupils is at a very early stage of development and remains one way in which the school could improve further its already good assessment practice.

87. Because the quality of teaching is good throughout the school, pupils respond very positively. Learning takes place in purposeful surroundings and pupils put in good effort to complete the work. This impacts well on the consolidation and extension of skills and knowledge. Most pupils are able to work independently and in a mature and responsible way. Many pupils know clearly how well they are doing, though the extension of target setting and sharing in lessons would bolster this understanding. Standards of presentation fluctuate in books and some otherwise capable pupils in Year 5/6 present their work untidily in their enthusiasm to complete it in good time.

88. The successes of mathematics in recent years are due largely to the very good quality of management of the subject. The co-ordinator is very hard working, she is alert to the issues that face the school and has taken decisive and very effective action to support and guide staff in the development of good practice. This is a quality that the school can build on in developing its monitoring in other subjects. The co-ordinator is justifiably a leading mathematics teacher for the local authority.

## **SCIENCE**

89. In the last inspection report the standards in science were average at Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. Standards have improved since then. The steady improvement in standards since the last inspection has resulted from a careful and comprehensive analysis of test results made by the co-ordinator, a well-structured curriculum and confident teaching that enables pupils to learn successfully through practical first hand experiences. Setting arrangements in the early part of this year have helped to boost standards at the end of Key Stage 2.

90. The 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 showed well above average attainment in all aspects of the subject. The results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 were average. Results in science have been steadily improving since 1996. There is no significant variation between the results of boys and girls. Results are above average at eleven years when compared to similar schools.

91. Inspection evidence judges science standards to be average at both key stages, it also shows accelerated attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. There is a good match between activities and the range of pupils competency in science, including the significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Most of these pupils join the school during the later key stage and have good provision made for them through the good level of very effective support given by both class teachers and support staff.

92. In Key Stage 1, pupils have good practical experiences. They have ample opportunities for close observation. Mini beasts are studied in reception class and as the worms move in the soil the need for oxygen is recognised. Accurate comparisons are made of differences in size and speed of travel. Good quality facts are discovered about the worm's body and verbally recorded in accurate scientific language. At the end of the key stage as pupils consider the human body, as an organism there is increased use of accurate scientific language that is then recorded in writing. Pupils build upon their previous learning as they move around the classroom to fair test their accuracy in identifying different foods, reading from a chart at a distance, trying to discover by listening to materials in sealed tubs and touching and feeling objects in a concealed box. They then draw together their collective recorded knowledge. However, there is not enough opportunity at this key stage for pupils to decide upon their own recording formats and this is a missed opportunity.

93. Attention to recording improves at Key Stage 2 when pupils are enabled to take responsibility for presenting their scientific findings. At Key Stage 2 pupils are given appropriate opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of humans as organisms. In a Year 3 and 4 mixed age class the different ages of pupils are used to particularly good effect as pupils compare the differences in skeletal form according to age. Science experiences are further developed at the end of the key stage as pupils work in pairs to investigate heart and pulse rates in very well organised practical sessions. There is also particularly effective support given to pupils with special educational needs by the special needs co-ordinator that ensures their full involvement and understanding of the activities they engage in.

94. Progress is good across both key stages. Pupils learn particularly well in developing their knowledge and understanding through investigative work. They invariably show good levels of concentration because they are involved in imaginatively interesting tasks. They make sophisticated responses in whole class discussions that follow up their paired and small group work. They listen well to one another and make very sensible contributions to support one another's learning.

95. Attitudes in science are good. Where teaching is best attitudes are very good. Pupils establish good working relationships with one another in small groups and paired work, which is a regular feature of work in science. They gain maximum benefit from this collaborative work. At the end of Key Stage 2 they organise themselves well and have very mature attitudes to completing their tasks successfully.

96. Teaching is consistently good across both key stages. There is some particularly effective teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. Where teaching is best there is secure subject knowledge and imaginative task setting. Discussions are led by teachers systematically so that pupils have a clear pathway to develop their thinking. Teachers ask open-ended questions that further promote thoughtful pupil responses. Lessons are managed well with sensitive interventions made to assist learning. Support staff are well deployed and make a particularly effective contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers work at a good pace that supports pupils well in developing their scientific skills.

97. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has supported staff in developing the appropriate scheme of work. The co-ordinator has used the budget carefully in order to provide good quality resources that are readily available to teachers. Good use is made of areas outside class bases in order to increase the effectiveness of the investigative work that is central to the improvement in science. However, there is not enough opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in science in order to give appropriate leadership to raising standards even further.

## **ART**

98. At the time of the last inspection, standards were good at the end of key stages and good progress was made throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 built upon the good start experienced in Key Stage 1. Standards in art have been sustained throughout both key stages and are above what would normally be expected at both key stages. Progress remains good as a result of the good teaching and the expert leadership of a well-qualified and informed co-ordinator. Pupils have a sound understanding of the work of a range of famous artists in both key stages. They are given good opportunities to experience a wide range of techniques and media to develop their creative skills. There is good evidence of two-dimensional and three-dimensional work throughout the school but the systematic use of sketchbooks has not been adequately developed. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit greatly from the value that is placed upon art as a medium of communication and reach high standards where teaching is most effective.

99. In Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to very sophisticated techniques of using view finders to enlarge patterns before they use clay, pencil and paint to transfer the pattern on to cartridge paper. They carry out the task with good measures of self-confidence and with well-sustained measures of concentration. There are very good opportunities provided for pupils to use art across the curriculum. For example in Year 2 their work on "The owl and the pussycat" in literacy is developed in science by work on the material that would be best to use to waterproof the pea green boat. This is well illustrated in a two-dimensional display combining paint and materials. There are also interesting links to the work of artists as they paint in the style of Picasso. Opportunities to work with visiting artists underpin the standards achieved at this key stage and result in very good three-dimensional models such as snowmen. Pupil interest in art at this key stage is much enhanced by the art club where pupils' work together to produce art such as the combination of the techniques of sponge painting and block printing. This results in creative pieces of work to a high standard.

100. In Key Stage 2, pupils benefit from working with extremely high quality resources. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 look in detail at textures as they link their work to their history study of the Tudor period. They consider the Holbein portrait of Henry Tudor and draw keyhole pictures in pencil looking in detail and demonstrating good observational skills. They are able to do this well because they have considered the elements of portraiture in some depth throughout the school year. They have previously created portraits of themselves

and friends using pencil, pastel and crayon. This style of work is further developed in Years 5 and 6 as they create portraits in the style of Modigliani in pastels and chalks. Dimension is added to work at the end of this key stage as faces and masks are made from clay in sculpture form. Observational work in studying African artefacts results in a whole range of art being produced in African imagery form. This includes block prints and batik work of good quality.

101. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. They are constantly encouraged to improve their skills in art. The use of a wide range of media is very supportive. It is also enhanced through building upon skills systematically. The further enhancement of such a systematic approach to making progress is not channelled through use of sketchbooks.

102. Attitudes to art are very positive. Good attitudes become very good ones where interest and enjoyment levels are high. Pupils work with care and enthusiasm. They take great pride in their work. They work together well and are happily prepared to share the good quality resources. Behaviour is good as a result of the good variety of tasks that sustain the pupils' interest. The art experiences make a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development as well as their personal development.

103. Teaching is consistently good across both key stages. Where teaching is particularly effective at the end of Key Stage 2 subject knowledge is secure and tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities. Art is imaginatively resourced with a wide range of materials such as clay and willow as well as the more usual range of paints. Teachers extend pupils knowledge of making different forms of art through this resourcing and their sensitive interventions to learning. The interventions do not constrain creativity but ensure the meeting of high teacher expectations.

104. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. There is a constant consideration given to how work can be improved through updating the policy and scheme of work that is already in place. A portfolio of work enables continuity and progression in learning to be evaluated. The good use of visiting artists enhances the art curriculum. The display of art throughout the school ensures that pupils understand the value of art and the value that is placed upon their work in art. It also supports the creation of a stimulating learning environment and promotes well the cultural diversity of different art-forms that they can appreciate.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Pupils did not have enough opportunities to develop the full range of skills and knowledge in design and technology at the time of the previous inspection. In 1997, all factors pointed to weak standards and slack rates of progress, though the lack of key evidence in the form of lesson observation, scrutiny of work and inconclusive discussion with pupils made a final judgement on standards and progress impractical. A key statement in that report indicated that the school could not demonstrate satisfactory provision for design and technology. As in the case of some other subjects, school management tackled the weaknesses with determination following that report and provision, standards and teaching in design and technology have all improved considerably.

106. There is much evidence that points to the fact that pupils attain the expected standard in design and technology by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. Additionally, it is clear that pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates on the whole and that these apply as much to the plan, design and evaluate stages of the work as they do to the make phase. Pupils experience all that is design and technology, not just the immediately

attractive part of making things. The challenge provided, for the highest achievers could be sharpened though, as at present there are few taxing extension activities planned for them. On the other hand, a strength of provision is to be found in the way that experience in the subject is closely dovetailed to work in history, science, mathematics and art. Skills that are common to two or more subjects are drawn out well in this way. Additionally, pupils' literacy skills are promoted well in the subject because there is a universal expectation that pupils will write to demonstrate and explain their ideas, knowledge and plans. This applies as much to pupils with special educational needs as it does to the others and the impact of the work of the non teaching staff is very good here.

107. Teaching is good in both key stages. The staff often work together as a team in design technology lessons and this ensures that pupils are well controlled, working purposefully and have the appropriate opportunities to complete worthwhile tasks. Expectations are good and skills and knowledge are taught well. Planning sometimes lacks precise enough focus on what is to be learned in lessons and assessment is often ad-hoc. Pupils respond to the good provision by trying hard, concentrating well and working responsibly. Design technology lessons are pleasant experiences and the work produced shows good insight and knowledge of products and their design and use. The oldest pupils also suggest clearly how they could improve their result.

108. Design and technology is well led and occupies an appropriate place in the curriculum. The school has succeeded in balancing the provision for the subject against the priorities of the core subjects. This is largely because design and technology is well integrated into work in other subjects. Monitoring and assessment require more development and together, improvement in these will assist the staff to identify and refine the remaining inconsistencies in the subject and help apply the strengths of provision in design technology to other foundation subjects that do not benefit from the same curriculum balance.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. At the time of the previous inspection standards in geography were below average, teaching was unsatisfactory and there was no scheme of work. These issues have been addressed appropriately and are no longer causes for concern. An issue raised about the time available to study topics deeply, is still on the school's agenda, as part of the planning for Curriculum 2000. Weaknesses in assessment and monitoring of the subject have yet to be addressed although some good marking of pupils' work was seen and reports to parents do indicate progress made.

110. Standards of work seen in lessons and in completed work are broadly similar to those achieved by other seven-year-olds and by the age of eleven. However older pupils in particular should be expected to produce more extended pieces of writing and improve the quality of presentation. In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to learn about geographical features as they make models and label them to indicate key features. They begin to learn about the link between climate, habitat and lifestyle and understand how plants and animals vary according to environment. By the end of Key Stage 1 they can identify differences in land use, are familiar with signs and symbols used in maps and can observe the weather and write their own weather forecast. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have studied a number of different areas and countries and can, for example, compare and contrast facilities in Birmingham and Shrewsbury. They study the life-cycle of a river and this provides a good



link with work in history on Ancient Egypt. Some of the best work seen resulted from an in depth study which included a residential visit to Arthog in North Wales.

111. Pupils enjoy work in geography and respond positively to the good opportunities for hands-on experiences. For example, they make models, maps and plans, study the local environment and find out about land use along the river, practise orienteering in the school grounds, undertake independent research in the library or from CD ROM and use computer programs to make their own maps. Knowledge and understanding is secure but sometimes, pupils particularly in Key Stage 2 need to take more time and care in how they present their work. Pupils with special educational needs work well in geography because they are well supported and the emphasis on practical work means they make good progress and are not disadvantaged by their lack of literacy skills.

