

INSPECTION REPORT

RIDGEWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chasetown

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124214

Headteacher: Mrs. L. Tibbetts

Reporting inspector: Mrs. K. Halifax
25439

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th September 2000

Inspection number: 224665

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: 5 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Grange Road
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Staffordshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. T. Hancox

Date of previous inspection: 23 September 1996

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		Design and technology	School's results and achievements
		Physical Education	How well are pupils taught?
		Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Jennifer Madden 13450	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Arthur Allison 31175	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information technology	
Jennifer Clayphan 20230	Team inspector	English	
		Music	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
Shirley Herring 29504	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ridgeway Primary School is a community infant and junior school that is maintained by Staffordshire Education Authority. Pupils come from the immediate area which consists of a mixture of privately owned and council housing. With 315 pupils on roll it is larger than most primary schools. The population is predominantly white and all pupils speak English as their main language. There are 34 pupils on the school's own register for pupils with special educational needs, which is below average for primary schools. Five pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Twelve percent of pupils receive free school meals. Whilst these figures are low the number of pupils with special educational needs and those entitled to free schools meals increased with the school taking pupils from two nearby schools which closed. Attainment on entry to the school is variable. Overall it is below that expected of children of this age.

The inspection took place in the second week of the school year. At that time three teachers were new to the school and six teachers had new responsibilities or were teaching pupils of a different age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Since the appointment of the present headteacher and as a result of good teaching there has been good progress in the results of national tests over the past two years. However, because the results were so low in the past pupils still do not do as well as those from schools with pupils from a similar background. Pupils are well behaved. The school is well led and managed in a cost-effective way. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress. The school is becoming more effective and is improving at a good rate. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good this is reflected in pupils' learning.
- The vision and drive of the headteacher is leading the school forward.
- The Education for Sustainability work undertaken by pupils and staff and makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- Close links with support services ensures good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' behave well, relationships are good. This contributes to pupils' progress.
- Links with parents, particularly the focus weeks, enable pupils, parents and staff to work together for the good of the community.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology across the school.
- The attainment of more able pupils in mathematics.
- The hazards in the grounds caused by continuous vandalism by local youths.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Despite a changing population, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection in September 1996. All the key issues identified at the time of the inspection have been addressed. The school has undertaken a full review which has resulted in a major reorganisation of staffing, roles and responsibilities. The governing body has set up committees that are working well. Pupils are now offered a wider range of learning experiences and pupils of all ages and abilities have good opportunities to develop their research and investigative skills. Curriculum planning has been reviewed and reorganised with the result that whole-school planning has improved. The method and quality of medium-term planning have improved teachers' weekly planning and ensured continuity in the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils acquire. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. At the time of the previous inspection, 17 percent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. There was only one lesson unsatisfactory during this inspection. Improved teaching has raised standards for older pupils in line with those expected nationally of eleven-year-olds. The targets set for this school year have been exceeded. Numerous improvements to the buildings and the grounds have enriched learning opportunities. The school has the systems and structures in place to continue to improve.

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*	C	D	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	D	E	
Science	E	E	C	D	

The end of Key Stage 1 national test results in English have improved over the last three years. Results in mathematics declined in 1999 as a result of the number of less able pupils in the group. Pupils' performance was not as good as that of schools for pupils from similar backgrounds. However in the 2000 national tests every pupil attained the required level for seven-year-olds in mathematics. Results in English have also shown good improvement. Inspection findings show that, taking into account prior attainment, pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 and are achieving standards in line with those expected nationally in these subjects.

Until 1999, the results of national tests for eleven-year-olds were very low. In 1998 less than one quarter of pupils achieved the expected level in English and only one third of pupils achieved that level in mathematics. Pupils' performance in science was closer to the average. Significant progress was made by pupils in the 1999 national tests with 68 percent achieving the expected level in English and 80 percent achieving the required level in science. These results were broadly in line with the national average. Although the mathematics results were not in line with national average, 62 percent achieved the desired level. The results of the 2000 national tests have improved further, with 78 percent achieving the expected level in English, 69 percent in mathematics and 84 percent in science. Overall, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are achieving in line with the national expectation. Whilst pupils' performance is not quite as good as that of schools for pupils from similar backgrounds, taking pupils' prior attainment into account, pupils in this age group are now judged to be making good progress. Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected at the end of both key stages. More able pupils do not always do as well as they could in mathematics because they do not have enough opportunities to explain their reasoning and sometimes the work is too easy for them. Standards in all other subjects are satisfactory other than in geography and physical education where they are higher than would be expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved in and around the school. They are polite and courteous and take care of the school and their possessions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils respond very well to opportunities for personal development. They readily help their teachers and each other.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils arrive at school on time. This makes a good start to the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. During the inspection, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen and this was by a teacher who also taught satisfactory and good lessons during the inspection week. Teaching was satisfactory in 29 percent of lessons, good in 60 percent of lessons and very good in 10 percent of lessons. This is reflected in the quality of learning with pupils making good gains in their knowledge and skills. The very good teaching was spread across the key stages and was in a number of subjects. Teaching for children in the reception classes was never less than good and on occasion very good. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. Teaching in mathematics is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers of all age groups provide useful opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, including specialist teaching by visiting local authority tutors. As a result they make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In addition to studying the required subjects, pupils have good opportunities to learn to become good citizens and protect the environment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive good support from staff at the school and from local authority support services. This contributes to their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Whilst pupils have many opportunities to appreciate their own cultural heritage, they are not well prepared for living in a multi-cultural society. Pupils have too few opportunities for quiet reflection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school cares about its pupils, however there are a number of safety issues in the grounds. Pupils receive appropriate support and guidance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The drive of the headteacher is instrumental in moving the school forward. Many key staff are new to their posts but they have very clear ideas about how the school can improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are very supportive of the school and are rapidly rising to their role. However, they are not fully involved in assuring quality through applying the principles of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Staff and governors analyse test results and plan how standards can be improved further.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has a good number of suitably qualified staff. The generous accommodation is well maintained. Resources are satisfactory and are used well. Specific grants are used appropriately and the school investigates all possible sources of finance.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's commitment to the environment • The improvements in the school over the last two years. • Their child's progress in reading. • Provision for pupils with special educational needs. • The opportunity for parents to join in family meals and Focus Weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils are expected to do at home. • The rate of progress of pupils of the same age but in different classes. • Classes which mix pupils of different ages • Standards in information technology.

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concerns, the amount of work pupils are expected to do at home is adequate for pupils of this age. The school recognises standards in information and communication technology are lower than they should be and is taking steps to remedy this. Pupils of the same age but in different classes make the same rate of progress. The school is gradually reducing the number of mixed age classes and pupils work in single age groups for numeracy and literacy. At the time of the inspection pupils in mixed age classes were receiving suitable work and making good progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment on entry to the school for most children was in line with that expected of children of this age with a significant number achieving at a higher level. Following the closure of two schools, the area which the school serves has changed since the last inspection. For the past two years, Staffordshire Education Authority's assessment on entry shows that attainment is variable and, whilst some children's attainment is average, overall attainment on entry to the school is below that which would be expected. Despite this children make good progress in the reception classes and many attain the desired standards by the time they enter Key Stage 1.
2. The end of Key Stage 1 national test results in English have improved over the last three years. Results in mathematics declined in 1999 as a result of the number of less able pupils in the group. Pupils' performance was not as good as that of schools for pupils from similar backgrounds. However in the 2000 national tests every pupil attained the required level for seven-year-olds in mathematics. Results in English have also shown good improvement. Almost one third of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Inspection findings show that, taking into account prior attainment, pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 and are achieving standards in line with those expected nationally in these subjects.
3. Until 1999, the results of national tests for eleven-year-olds were very low. For example in 1998 less than one quarter of pupils achieved the expected level in English and only one third of pupils achieved it level in mathematics. Pupils' performance in science was closer to the average. Significant progress was made by pupils in the 1999 national tests with 68 percent achieving the expected level in English and 80 percent achieving it in science. These results were broadly in line with the national average. Although the mathematics results were not in line with national average, 62 percent achieved the desired level. The results of the 2000 national tests have improved further with 78 percent achieving the expected level in English, 69 percent in mathematics and 84 percent in science. To date the results of national tests have not been moderated and there is no published national average with which to make comparisons. Similarly the number of pupils attaining the higher level 5 has improved significantly. In 1998 less than one percent of pupils achieved the higher level in English, with three percent in mathematics and no pupils in science. In the 2000 tests, almost one quarter of pupils attained the higher level 5 in all three subjects. At the time of the previous inspection whilst levels of attainment were "sound" a substantial number of pupils were judged to be underachieving. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 are achieving in line with the national expectation. Whilst pupils' performance is not quite as good as that of schools for pupils from similar backgrounds, taking prior attainment into account, pupils in this age group are now judged to be making good progress.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. This is because of the specialist support they receive both in class and when withdrawn for individual or small group work.

5. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well in all subjects and attain standards in line with those expected by the end of both key stages. Most are eager to engage in conversation. However a few pupils in both key stages speak using single words as opposed to phrase or sentences. Pupils know to wait for their turn to speak and use their listening skills well as when listening to instructions and moving to the beat of the music in physical education. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 when speaking in front of a group, for example at the School Council meeting. Pupils in both key stages use their skills well when reviewing lessons and when taking part in assemblies.
6. Standards in reading are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make steady progress through shared and guided reading. They develop a range of strategies to help them read new words and some are beginning to read with expression. Pupils in Key Stage 2 read a range of books with good levels of understanding. Older pupils state their preferences and opinions, referring to the text when doing so. Pupils of all ages and abilities use their reading skills effectively in other lessons, such as reading work sheets in history and religious education and when researching individual topics. Pupils write with increasing confidence and attain satisfactory standards as they write for a range of purposes, for example, letters, play scripts and imaginative writing. Pupils improve their handwriting as they get older and by the age of eleven pupils have developed legible joined up handwriting. Pupils write using ink and many take pride in the presentation of their work. As pupils pass through the school, they write increasingly complex sentences. However, spelling is not always accurate.
7. Overall standards in mathematics are now satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 regular counting practice, good use of a number line and appropriate practical activities ensure that pupils build up confidence. By the end of the key stage, pupils of all abilities are recording their work at an appropriate level. More able pupils move on to work with larger numbers and make good progress in solving problems, whilst suitable emphasis is placed on improving the counting and addition skills for lower attaining pupils. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory through Key Stage 2, with accelerated progress for older pupils. Though scrutiny of pupils' work for last year indicates that progress was less marked in Year 3, lesson observations show that this is no longer the case. Emphasis on the teaching of numeracy skills and regular practice ensures that the majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils, resulting in fewer pupils than might be expected achieving the higher levels.
8. Pupils make good progress in their scientific knowledge and satisfactory progress in their investigative skills. Standards in science are in line with those expected nationally by the end of both key stages. As pupils move through the school they increase their scientific vocabulary and make good gains in their knowledge of living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Work is recorded in a variety of ways and pupils are beginning to understand the need for their investigations to be fair.
9. Attainment in information and communication technology is below that expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. The school has only very recently taken delivery of a number of machines. Though pupils have made some progress in using a range of software and know the functions of parts of the computer such as keyboard, mouse and monitor, many need adult support when using the technology. Keyboard skills are at a basic level with many pupils using only one finger. Whilst a number of pupils are able to save their work, many need help to retrieve and print it.

Limited computer skills reduce the effectiveness of learning in some subjects for example, literacy. Older pupils are beginning to use a range of programs to produce letters, greetings cards and concert programmes. Pupils of all ages are starting to use CDROM and the Internet to research topics such as the Egypt.

10. Standards achieved in religious education are in line with those of the Staffordshire Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of both key stages. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and awareness of Christianity and some of the other major world faiths. Key Stage 1 pupils recognise that everyone is special and that Christians celebrate special occasions such as weddings, birthdays and Christenings. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have an awareness of the importance of holidays and festivals of several faiths, such as Christmas, Hanukah and Diwali. They compare places of worship and holy books and show respect for the beliefs of others. Pupils of all ages and abilities have a good understanding of the life and works of Jesus from their spectacular Millennium production "JC 2000".
11. Other than in physical education and geography, standards in all other subjects are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 and eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in physical education and geography are above those expected for pupils by the age of eleven.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The attitude of pupils to school is satisfactory, and the majority of parents questioned clearly agree that their child enjoys being at the school. Encouraged by good teaching and skilled behaviour management most pupils settle quickly into the school routine. Many pupils are keen to succeed and are competitive in their response to teaching strategies such as setting time targets in which to complete work. Because pupils are encouraged to sustain the environment they are proud of their school; this is evident in the respect they have for the school building, contents and grounds. Parents report that Education for Sustainability learned in school spills over into the home, where pupils turn off switches and encourage adults to save water.
13. Behaviour in and around the school is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils in each class agree their rules at the beginning of the school year, and these are prominently displayed. Whole-school rules for the playground are similarly discussed and displayed. As a consequence, the majority of pupils of all ages are well behaved. At times there is however, a small number of pupils who find it difficult to sustain concentration or to work unsupervised. Nevertheless, their behaviour is managed well by teachers and this causes minimum disruption to lessons. Parents attending the parents' meeting were pleased with the good behaviour in the school and on the field trips that they accompany. Parents and pupils report that instances of bullying are isolated and all know that incidents should be reported immediately. It is unusual for the school to exclude pupils, there has been only one exclusion in the last school year.
14. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to use their initiative and to act responsibly. From the time they enter school, pupils are encouraged to choose their activities and to take responsibility for clearing tables, litter-picking and tidying away. Pupils undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. Relationships throughout the school continue to be good, pupils work well in groups and share resources. Pupils successfully develop an understanding of each other through activities such as "Circle time". They talk about problems openly, respecting each other's differences,

and beginning to realise the impact of their actions on others in a relaxed environment. The importance of working together has a high priority and is illustrated in assemblies and in class lessons. Younger pupils learn the need for co-operation in parachute games and older pupils achieve success when competing in the football and netball leagues. Older pupils successfully develop the skill of negotiation and the ability to compromise through membership of the Eco group and School Council. The School Council, comprising all of Years 5 and 6, is an impressive forum. Their discussions about improving the school grounds are sensible and mature and pupils demonstrated a willingness to listen to the views of others. Year 6 pupils responded with great enthusiasm as they gained a good insight into the world of commerce by participating in the Business Enterprise Project. Groups of pupils raised money through a range of activities including car washing, baking and selling sweets. Profits of £150 were used to benefit the whole of the school through the School Fund.

15. Attendance is satisfactory, contrasting with the previous report when attendance was very good. There has been a slight fall in attendance and increased unauthorised absence when measured against higher national standards. This can be explained by the changing population of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen and this was by a teacher who also taught satisfactory and good lessons during the inspection week. This is good improvement since the last inspection when 17 percent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching was satisfactory in 29 percent of lessons, good in 60 percent of lessons and very good in 10 percent of lessons. The very good teaching was spread across the key stages and was in a number of subjects.
17. Teaching for children in the reception classes was never less than good and on occasion very good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 ranged from satisfactory to very good being good overall. The quality of teaching for pupils in Key Stage 2 ranged from unsatisfactory to very good and was good overall. The quality of teaching is reflected in the quality of learning and the rate of progress which pupils make.
18. Other than in information and communication technology, teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and understanding. All staff are confident in teaching the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. However, the teaching of literacy is better than the teaching of numeracy. This is because some of the teachers use the introductory part purely as a mental mathematics “warm up” rather than as an oral lesson where pupils are expected to reason their answers. Most staff provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in other lessons. For example, younger pupils using the parachute in a physical education lesson had to recognise the initial letter of their first name before they could run underneath it “diagonally” to the other side. In most lessons teachers emphasise specialist vocabulary by writing the new word on the board and by stressing it in their discussions. This enables pupils to extend their vocabulary, as in a geography lesson about weather where they learnt the words “breeze” and “gale”. All staff have a good knowledge of the special needs of pupils in their class, for example in physical education staff take particular note of the level of activity of pupils with physical conditions to ensure they do not become over tired.