112. Teaching is good overall. The main strengths in teaching are the enthusiasm of teachers that motivates children to want to find out more, the emphasis on practical learning activities and the good use of resources. Teachers manage pupils well and lessons move briskly on. Planning is too often focused on the activity and experiences to be offered rather than identifying what the range of pupils will be expected to know, understand and do by the end of the lesson. Teachers and support staff work closely together and this ensures good support for all pupils but particularly those with special educational needs. However lesson planning and assessment are weak because the scheme of work does not give sufficient emphasis to skill development. The present scheme meets the broad requirements of the National Curriculum but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about different countries and communities although the school is hoping to develop, through the Internet, a link with Uganda. The school is aware of the need to revise the current scheme of work and this is a priority in the school development plan. The co-ordinator is actively considering improvements to the scheme of work but currently has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning.

## **HISTORY**

113. At the time of the previous inspection standards were unsatisfactory at both key stages, and although teaching was satisfactory the overall impact was unsatisfactory because of inadequate planning, insufficient time and no scheme of work. These issues have been addressed appropriately and are no longer causes for concern. Weaknesses in assessment and monitoring of the subject have yet to be addressed. The current time available for history is in need of review if sufficient depth of study is to be enabled. Nevertheless the marking of work in history is sometimes of good quality and reports to parents do indicate progress being made.

114. Standards achieved at the end of both key stages, in lessons and completed work are at a similar level to those seen in many primary schools. However pupils do best in oral work, for example, in Key Stage 1 when looking at a collection of toys, deciding how old they are and what they can deduce about the owners. These skills are built on in Years 3 and 4 when pupils look at portraits of Queen Elizabeth 1 and discuss what evidence they provide about her character. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can study a range of artefacts, texts and CD ROM, gather information and discuss the validity and reliability of evidence about the past. But pupils' ability to record what they know and understand is not as well developed and although there are some good written accounts of the Fire of London and diary writing about World War 2 this is an area where more could be achieved. Pupils construct time-lines and there is good evidence of pupils adding additional information as a result of work at home. Pupils also record evidence by drawing. The youngest pupils draw old toys, by Year 3 pupils are drawing Tudor buildings and in Year six

Ancient Egyptian artefacts. Pupils' knowledge about the range of sources for history is very good because teachers' constantly ask, 'How do we know?'

115. Pupils enjoy work in history, they are eager to examine artefacts and do so with great care. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to interview a dinner lady about her early life in the 1940's. At Key Stage 2 pupils respond positively to the good opportunities to explore the local area and worked hard to study, "Old Shrobsbury". They act responsibly when researching information in the library and by Year 6 can mount their own work and make individual topic books. There are good links between history and design and technology and this means pupils can use what they know about old toys to make modern versions. Pupils in Year 1 tackled this problem with enthusiasm, ingenuity and determination. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the opportunities to find things out in a practical way and because they are well supported make good progress. Older statemented pupils are helped to record what they know about the Ancient Egyptians and in this way are enabled to produce individual topic books along with the rest of the class.

116. Teaching overall is good. Some teaching is very good particularly when Year 6 studied the Ancient Egyptian views of the after-life. The main strengths in teaching are the enthusiasm of teachers that inspire children to want to find out more, the emphasis on practical learning activities and the good use of artefacts and resources. Lesson planning lacks precision and this means that sometimes too little is demanded of higher attaining pupils. Drama is well used to help pupils understand the past. Teachers manage pupils well and lessons move briskly on. Occasionally independent activities are not well devised as they sometimes do more to reinforce literacy skills than history skills as in a Year 3-4 lesson on Queen Elizabeth 1. Teachers and support staff work closely together and this ensures good support for all pupils but particularly those with special educational needs. However lesson planning and assessment are weak because the scheme of work does not give sufficient emphasis to skill development. Although the present scheme meets the broad requirements of the National Curriculum the school has identified the need to revise it in the light of Curriculum 2000 and has identified history as a priority subject in the school development plan. The co-ordinator is actively considering improvements to the scheme of work but currently has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. At the time of the last inspection, information technology was evidently a subject of low priority and focus. Inspectors were not able to judge standards or teaching because so little information technology was taught. The curriculum lacked systematic structure and the development of skills and knowledge in the subject was incidental to the development of the cross-curricular topic that was the focus of the work. The chief strength identified was the level of resourcing, which was judged to be satisfactory. The September 1998 revisit by Her Majesty's inspectors flagged that information technology was not reflected enough in planning of other subjects or given suitable timetable allocation and that the subject continued to fall short of the statutory requirements. It is evident today that, taken in total, the school has made good progress in rectifying the weaknesses to provide more determination and success in the teaching of information technology, although the use of information technology to support communication in most subjects, is under-developed.