19. Teachers plan their lessons well. The quality and use of planning have improved since the last inspection. Effective planning between teachers of pupils of the same age ensures that pupils of the same age but in different classes have the same learning opportunities. Planning meetings with other teachers makes sure there is continuity in pupils' learning from class to class. Much of the planning is matched to different ability groups. In lessons such as religious education where all pupils complete the same task teachers make sure that less able pupils receive the support they need, for example, in organising their ideas and that more able pupils do additional research and use dictionaries to find the spelling of more difficult words. Where teaching is less effective, for example in some mathematics lessons, more able pupils are expected to complete the work set for pupils of average ability before moving on to more difficult work. This slows their rate of progress. Teachers' planning for pupils with special educational needs often contains direct reference to the tasks they are expected to complete and targets in their individual education plans, such as the use of capital letters. This enables them to make good progress.
20. All lessons have a good structure. At the beginning of each lesson teachers tell their class what they will learn. For example, "to identify the parts of a flowering plant through investigation". As a result pupils know what is expected of them and learn well. Most lessons follow the pattern of the literacy hour with class time, group and individual work and a review. This makes best use of teacher time and gives pupils good opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. At the end of each lesson there is a useful review of the learning that has taken place, with pupils extending their speaking skills by explaining what they have learned. Where teaching is not as effective, teachers discuss the work that has been covered rather than the learning that has taken place.
21. Staff have high expectations of how pupils will behave and the standard of work they produce. Teachers work hard to make sure that all pupils behave well. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are set targets to behave and strategies such as "go for goal" charts encourage them to behave appropriately. This enables all pupils to concentrate and get on with their work without interruptions. Pupils are expected to write neatly in their books, using ink as they get older. As a result, pupils take a pride in their work. The oldest pupils in school have written targets inside the covers of their English books to encourage them to make greater progress. Many teachers set pupils "time targets", for instance minutes in which to complete their work. This ensures pupils maintain concentration and produce a good volume of work in the allotted time. All staff provide good examples of how to conduct themselves with the result that pupils are courteous, polite and well behaved.
22. Teachers have spent a lot of time discussing different uses of questions and most use questions well. For example, they used closed questions to check pupils' factual knowledge. As lessons progress they use "open questions" such as "Why are the characters' names written in bold print" to make pupils think and reason. In lessons where teaching is more effective, pupils have to explain their answers, for example how they worked their sum out. However, this does not always happen in all mathematics lessons. All teachers encourage pupils to be "active learners" for example in a group spelling lesson pupils have to write their answers on a "dry-wipe" board. As well as enabling the teacher to check pupils have the correct answer, it ensures all members of the class take part rather than many sitting back whilst two or three give all the answers. In these activities pupils make at least good progress.

23. Resources are used well to make lessons interesting and to further pupils' understanding. Teachers expect pupils to show respect. For example in a religious education lesson, the teacher used hushed tones when she talked about "special books". In response, pupils respected why the books are special and handled them with great care. During the week of the inspection, computers were switched on in all classrooms. Though many teachers included information technology as part of their planning, staff knowledge and lack of skill on the part of many pupils meant pupils did not make as much progress as they should in this element of the lesson.
24. Assessment is an integral part of all lessons. In whole-class work, teachers use questions to assess pupils' understanding. When pupils are working individually, teachers move around the class to make sure pupils have understood their work before moving onto the next stage. Work is marked in line with school policy and where teaching is more effective pupils are set targets to improve their work. Overall teachers take account of the results of assessment when planning the next lesson.
25. In lessons where the quality of teaching was very good, the teachers' enthusiasm was infectious and motivated pupils. Lessons were conducted with a sense of urgency and more able pupils received work which challenged them to think, thus increasing their rate of progress.
26. Parents attending the meeting and those responding to the questionnaire expressed concerns regarding homework. During the week of the inspection the amount of homework given was suitable for the age and ability of the pupils and contributed to their progress.

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

27. The school provides a broad, balanced and well-planned curriculum that includes all pupils and promotes the progress of pupils of all ages and abilities well. It has introduced the National Numeracy and Literacy strategies satisfactorily to the benefit of all pupils. The school has successfully maintained all subjects and religious education despite limitations of time. Carefully chosen topics enable the school to teach the required curriculum in a way that makes good use of the time available. Good use of assessment and record-keeping systems enables pupils to build on previous learning. All National Curriculum requirements are met and schemes of work are being modified to meet the requirements of the new Foundation Stage and Curriculum 2000. The teaching of religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
28. The quality of teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection. The practice of curriculum co-ordinators taking responsibility for termly planning has resulted in improved weekly planning by teachers and has ensured continuity in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire as they move through the school.

29. Provision for special educational needs is good. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early and appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs, write individual education plans and provide support. Individual education plans are of a sound quality and are reviewed regularly. Whilst targets in individual plans are appropriate to the needs of the pupils, targets in a small number of plans are not sufficiently precise to be able to measure progress easily. Most of the support is within the classroom. By being integrated into the classroom pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. They also have full access to educational visits and are valued as individuals.
30. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. During lessons relationships between pupils are good whether working as a whole class, in groups or in pairs. School assemblies reinforce good behaviour by, for example, using strategies promoting the notion of everyone being part of a team. Sex education and drugs education are suitably taught through science and personal and social education in line with agreed school policy. Healthy eating is promoted through the science curriculum. The school makes good use of the "Circle Time" to enable pupils to express opinions and be involved in decision making.
31. The curriculum is strongly under-pinned by the practice of the Education for Sustainable Development philosophy. The school received a Curriculum Management Award for two years from 1996-98 to develop education for sustainability. The school participates in the Eco School project and is the first school in the country to be awarded three Eco flags. The key aims of the project include enabling pupils to make informed decisions and thoughtful choices, making pupils aware of what actions they can take to promote the sustainable use of the earth's resources and making them aware of the forces which foster or impede sustainable development. The way in which this project is intertwined in curriculum planning ensures that it does not only has a good impact on personal, social and health education but fosters learning across the curriculum.
32. Extra-curricular opportunities, mainly for the older pupils, are in line with the provision expected in a school of this size and type. The provision of a range of sporting, music, drama and computer clubs makes a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment and progress in these subjects. The school successfully participates in a number of sports competitions including football, netball, rounders, basketball, swimming, cross-country running and athletics. The choir, three recorder groups - one for Key Stage 1 pupils - and the opportunity for pupils to learn an instrument taught by peripatetic teachers enrich music in the school. The instrumental tuition service, provided through the local education authority, has to be paid for by the parents. Homework is set throughout the school, with the emphasis being on reading initially. However, there is no provision for a homework club. The policy of the school is to match homework to pupils so that they can cope at home without support if necessary.
33. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits and by visitors to the school. Visitors include representatives of the police and the fire service, a local vicar, the school nurse, a dentist and a mother with a duck. These are in addition to the parents who come into school regularly to assist in class who make a positive contribution to the learning of the pupils. Day visits are made to Middleton Hall, Shugborough Hall, a Mosque, a church, Carsington Water and Cannock Chase to extend pupils' learning in a range of subjects. Last term the economic awareness of Year 6 pupils was enhanced by a business enterprise week which contributed not only to pupils' personal development but also their English and numeracy skills. Prior to the week pupils wrote business plans and letters of application for posts and

learned about financing a business. Over a period of a week the businesses made a profit for the school.

34. Strong links with the local secondary school contribute to the successful transfer of pupils at the age of eleven. Liaison is good. Teachers from the secondary school have visited to teach French “taster” lessons to older pupils. They have furthered their own knowledge by observing the teaching of literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils in Year 6 visit the secondary school to familiarise them with the school and many have used the school’s information and communication technology suite. There are good links with Lichfield and Tamworth College of Further Education which runs courses in the school for lunch-time supervisors and for parent helpers. A member of the school staff acts as mentor for trainee teachers from the University of Central England. Effective links with pre-school education providers in the area enable children to make the successful transfer to school.

35. Overall, the school continues to makes good provision for the pupils’ personal development and this is recognised and appreciated by their parents. Provision for pupils’ spiritual development is satisfactory. Daily collective worship meets requirements. There are good links with local churches with pupils attending Christmas and Harvest celebrations. The vicar of the local church leads lively assemblies and participates in some religious education lessons. Pupils learn to respect the values and beliefs of others through their religious education lessons when learning about the major world faiths. Older pupils have opportunity to compare faiths through visits to a mosque and a temple. The school’s celebration of the Millennium emphasised its spiritual aspect with pupils participating in the “JC 2000” pageant, movingly enacting elements of the life of Jesus through mime and dance. During one lesson observed, pupils were provided with a good opportunity to appreciate and question their beliefs and values. This occurred when a teacher created a calm atmosphere by lighting a candle and speaking in hushed tones to encourage pupils to reflect on the meaning of the word “special”. This was very successful, with the pupils thinking deeply about their answers and explaining why certain books were particularly special to them. However, generally, pupils have too few opportunities for quiet reflection, with none being provided in the assemblies seen. Whilst pupils enjoy their lessons for example, in Year 2, where pupils were totally enthralled in their parachute game and squealed with delight as it left the ground, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to feel so totally engrossed or amazed by their activities.