118. This year, standards in information technology are satisfactory overall at the end of both key stages. Pupils demonstrated a range of achievements during the inspection depending on their previous experience. Those who have computers at home are able to complete homework tasks with material found on CD ROM and the Internet. Those who do

not have such access start from a lower base of skills and knowledge but the school does an effective job in ensuring that all pupils are taught how to use technology in efficient ways. Attendance at the twice weekly out of hours Computer Club has had good impact on the standards achieved and displays of work completed at these times shows above average attainment. During timetabled lessons, skills and knowledge are built well, although the total range of experience varies from class to class within the same year groups. This was especially noticeable in the work scrutiny where attainment in some Key Stage 2 classes was higher than in parallel ones because the intensity and range of computer use was greater. At present, computers in class rooms are not used to maximum effect, largely because teachers are reviewing their use now that the computer suite is operational. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in information technology lessons and they keep up with fellow pupils and progress at the same rate. Occasionally, pupils with special educational needs learn at a very good rate, for example when working with software that asks for words to be spelt correctly at speed and then plays a tune to reward good accuracy.

119. Teaching of the subject has many strengths, but there are also a number of aspects that would stand enhancement. In total, teaching is good in both key stages and this results in purposeful learning. The level of staff knowledge and confidence has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Expectations are also good and for much of the time, levels of challenge are generally demanding. There are some occasions when the high attainers complete the set task and then have little to tax them further while the majority complete their work. The school is developing an amended programme of work, based on government guidelines, and attention to provision for such high attainers will be a timely addition. Lesson planning is thorough, though the identification of precise learning objectives is inconsistent and so measures to ensure that pupils remain on course to achieve at appropriate levels are not as effective as they could be. There is no cross school assessment of information technology, although provision of such a tool is a key priority at present.

120. Pupils enjoy their tasks in information technology and work hard. Behaviour is good and relationships are very advanced. Most pupils work independently and show growing maturity and responsibility as they grow older. Skills and knowledge are built at a good rate and pupils develop confidence and dexterity in handling different forms of technology such as computers, cameras and audio recorders. Pupils with special educational needs benefit as much as other pupils from the work in information technology because of the very successful assistance given by support staff.

121. The curriculum for information technology meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils have the necessary opportunities to investigate the power of computers to process data, combine text and graphics to produce eye catching documents, control machines, communicate across the world at speed and monitor processes. The school is well resourced for information technology and can offer a complete programme of work to equip the pupils with the skills to help them cope in the technological world in which they live.

122. The subject manager has done a good job of boosting provision and the quality of teaching in information technology. She recognises that there are still things to be done and approaches these with cheerful determination. Monitoring of the subject requires further enhancement so that the remaining inconsistencies can be ironed out. It is evident that

information technology has come a long way in school since the last inspection and that the future holds bright prospects.

## **MUSIC**

123. The last inspection indicated that national standards were met and that although progress was sound at Key Stage 1 it was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. The amount of teaching time varied with some Key Stage 2 classes having no music indicated on their timetables so there was not equal access for pupils. Standards are now at the level expected for pupils' ages at the end of both key stages. Pupils have opportunities to involve themselves in music making in all classes, including some instrumental tuition. This is provided by visiting specialists and some class teachers, including the co-ordinator. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

124. In Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to dynamics in music through singing together in reception class. They enjoy singing songs together tunefully putting good inflection into their voices. They use actions with enthusiasm that support them in developing their understanding of changes in rhythm. At the end of the key stage their understanding of rhythm-patterns is extended as they compose rhythms in pairs and perform them for one another with good levels of skill. Some are able to use conventional musical notation whilst others use their own symbols or words to record their compositions. They join together to share their work appropriately as they link their own rhythms into a whole class sequence. There is also further opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils to develop their instrumental skills as they play violins very well with a member of the local authority music team. They also participate enthusiastically from an early age, and with good levels of vocal skill and performance, in the school choir.