36. The school’s provision for both social and moral development is very good, improving on the good provision identified at the time of the last inspection. The Education for Sustainability curriculum is particularly impressive and pupils’ achievements in caring for their environment through collecting waste paper, picking up litter and turning off lights has been recognised nationally. Pupils are now planning and eagerly looking forward to their next “focus week” to improve the grounds by planting trees. School rules are based on what pupils are expected to do rather than what is prohibited. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and use this to devise their own class rules. For example rules in Year 2 include “Be kind, work quietly, try hard!” Pupils are taught a sense of responsibility through discussion in “Circle Time” and through role-play. For example older pupils considered the dilemma between telling the truth about an instance of theft, with some personal risk, or keeping quiet and letting a bully go unpunished. Rewards and sanctions are used well to acknowledge pupils’ achievements in all aspects of school life. Pupils are encouraged to consider qualities in other people. For example, in an assembly pupils highlighted reasons why others in their class should feel proud, because of helping a friend or being a

good reader. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to care for each other with the older pupils helping younger ones at lunchtime and all appreciate those who care for them.

37. The school's provision for cultural development is generally satisfactory. Pupils gain a good understanding of their heritage through studies of the local area and through participating in "Living History" visits to Middleton Hall and Shugborough. Through history they gain a suitable understanding of ancient civilisations such as the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians, dressing up and enjoying a banquet during their Greek day in school. In a literacy lesson older pupils learn about Shakespeare and the relevance of the Globe Theatre. Through art, pupils appreciate the work of a variety of artists such as Matisse and Klimt. Whilst some pupils have studied aboriginal and Islamic art, many have a limited experience of art beyond Europe. In music, pupils listen to the work of a number of composers but opportunities to use music at the start and end of assemblies are missed. A recorder group has taken part in a recital in Lichfield Cathedral. Pupils are aware of a number of world faiths through religious education lessons. However, there are few regular, planned opportunities to appreciate the lives and traditions of other cultures. The range of books in the school library mostly reflects European cultures. Whilst pupils celebrated Diwali and welcomed children from a multi-ethnic school two years ago, these are not features of the curriculum at the present time. Pupils are not sufficiently well prepared to live in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The overall care for pupils is satisfactory. Each pupil is well known to their class teacher and extensive notes about personal and academic development pass through the school with the pupils. Particular attention is given to ensure the health and safety of pupils. The building and its contents are regularly checked and kept in good order. In subjects such as science and physical education teachers ensure pupils are aware of safety factors. Road safety outside the school has been a particular problem but pupils, through the Eco group, have successfully written to the authorities about tightening traffic regulations, and this is to be put into effect in the near future. Despite the school's best effort, difficulties still remain regarding the safety of the extensive grounds, particularly vandalism by local youths. These need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
39. The school makes good provision for the medical needs of pupils, with staff trained to administer first aid on duty throughout the school day. Special training is given to staff to ensure that the needs of pupils with individual medical conditions are well understood. Pupils with special educational needs are looked after well by good teaching using appropriate strategies. Outside agencies, including educational psychologists, specialist tutors, behaviour management specialists and the family services all contribute to the care and progress of pupils.
40. Child protection arrangements are in place, but are not accompanied by clear guidelines. Most staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. However, there has been no training for non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors. This has created some gaps in the network of care for pupils. Children in the Reception classes have a separate play area that is well supervised and teachers carefully monitor pupils as they leave school. Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils all play in the school grounds and are supervised in designated areas.

41. The monitoring and promotion of attendance is good. Registers are marked quickly and efficiently at the start of school sessions, making a good start to the day. Registers are checked by the education welfare officer and monitored by the school. Pupils who appear to be developing an attendance problem are given suitable support. The recently adopted computerised system will provide more detailed monitoring for the future. Parents consistently inform the school about pupils' absences. Pupils who are late report to the office where a record is kept and long-term problems are dealt with by the education welfare officer. A few parents remove pupils for annual holidays in term time this has a marked effect on the consistency of pupils' learning. The school has alerted parents to this fact.
42. All the procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. The behaviour policy has been in place for the last two terms and supports the well-established aims of the school. The system of rewards and sanctions make expected behaviour clear to both pupils and parents. House points and achievement records help to support the high expectations and are valued by all. Pupils strive hard to achieve their awards and are proud to discuss them with visitors. Discussions with pupils and parents suggest a few instances of bullying do take place. However, whenever bullying is reported, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. "Circle Time" provides good opportunities for personal growth and the understanding and respect of others. The school's practice of enabling pupils to become independent learners is adding considerably to their personal development and progress.
43. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good. The previous report stated when planning lessons, teachers did not always use the variety of assessment procedures devised by the school. This is not now the case. A detailed assessment, recording and reporting policy provides useful guidance and is used well by members of staff. Further assessment procedures have been introduced since the last inspection. For example, assessment of a child's abilities on entry to the school, optional standard assessment tests at the end of each year and some standardised tests. The introduction of these tests enables teachers to compare pupils' performance with that of schools for pupils from similar backgrounds and also to track pupils' progress. Teachers are now using the information well to set suitable individual targets for pupils to improve further in English. Plans have been made to introduce individual pupil targets for mathematics in the near future. Most subject co-ordinators have produced useful portfolios of pupils' work which are linked to National Curriculum levels. This enables less experienced members of staff to gain a good understanding of what standards their pupils should be achieving. As a result of improved planning and assessment procedures, staff now take the results of their assessments into account when planning further lessons. Procedures for assessing and reviewing the provision for pupils with special educational needs meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. They ensure pupils are working at the correct level. The school has very recently introduced a computer program that enables staff to analyse the results of assessment and to provide accurate information quickly for teachers, governors and parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school continues to maintain good links with parents. Most parents are happy with the education their child receives. Though only one quarter of parents responded to the questionnaire this is clear from discussions with parents during the week of the inspection and at the pre-inspection meeting. Parents are particularly pleased by the hard work of their children in response to the good teaching and

their consequent good progress. They report that their children like the school and that it helps them to mature. The inspection team supports this view. Parents responding to the questionnaire were less happy with the perceived behaviour of some pupils and information about the progress of their children, coupled with a lack of closeness with the school. This is in direct contrast to the views of parents at the pre-inspection meeting and the findings of the inspection team. The amount of homework is a concern for all parents. However, the school has recently introduced a homework policy and homework given during the week of the inspection was appropriate to the age and ability of pupils and contributed to the pupils' progress. Parents responding to the questionnaire expressed some reservations about how the school is led and managed. The inspection team judged the school is well led by the headteacher, governing body and key staff. Some parents in their responses were unhappy about the range of activities offered by the school but parents at the pre-inspection meeting reported good opportunities for older pupils in drama, choir, netball and football. Music tuition is also available on payment of a fee.

45. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and the impact of their work with the school are good. Pupils entering the reception classes have a good phased introduction in all three intakes. Parents are encouraged to visit the classes, to join in activities and borrow library books. Parents are clear about the attendance policy and keep in touch with the school if their child is absent. Parents attending the meeting and those spoken to during the inspection are confident that problems discussed with the teachers or headteacher are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school aims to involve all parents in the education of their child. The Eco club has parent members who assist in the organisation of "focus weeks". Over the last school year the group has organised a week where all pupils walked to school in an effort to cut down on traffic congestion and to preserve the environment. Many have taken part in a "fitness week" exercising daily alongside pupils, discussing ways to adopt a healthier life style. During the week of the inspection a good number of parents attended meetings in the school to discuss the next focus of grounds improvement and tree planting. Parents provide a considerable contribution to the social and moral development of pupils through their work during focus days and weeks and through their partnership in the conservation work undertaken in the school grounds. A small number of parents regularly help in the school and others help on school trips. One parent of a former pupil is the football coach. The active friends' organisation holds successful social events, raising considerable sums of money for the school to spend on equipment. Parents appreciate the Christmas productions, leavers' concert and the opportunity to eat once a term alongside their child during "family meals".
46. The information provided for parents is good. The prospectus is well laid out and informative but in need of slight revision in the light of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and Curriculum 2000. Parents receive termly newsletters telling them about the topics their child will be studying. The Ridgeway Review, produced by the Friends' Association, contains articles by pupils, teachers and governors and gives parents useful information about special events. School reports have improved since the last inspection. They are now well written and informative. Clearly based on a good knowledge of pupils, they indicate what the children know and understand and give details of where improvement can be made. Parents and pupils meet teaching staff three times a year and on these occasions educational targets are agreed and signed by all three parties. Parents of pupils with special educational needs feel well supported and appreciate that that they are able to ask for information and reassurance when necessary. One parent expressed his praise for the support received from a visiting specialist teacher.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management of the school are good. There has been good improvement at all levels of management since the last inspection.
48. The ethos of the school has changed considerably since the last inspection. There is now a commitment to high standards that has resulted in significant improvements in national test results. The commitment, drive and vision of the headteacher has enabled the school to move forward at a rapid rate over the two years she has been in post. Under her leadership staff have been encouraged to work as a team and have been given the confidence and skills to develop professionally. This is clearly demonstrated in the number of staff who have been promoted to senior positions in other schools. The headteacher's enthusiasm in supporting the school's aim to protect the environment has created a culture whereby pupils, staff and parents do their utmost to preserve natural resources and maintain an ecological balance. The school is justifiably proud to be the first school in England to gain three Eco Flags for its work to protect the environment.
49. The deputy head teacher had only been in post a few of days at the time of the inspection but she was still able to provide good support for the headteacher and staff and has clear views as to how her role will develop. Similarly, almost all the senior management team are new to the position but nevertheless talk enthusiastically about their responsibilities and how they will review and further extend the monitoring of the curriculum and the impact of teaching on learning. Many of the subject co-ordinators have only been in post a few days. However, continuity in subjects has been ensured by producing good quality portfolios of pupils' work, records of monitoring classroom teaching and planning, schemes of work and development plans, all of which have been handed to the new co-ordinators. The monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on standards.
50. The enthusiastic governing body is very supportive of the school. Since the last inspection committees have been formed to good effect. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are proud of its achievements. They know the areas in which the school needs to improve and minutes of governing body meetings show that committee meetings are used effectively to discuss them. The governors have previously set suitable performance targets for the headteacher and her deputy and are now considering targets for the coming year. All legally required policies are in place. The prospectus has been made attractive to parents, and other than providing information regarding very recent curriculum changes, meets requirements. The governor's annual report to parents is informative but does not include information regarding access for the disabled.
51. The school development plan is a useful management tool and prioritises the needs of the school well. Targets are challenging yet realistic. Success criteria are clearly identified and linked to raising standards. Targets for achievement in national test results have been agreed with the Local Education Authority. However, following the improved results of the 2000 tests more challenging targets now need to be considered. Action plans following the last inspection and school development planning have improved considerably under the leadership of the headteacher.
52. The school is staffed by a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. Most subject co-ordinators have basic training in their subject, though this is not so for mathematics and information and communication technology. Professional development for staff is closely linked to the school development plan and training for all staff in information and communication technology is planned for

the immediate future. Teaching staff are ably assisted by well qualified and enthusiastic support staff who together with specialist staff from the local authority make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

53. The school's strong commitment to professional development includes induction and appraisal as important elements. Teachers who are recently qualified undertake an appropriate induction course and receive good support to help them in their first year of teaching. All teachers have annual appraisals and there is a shared understanding of the benefits of regular reviews of performance. The results of professional development are evident in the improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
54. Accommodation is generous with extensive playing areas around the buildings, including a useful wildlife area. However, there are a number of safety issues caused by persistent vandalism by young people from the locality. The Early Years unit has spacious accommodation but it is not possible to link all three rooms together. Their play area is adequate, but is all hard surface with no large outdoor play equipment to help the children's physical development. There is limited shade in this area. Classrooms throughout the school are of a good size. However, the number of pupils in the Year 5/6 classes means that sometimes these rooms are cramped. This has an effect in practical subjects such as design and technology and limits the activities that can take place in practical mathematics and science. Pupils of all ages benefit from the use of specialist rooms for art, music and the recent addition of an information and communication technology suite. The library is spacious and well cared for, though the range of reference books is limited and some are dated. Learning resources are good in music, science and physical education and adequate in all other subjects. However, there is a lack of challenging texts in the classroom libraries for older and more experienced readers. The building is cleaned to a high standard and attractive displays of pupils' work support learning.
55. Financial planning is good. Educational priorities are supported through careful financial planning. The governors seek value when making purchases. However, they have yet to apply the principles of best value when assessing the school's effectiveness. Governors and senior managers seek out all possible sources of income and are constantly looking at ways to make savings. For example, by saving money through appointing a general teacher with musical ability rather than paying £3000 each year for the services of a peripatetic music teacher. The decision to appoint extra staff to make smaller teaching groups for numeracy and literacy has resulted in improved standards. Specific grants to the school are used appropriately. The accommodation and teaching resources are used effectively. Though the accommodation is generous with many specialist rooms, few rooms stand empty during the school day. The hiring of the school to community groups provides a useful income. The grounds are used extremely well to enrich the curriculum, particularly in science, geography and physical education. Day-to-day administration is of a high standard. The administration officer is well qualified and ensures the smooth running of the school to enable the headteacher and staff to get on with their work. A good start has been made to the use of new technology by most staff. However, some teachers still lack confidence in using computers. The school has sensibly identified this as an area for staff training in the near future.

56. WHAT COULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Whilst sustaining and developing the many strengths of the school, in order to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- ◆ raise standards in information and communication technology by
 - securing planned professional development for all staff
 - planning and using opportunities for pupils to use new technology in other subjects;

(9,18,23,54,78, 83,91,95,102,103,104)
- ◆ raise the attainment of more able pupils in mathematics by
 - extending the provision of challenging work to match their ability
 - providing opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning;

(2,3,7,18,19,22,74,77)
- ◆ as a matter of urgency address the health and safety issues highlighted with respect to the grounds;

(38, 54)
- ◆ further advance pupils' personal development by
 - providing more opportunities to prepare pupils to live in a multi-cultural society
 - planning opportunities for pupils to experience quiet moments and be enthralled by their learning.

(35,37,73,87)

The numbers in brackets after each key issue refer to the paragraphs in which the weaknesses are discussed.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important points should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- ◆ Improve standards in spelling. (6,71)
- ◆ Ensure all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, receive suitable training in child protection. (40)
- ◆ The governing body should take account of the principles of best value when assuring the quality of the school and to meet requirements in their annual report to parents. (50,55)
- ◆ Improve outdoor play facilities for children in the reception classes.

The school has identified the need to raise standards in spelling and information and communication technology in its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	60	29	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	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	315
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	40
Special educational needs	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34
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	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	16	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	15	17
	Girls	13	15	16
	Total	22	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93(90)	90(86)	100(82)
	National	*(83)	*(83)	*(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97(88)	91(88)	100(88)
	National	*(82)	*(86)	*(87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	20	31	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	24	20	25
	Total	40	69	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78(68)	69(61)	84(80)
	National	*(70)	*(69)	*(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	14
	Girls	23	16	20
	Total	38	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75(59)	59(54)	67(68)
	National	*(68)	*(69)	*(75)

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

* National comparative figures for 2000 are not yet available.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	312
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	
Black – African heritage	0	
Black – other	0	
Indian	0	
Pakistani	0	
Bangladeshi	0	
Chinese	0	
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups	0	

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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Total income	547,778
Total expenditure	535,422
Expenditure per pupil	1,700
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,400
Balance carried forward to next year	30,756

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	340
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	52	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	49	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	57	10	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	59	15	5	2
The teaching is good.	45	49	5	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	17	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	45	11	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	49	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	53	13	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	26	45	18	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	53	5	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	37	24	7	11