125. In Key Stage 2, pupils have continuing opportunities to create music with visiting teachers of woodwind and brass instruments and playing recorders with the co-ordinator and two other members of staff. Pupils from all year groups in this key stage are involved in these activities. At the end of the key stage in class lessons pupils are able to join knowledge of pitch, dynamics and rhythm together as they listen and appraise a variety of music. They complete their lesson by performing together having listened with care and perception to music from 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. The opportunities to work together are effectively reinforced when they join with Key Stage 1 pupils in the choir. Again the choice of songs in a weekly music appreciation assembly is varied and sophisticated. They sing some demanding songs such as 'Castle in the clouds' from the musical 'Les Miserables' with good measures of self-confidence. Pupils in this key stage are also given appropriate opportunities to join in playing as an orchestra as an extra curricular activity. All pupils learning instruments are part of the orchestra and they play together skilfully.

126. As a result of this good range of opportunities progress is good across both key stages with very good progress when they sing together. They pay good attention to developing their skills. They pitch voices accurately and give particularly effective attention to using their voices as instruments with loud and quiet singing according to the requirements of songs. They make good contributions to one another's overall knowledge of music as they support and interact with one another well.

127. Attitudes to music are positive. They work purposefully with good levels of concentration. They listen carefully and demonstrate enjoyment in their music making. Behaviour is good as all pupils are involved in music making in groups and whole classes and this has a positive impact upon their personal development. These experiences also make an effective contribution towards pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

128. Teaching is good across both key stages, and very good where there is specialist teaching by visiting and class teachers. Where teaching is best there is secure subject knowledge shown by teachers in their well-planned lessons. An imaginative use of activities are matched to pupils' needs and levels of ability accurately. Teachers are good role models as they join in with the activities and set high standards for pupils to aspire to. They make effective use of good resources. They ask open-ended questions that draw out thoughtful responses from pupils. They maintain good pace to learning. Teachers monitor work well to ensure the involvement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils with special needs often receive extra support from well-deployed support staff so that they can join in with equal amounts of enjoyment and pleasure.

129. There is good leadership of music by the co-ordinator. There is an appropriate policy and scheme of work to support all staff. However, there is not enough opportunity to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of work in music across the school. Resources are of good quality and adequate quantity. They are stored centrally so that they are readily accessible to teachers and pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130. The strengths identified in the physical education curriculum have all been sustained. Standards at Key Stage 1 remain satisfactory and are now good at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Only games lessons were observed during the week of inspection.

131. The curriculum plans show full coverage of all aspects of the subject. A nationally recognised award scheme is used to assess and reward success in athletics. Dance tends to be developed at times to support other activities such as Christmas celebrations. Summer sports are assisted by Shrewsbury Youth team who come into school to take groups for volleyball, cricket, circuit and trim-track training and parachute games for example. There are missed opportunities for pupils to develop skills in self-evaluation and in Key Stage 1 there is insufficient time allowed for pupils to improve and refine their performance however. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate support that ensures they have full access to lessons and are well integrated.

132. The school's assessment shows that good standards are achieved in swimming by the time pupils leave the school. Key Stage 2 pupils receive regular swimming lessons during the year, with almost every pupil able to swim at least twenty-five metres by the time they leave the school. In outdoor games lessons, Year 6 pupils demonstrate good skills in rounders, with a good proportion demonstrating accurate throwing and catching skills that are better than would be expected for this age group in many cases. Pupils work well in teams and in indoor games. For example in a Year 4 lesson, pupils worked co-operatively in teams and were competent in the skills of 'benchball', passing accurately, although not all have developed secure footwork. In all of these activities the importance of rules for safety are appropriately emphasised and understood by all.

133. In all the lessons observed most pupils responded well to their teachers, following instructions speedily and with good humour. Pupils take turns without fuss, use space sensibly and work with sustained effort.

134. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 1 involving travelling with a beanbag, too little was demanded of pupils by the teacher and the pace of learning was too slow because of problems concerning the management of behaviour.

135. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. It is good in Key Stage 2. Lessons begin with a suitable 'warm-up' activity in most cases. In the best teaching there is good emphasis on the systematic development of skills with good opportunity to use skills acquired in appropriate team games. In the weaker teaching, the slow lesson pace and low expectations result in unsatisfactory progress and behaviour.

136. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the excellent range of extracurricular activities and exciting opportunities, particularly for older pupils who enjoy the chance of residential experiences in Years 5 and 6. Opportunities include football, netball, cross-country and rounders. Pupils regularly take part in inter-school and County level tournaments. The very good quality of outdoor facilities makes a very positive contribution to the quality of education provided. Physical education is efficiently managed and well resourced. Though the co-ordinator does not routinely see teachers' planning and has not had the opportunity to observe actual lessons. Assessment is one aspect of provision that is weak and the co-ordinator is aware that it requires development to help plan the development of skills more consistently.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. At the time of the previous inspection standards were unsatisfactory at both key stages, teaching was good but because not enough time was available for religious education, learning was incoherent and many aspects of the syllabus were not covered. These issues have been addressed appropriately and are no longer causes for concern but there remains an imbalance in the programme for religious education. This is because although pupils learn much from religion about how to conduct their lives they are less knowledgeable about religions. Weaknesses in assessment and monitoring of the subject have yet to be addressed. Religious education is not given its full status as core subject in terms of its priority rating in the school's development plan. The same person has responsibility for co-ordinating the core subjects of mathematics and religious education, and this workload places too much demand for successful management of both.

138. Work seen in lessons and work in pupils' books is more limited but similar in quality to that seen in most primary schools and is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The thematic approach means that pupils are learning a set of moral principles by which to live a good life. This is beneficial and contributes well to the quality of relationships, sense of calm and orderliness seen at the school. Pupils explore friendship and what makes a good leader, ways to remember and celebrate. They show great sensitivity and respect for the many confidences shared by their peers in discussion. Pupils in Year 6 are keen to plan a celebration to welcome their class teacher's new baby. However, particularly at Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge about religions is not as well-developed as it should be. For example they sometimes confuse the rituals and places of worship associated with different religions.

139. Pupils in Key Stage 1 listen to stories from the Bible and record 'What I know about God'. The best pieces of work show good insight into beliefs about God. Pupils make booklets about favourite places and record the reasons why they are special. They begin to learn about Judaism and clothes special to Christianity. In lower Key Stage 2 pupils think about the significance of light as a religious symbol and about the leadership qualities of Jesus and other religious teachers. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know what a religious site is and why people visit them as pilgrims. They think about the journey of life from birth to death and consider ways in which we remember the significant events and people we know.

140. Most pupils enjoy the opportunity to explore ideas and relationships in lessons but just occasionally some older pupils, mostly boys, appear easily distracted and contribute little to the discussion. Some of the best work examined involved the re-telling of Bible stories such as the Good Samaritan in a modern way to make the meaning clear today. The positive response of pupils to first hand experiences such as when they visited the Sikh temple or Shrewsbury Abbey, or took part in a Diwali festival is well-recorded.

141. Teaching overall is good but is best at Key Stage 2. The main strengths in teaching are the emphasis on discussion and personal response, the effective management of pupils and the good use of contributions made by pupils from their own experience. Lessons typically begin with a whole class session followed by independent or group activities. Lesson planning needs to be improved because the first part of the lesson is sometimes more effective than the second part as the follow-up activities are not always of sufficient quality, particularly to stretch the higher attaining pupils. Teachers and support staff work closely together and this ensures good support for all pupils but particularly those with special educational needs. Assessment is unsatisfactory although marking is sometimes good. As little recording is done, for example, in Year 1 simple ways need to be found to collect evidence of learning.