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 school admits children in the term in which they become four years old. Those children whose birthdays occur in the Autumn or in the Spring terms attend a pre-reception class on a morning or afternoon part-time basis and become full-time members of a reception class at the start of the following Summer term. Children whose birthdays fall in the Autumn term join a separate reception class, part-time for the first four weeks and then they become full-time. At this early stage in the Autumn term there are 20 children attending full time in the older class, and 14 attending part-time in the younger group.
58. The previous report found that learning opportunities were very good and provided a sound base for pupils' later studies. Observations suggest that despite major changes of staff, standards have been maintained in mathematics and communication, language and literacy, although because it is so early in the school year, there is restricted evidence of some activities. In these cases, where possible, evidence is drawn from samples of previous children's work. Improvements since the last report have included introducing a standardised test of the children's knowledge when they enter school so that this can be compared with results from other schools. A further test when they leave reception enables teachers to define the children's progress and focus on any areas of weakness.
59. Two new teachers moved into the area at the start of this term, one in each reception class, and one of them has become co-ordinator for the unit. Long term planning suitably incorporates the new early learning goals for children of reception age. However, although the teachers plan closely together they have not yet fully implemented the new orders. They are ably supported by experienced, trained assistants. The quality of teaching is good and on occasion very good in all areas of learning. This is reflected in children's acquisition of knowledge and skills. The adults choose a variety of activities that skilfully extend their children and maintain their interest while at the same time reinforcing their learning. For example in a counting lesson children counted to 10 in chorus, then one by one, then counted back from ten to one in chorus and finally one by one. Following this they then played a range of games that reinforced their learning. On occasion teaching is of very good quality as when in a physical education lesson children were given a wide variety of tasks to perform which enabled them to practise and extend their repertoire of movements. The teacher expected and received very high levels of concentration, obedience and skill from the children, who also thoroughly enjoyed the whole lesson. Children take full advantage of the interesting opportunities provided for learning. In both rooms emphasis is placed on making learning an enjoyable experience and there is clear evidence that children are making good progress in acquiring new skills.
60. Most of the children have had some experience of nursery education but many enter school with poorly developed skills in literacy and mathematics. This is confirmed by initial assessment tests. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, a majority of the children attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and in mathematical development. The majority of children attain the goals in personal, social and emotional development before they leave the reception classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Nearly all children enter the reception classes with appropriate skills in personal and social development. They quickly become confident and happy learners. For example, having played a number game before play, children in the part-time reception class organised themselves so that an adult could help them to repeat the activity and they could practise their newly gained skill of counting to seven again. They play and work together well, showing the ability to take turns, and to look after toys and equipment carefully. Adults have high expectations and exploit every situation to encourage children to develop good relations with each other. Whether children are playing or working, there are high levels of co-operation between them. They are fully occupied and purposeful throughout the day and show good levels of respect towards each other and to adults. Staff place high emphasis on developing children's self-confidence and have a very friendly, encouraging manner, which is effective in instilling confidence and a desire to come to school. Children identified as having special emotional needs are well supported so that they are able to concentrate on their tasks. Those with special educational needs are given appropriate individual help.

Communication, language and literacy

62. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers introduce elements of the Literacy Strategy which are suitable for four-year-olds. The majority of children know the phonic sounds they have been taught and some older ones recognise familiar letters in simple words. By the time they enter Year 1 most children attempt writing for different purposes and their writing is becoming understandable. By the end of their time in the reception classes, many children enjoy writing freely in the form of emergent writing and the more able start to produce independent writing using their knowledge of simple words and phonics. Children enjoy handling books, discussing their contents and "reading" in chorus with an adult. The more able begin to recognise familiar words in text. They all listen carefully to adults' instructions, explanations and stories, and they reply using appropriate and increasingly clear language, although it is often in short phrases. There are good levels of discussion between children. Children begin to recognise sounds they have learnt in literacy in other lessons, such as recognising "c" when talking about clocks in mathematics.

Mathematical development

63. Teaching is good, teachers introduce those early stages of the Numeracy Strategy which are suitable for reception aged children. They encourage the recognition of numbers at the same time as counting and the majority of older children are already confident using games involving numbers up to 10. By the time they leave the reception classes, most children have a firm understanding of numbers to 10, compare quantities and size of objects and recognise simple shapes such as circles and squares. Some pupils are beginning to understand how to add and subtract small numbers. Children use their knowledge of counting at other times. For example, to help the teacher count how many children are present and when counting jumps in physical activity.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of life outside their classroom. They use the extensive school grounds to heighten children's awareness of growing plants and of animals and to help them develop an idea of space. Children use the computers with growing confidence, and with adult help enjoy playing games on them. Several children know the function of the mouse but many are dependent on adult support. This is an area for further development. As they learn about the properties of water and sand they begin to select resources and use tools safely.

Physical development

65. Owing to the layout of the grounds, children are restricted to playing on tarmac. At present there is an inadequate range of large wheeled toys, no secure storage space and no climbing apparatus near the unit. This considerably restricts opportunities for physical development. Although lessons take place regularly in the hall, the number of support staff limits the use of the outdoor playground for physical and social play during lesson times, and children only use the playground for free play during school playtimes. Children are becoming aware of space and show increasing confidence when moving. They hop, skip and run with good control and thoroughly enjoy obeying their teachers' instructions in the hall. They have well developed fine motor control when using scissors, glue spreader, paintbrushes and crayons.

Creative development

66. As a result of good teaching, children experience using an interesting variety of media which helps to develop their creative skills. They know the names of primary colours and mix them to produce a range of other colours. Paintings are clear and well defined. They enjoy singing and join in sweetly. Children enjoy role-play, and are helped to develop ideas by imaginative input from the adults. They use the home corner and dolls' house well to extend their experiences of life and sustain concentration for considerable periods of time. For example a group of children became a family and talked about their characters in detail.

ENGLISH

67. Seven-year-olds attain standards that are in line with the national averages in both reading and writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and writing in the national tests in 1999 was close to the national average. This year's tests indicate an improvement of 5 percent of pupils reaching both the average and more advanced levels. The attainment of eleven-year-olds overall is in line with national averages. National test results for 2000 show satisfactory improvement at both key stages. Pupils do not do as well as those from similar backgrounds. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
68. The introduction of the literacy hour has had a considerable impact on standards in writing at both key stages. Pupils enjoy the variety of topics provided by the scheme and make steady progress in their literacy lessons. Careful teaching ensures that literacy is being used well in the other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 5/6 music lesson the teacher provided good opportunities for pupils to use rich descriptive vocabulary when listening to the sounds of musical

instruments. Literacy skills are developed in science throughout the school through writing opportunities and the use of glossaries.

69. Speaking and listening skills are developed effectively in all subjects. Pupils in Key Stage 1 ask appropriate questions in order to clarify their understanding. Their speech becomes progressively clearer and they start to demonstrate well-considered thinking in their answers. In Key Stage 2, pupils' skills are further developed in the many question and answer sessions designed by teachers to extend their thinking and understanding. Pupils gain confidence when speaking in public, for instance in assemblies and at School Council meetings. Pupils of all ages listen carefully to instructions in all lessons.
70. Younger pupils make steady progress when learning to read through shared and guided reading. They pay close attention to print and become aware that capital letters and full stops in text denote the length of sentences. They take reading books home regularly. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils read at levels expected nationally using a range of strategies to help them read new words. Pupils in Key Stage 2 read a range of books with good levels of understanding. Older pupils read a variety of texts and state their preferences and opinions referring to the text when doing so. Pupils occasionally write reviews of their own reading. However, pupils' progress is limited because many of the "free choice" reading books are old and there is a limited range with which to challenge the most able readers. There is scope for placing more emphasis on reading in order to heighten pupils' enthusiasm and raise standards further. Opportunities for reading individually to adults in school are not frequent and regular enough in all classes for all pupils to make good progress. Inadequate library facilities until very recently have limited pupils' research skills. Not all pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are sure of the terms "fiction" and "non-fiction", and because the Dewey system of cataloguing books has only very recently been introduced, few pupils are able to use the system effectively. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with specific learning difficulties, make good progress because of the support they receive. In class support, small group and individual work, with enthusiastic learning support staff and a local authority tutor, enables pupils to attain standards in line with their age and ability.
71. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to use their phonic knowledge in their spelling, and by the end of the key stage many use simple punctuation correctly and effectively in their sentences. They write for a variety of purposes. For example they retell stories and write simple letters. In one class pupils use adjectives carefully to describe different characters. By the end of Key Stage 1, the more able pupils usually spell correctly and handwriting is neat and legible although not yet in a joined script. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils' writing is clear and they write confidently for a good range of reasons. They understand the different conventions required when writing scripts, diaries and reports. They write poetry and imaginative pieces of prose. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills continue to be developed across the key stage though spelling is not as good as it should be.
72. The quality of teaching is generally good throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 the quality is nearly always good and never less than satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 whilst there was one unsatisfactory lesson, a large majority of lessons are of good quality. A number of external factors such as the unavailability of books affected the quality of teaching in the unsatisfactory lesson. Teachers have a sound understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment especially in writing at Key Stage 2. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that pupils have tasks that challenge them appropriately. Teachers are careful to keep lessons moving briskly with a suitable range of activities which ensure that pupils maintain good levels of interest. They build steadily on their pupils' knowledge of skills so that pupils are confident and produce

work of increasing complexity. The teachers show high awareness of the value of using questions to extend the pupils' thinking, check their understanding and to further their ability to answer clearly. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher's skilful use of questions encouraged pupils to recognise that not all words are pronounced as spelt as she introduced the idea of "unstressed vowels". She took the opportunity to heighten the pupils' awareness of how they pronounce words. There are generally high levels of firm but friendly discipline which create an atmosphere in which pupils settle quickly to their tasks and concentrate well. The majority of teachers use review sessions at the end of lessons effectively. Teachers are good at assessing what their pupils know. They do this through careful questioning to check what pupils remember and understand. It was observed that two teachers changed their daily planning because they decided their pupils needed to practise further. Marking is consistent throughout the school, often with some constructive remarks to help pupils improve further. Teachers are sensitive when they introduce the idea that Standard English should be used in school in preference to local pronunciation. For example a teacher encouraged her pupils to be aware that while local people say "ink" at the end of some words such as "swimmink", the accepted pronunciation is "swimming" and follows the spelling. Pupils have a good attitude and are pleased to discuss their work with visitors. They work together well in discussion groups and wait for their turn to speak. Pupils of all abilities try hard to present their work neatly.

73. The English co-ordinator is very new to post. However she has been handed very detailed records of the monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning and the resulting targets. This will help the continued development of the subject and improved standards. Assessment in English is becoming very thorough. The results of national tests are analysed and used for grouping pupils appropriately. The smaller classes for literacy in Key Stage 2 are having a positive effect on standards. Last year a detailed analysis was carried out of the strengths and weaknesses in the work of each class. This resulted in group targets being set, which are revised each half term. The effectiveness of the home-school reading records is variable. When used regularly by parents and teachers they are a valuable liaison between home and school. Teachers of older pupils do not always keep an effective check of the suitability of books that pupils choose for free reading in order to ensure that the pupils are constantly being challenged to think, as well as to enjoy literature. Resources are satisfactory. The library has recently been refurbished. It is of good size and very pleasantly laid out. However, the range of reference books is limited. Many of the books are dated and few reflect cultures beyond Europe. Other than for word processing, there is limited use of pupils' information technology skills. There have been several improvements in English since the last inspection. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has raised the teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and standards have risen particularly at Key Stage 2. The analysis of work has given the school valuable information about standards and the level and use of assessment has improved.

MATHEMATICS

74. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, results indicated that standards were well below the national average and well below those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, as a result of an improvement in teaching through staff training and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, results for 2000 show a considerable improvement with all pupils achieving the expected level and a third of pupils attaining the higher level. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, 61 percent of pupils achieved the national expectations. The results

indicate that standards were below the national average and well below average compared to schools of a similar background. However, this showed a very good improvement from the previous year when only 34 percent of pupils achieved the expected level. This improvement has continued in the tests in 2000 when 69 percent of pupils achieved the expected level, which is close to the previous national average, though there was a fall in the number of pupils achieving the higher level. Whilst the work observed during the course of the inspection was revision at the start of a new school year, the improvement in teaching and the structure of lessons would indicate that this improvement is being sustained. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

75. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In Year 1, regular counting practice, good use of a number line and appropriate practical activities ensures that pupils build up confidence. Pupils are also helped by the vibrant display of number caterpillars in their classroom. By the end of the key stage, pupils of all abilities are recording their work at an appropriate level. More able pupils move on to work with larger numbers and make good progress in solving problems, whilst suitable emphasis is placed on improving the counting and addition skills for less able pupils. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory through Key Stage 2, with accelerated progress for older pupils. Though scrutiny of pupils' work for last year indicates that progress was less marked in Year 3, lesson observations show that this is no longer the case. Emphasis on the teaching of numeracy skills and regular practice ensures that the majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils, resulting in fewer pupils than might be expected achieving the higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and good use is made of the support available from classroom assistants who have benefited from the numeracy training.
76. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils count to 100 and perform addition and subtraction sums. They place numbers in the correct order and many know the multiplication tables for 2, 3, 5 and 10. Pupils tell the time to quarter of an hour using digital time and the clock face. They recognise right angles and know the names of most two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils collect information and display their findings in a variety of graphs, for example when recording the number of times the spin of a coin results in heads or tails, or the number of animals with a given number of legs. Most use their knowledge well to solve simple problems, though many need more opportunities to explain how they worked their answer out. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is in line with expectations, pupils have acquired sound numeracy skills through regular mental practice and most understand how to multiply or divide numbers by 10 or 100. They understand percentages as parts of a hundred and calculate simple fraction, decimal and percentage equivalents. Older pupils draw the "net" of a three-dimensional shape and calculate its area and perimeter. They read scales to parts of a thousand and also negative numbers. Others draw pie charts to show how pupils travel to school. When required, pupils respond well to the challenge of problem solving but they need more regular opportunities to explain their thinking.
77. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons seen. The quality of teaching has improved as a result of staff training and the implementation of national initiatives and has resulted in the raising of standards. The quality of teaching was good in three-quarters of the lessons observed in Key Stage 1. Work is well planned, particularly in relation to the teaching of basic skills, with many opportunities for counting and practical activities to promote understanding and sustain interest. An example of this was seen in Year 1 when the teacher changed the counting activity to Daisy Duck counting to revive pupils' flagging interest. In

Year 2, teachers give clear instructions, enabling pupils to settle quickly to their work in groups and they are kept on task by timely reminders. Good use is made of classroom assistants, when available, to support less able pupils. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall and three quarters of the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 were good. In the better lessons teachers displayed good questioning skills which required pupils to think and to explain their answers. In the less effective lessons, work started at too low a level for more able pupils and time was wasted in completing unnecessary exercises. In both key stages the introductory oral session is not sufficiently paced to improve pupils' mental agility, and in only a minority of lessons are pupils challenged to explain their working and to compare their methods. Good use was made of the plenary session in some lessons, for example, in Year 2 pupils extended the knowledge they had gained about tens and units to read 3-digit numbers; and in Year 5, pupils demonstrated their understanding of square numbers in a round robin game. This also enabled the teacher to assess quickly pupils' learning. The school recognises that the initial and plenary sessions of the maths lessons are areas for development. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good attitude to their work and respond well to lessons which are well paced and where the level of challenge maintains their interest. However, a minority of pupils have difficulty in sustaining concentration for more than a short time. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a satisfactory attitude to their work. They are interested in their work when it is sufficiently challenging and are eager to demonstrate their knowledge. They co-operate well when working in pairs, but some find it difficult to maintain concentration when their group is not being directly supervised by an adult. Work is generally neat and well presented.

78. The staff have worked hard to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy with a positive effect on standards. Some lessons have been monitored by the headteacher and the co-ordinator and also by the numeracy advisor, with helpful ideas how to improve. The school has given high priority to staff training and seven members of staff have already attended a week's course. This is to be extended to include other teachers. There has been a good improvement in teaching methods since the last inspection when there was an over-reliance on worksheets. There is a good capacity for improvement, particularly in extending opportunities for problem solving and in raising the standards achieved by the more able pupils in Key Stage 2. In both key stages, pupils have appropriate opportunities to apply their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects. Pupils in Year 1 compile a graph showing eye colours and also popular flavours in their science topic. Pupils in Year 2 draw symmetrical pictures in art. In Year 3, pupils compile a chart to record their achievement awards and in Year 4 they keep a record of the temperature showing days when it was below freezing. Pupils in Year 5 show significant events in history on a timeline from the time of the Ancient Greeks to the present day. Pupils in Year 6, use their numeracy skills well when participating in the Business Enterprise Scheme to calculate their costings, selling price and subsequent profit. The school recognises that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills through information technology, though some pupils in Year 5 are using a program to practise their arithmetic skills.

SCIENCE

79. The attainment of pupils in the previous inspection report was average overall. The school has maintained these overall standards despite the changing population resulting in a higher percentage of pupils in the lower ability band. Teacher

assessments for 1999 show that 90 percent of pupils achieved the required level, which is in line with the national average but below the performance of pupils from similar backgrounds. Fewer pupils than would be expected attained the higher Level 3. Teacher assessments for 2000 show that all pupils achieved the required level, with almost a quarter attaining the higher level. This is good improvement. National test results for eleven-year-olds identify that 80 percent of pupils achieved the expected level of these a quarter attained the higher level 5. These results are close to the national average but below those of pupils from similar backgrounds. The results of the 2000 tests show improvement with 84 percent attaining the expected level and again one quarter reaching the higher level. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.

80. Pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their knowledge and satisfactory progress in their investigation skills. By the end of the key stage, they are beginning to use appropriate scientific vocabulary. Through their work they know that plants require light and water for growth and identify parts of flowering plants such as leaf, stem, flower and root, labelling drawings correctly. They are also developing an understanding of the sources of light, why there are shadows and why we have day and night. They know that sounds can be made in different ways, for example, by shaking, plucking, tapping, and blowing and record the results of their investigations on a chart. Through the topic 'Ourselves' they learn about the senses. In a study of materials and their properties pupils use Venn diagrams, which they know about through their mathematics lessons, to sort artefacts into groups. Pupils are beginning to understand the need for a test to be fair as shown in their investigations into whether seeds need water to germinate and grow. Work is recorded in a variety of ways, including lists, simple charts and descriptive writing. Higher attaining pupils present their work more neatly and their written work is more detailed. Pupils are also beginning to research topics themselves and present their findings by drawing and writing using bullet points as in work on mini-beasts.
81. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage 2 pupils know the function of the main organs of the body including the heart and muscles. They know about evaporation and condensation. They possess an understanding of food chains, habitats and life-cycles. In this work pupils learn how to use keys. They know about healthy eating. Their work on electricity shows that they know how to draw simple circuits using appropriate symbols for switches, lamps and batteries. When they revisit a topic their knowledge and understanding is deepened by the amount of detail incorporated in their studies. This is shown in the work on "Green plants as organisms" where stamen, sepal, ovary and anther are used in the labelling of more accurately drawn diagrams. The use of scientific vocabulary is appropriate. Pupils continue to develop their investigation skills, for example by planning an investigation into the different sounds made when the balance of air and water in bottles varies. Pupils also continue to develop their research skills through independent work on, for example, spiders. Their understanding of a fair test is improved as they talk about changing the variables in their investigation.
82. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and one lesson observed was very good. At Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall with teaching at towards the end of the key stage being consistently good. The foundations for the good standard of teaching lie in the good subject knowledge and understanding of the teachers. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives which are easily assessed and used when planning further work. Questioning, particularly open-ended questions, are used

well to promote and consolidate pupils' learning. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage and support less able and less confident pupils. Good use is made of targets in individual education plans to help match tasks to the needs and abilities of the pupils. Support assistants are used effectively to enable pupils to make progress during the lesson. Activities are well prepared using a good range of resources. In a very good Year 2 lesson investigating the senses of touch, taste and smell the teacher used questions well to recapitulate previous learning before giving a very clear explanation of the aims of the lesson. The challenging tasks were very well resourced and particularly good use was made of other adults. Throughout the lesson organisation and management were very good. Expectations of behaviour and pace of work were good. As a result pupils worked well and very good learning took place. In a good Year 5/6 lesson pupils were investigating the different parts of a flower and the role of each part in the life cycle of flowering plants. Good management and organisation, clear instructions and high expectations of the pupils enabled the teacher to promote learning. Support for pupils with special educational needs during the investigation ensured that they made progress during the lesson. Learning was also supported by the link the teacher made with work in literacy when pointing out that the mnemonic "LAW" would help them to remember that plants need light, air, water. Teaching and learning are supported by educational visits, for example to Carsington Water and to Cannock Chase, and by focus weeks in school linked to the Education for Sustainability project. Evidence from the teaching seen and scrutiny of pupils' work, however, shows that pupils have limited opportunities to develop their skills of scientific enquiry, as much of the investigative work is teacher-directed. The use of information and communications technology to support learning in science is insufficiently developed. Pupils' attitudes to science are good at both key stages. They are interested and respond positively to the tasks set by the teachers. They are eager to answer questions and put forward their own ideas. Pupils listen well to each other and value each other's opinions. Behaviour is good. Equipment and materials are handled sensibly. In discussion Year 6 pupils were able to explain why they liked science and described their work on electricity in Year 5 in some detail. The ethos for learning science is good.

83. The subject is well co-ordinated. The previous inspection identified the need to raise expectations and achievement for the older pupils and to devise strategies for effective monitoring of the curriculum. These have been successfully addressed. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed and she now undertakes all medium term planning to ensure continuity and progression. She monitors teachers' planning and looks at samples of pupils' work to check standards are being maintained and that pupils are studying the correct topics. Classroom observation and its impact on learning are scheduled for this year. The co-ordinator provides helpful advice for staff on teaching, planning and the use of resources. She recognises that a priority for development is strategies to promote and assess pupils' investigative skills. Assessment, which includes the use of optional national tests at the end of Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5, is now very detailed and influences both medium and short term planning to ensure appropriate provision for the pupils. The school has satisfactory resources, including the extensive grounds in which there are hedgerows, trees, a wild area, a bog garden and old logs to support the study of "living things". Though not used to full advantage, sufficient information and communication technology resources are available to support the teaching of science.

ART

84. Art is now taught as a subject in its own right whereas at the previous inspection it was taught as part of topic. This has led to improvement in the areas studied. For example, pupils now have far more opportunities to appreciate and work in the style of famous artists such as Bridget Riley and Monet. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of this age at the end of both key stages. Pupils continue to use art effectively to support work in other subjects, for instance the design and painting of Greek vases to support work in history.
85. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have experience of using a range of media including paint, pencil, chalk and pastels. They work carefully, mixing colours and producing different shades and textures. Younger pupils know which colours to mix to produce green, orange and purple. Older pupils in this key stage use line well to contrast black and white with colour. Pupils make satisfactory progress and extend their skills through Key Stage 2. They produce holiday pictures in the style of the impressionists and colourful stained glass windows reflecting the story of the Creation. Pupils make sound progress using their observational skills as when producing pencil drawings of a bicycle. Photographic evidence shows some very good outdoor sculptures using natural materials such as wood and grass in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils in Years 5/6 produce pleasing mixed media work using paint and collage to produce “golden studies” in the style of Gustav Klimt.
86. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages, though one good lesson was seen in Key Stage 2. Most of the lessons observed were the first art lessons of the new school year. Clear instructions by teachers enabled pupils to acquaint themselves quickly with the demands of new routines in new classes. All staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for selecting and returning their resources thus aiding their personal development. Teachers are imaginative in their introductions and use resources well, as when using a range of quality images of evening skies to encourage pupils to work in the style of Turner. Good discussions about the colours and style enabled pupils to produce paintings of skies using colours effectively to create a mood. A Year 1 teacher gained the interest of her pupils by reading the story “Mouse paint” with the result that they were eager to begin their work on colour. Whilst teachers are enthusiastic, not all concentrate on art specific skills, for example the way pupils hold their brushes or selecting the correct type of brush for a particular piece of work. This means that though pupils try hard and make satisfactory progress, their progress could be better. Whilst teachers talk to pupils about their work and how it could be improved, the assessment and recording of skills is an area for development. Pupils are pleased to discuss their work with visitors and explain the techniques they have used confidently. Though all pupils have sketch-books these are not used well by many teachers. Staff encourage pupils to consider sustainability as they provide opportunities for pupils to create “recycled art” using discarded materials such as old buttons, braids and paper.
87. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The long serving art specialist has recently left to take up a post in another school. However, prior to leaving she worked alongside the new co-ordinator to ensure development of the subject continued. Before taking up her post, the new co-ordinator worked particularly hard to produce detailed portfolios of pupils’ work which clearly show how skills progress. Resources are satisfactory. Though little clay work has been produced pupils have used salt dough successfully. A satisfactory start has been made in using computers for research and to generate art. The appreciation of the work of artists

makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. However, whilst there are numerous examples of European art, other than a few pieces of African, Australian and Islamic art, pupils have too few opportunities to appreciate art beyond Europe. The school demonstrates how it values pupils' achievements in the way pupils' work is framed and displayed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Standards are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement for pupils in Key Stage 2. Only two lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. Judgements have been made following careful scrutiny of teachers' planning, portfolios of work, photographic evidence and following discussions with teachers and pupils. The school provides a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to progress. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
89. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a basic understanding of the design process and the need to identify the materials they will require. Younger pupils design and make photograph frames and some pupils explain how they have used card at the corners to make them more rigid. Others explain how they used balloons to make a flower pop out of a pot. Pupils in Year 2 making a model with moving arms and legs show reasonable control of scissors and a hole punch as they construct their figure. In their textile work they produce colourful samplers using a variety of simple stitches and repeating patterns. In Key Stage 2, pupils design and make a fruit salad as part of their course in food technology. They discuss the use of colour and are aware of health rules such as tying their hair back and cleaning their chopping board. Evidence shows that a good number have acquired the skills of peeling, chopping and slicing. Older pupils design and make a shelter to protect "Action Man" in changing weather conditions. They mark out, cut and join their materials and explain what makes their structure strong. As part of the planned "focus week" pupils in Years 5/6 use chicken wire to produce trees to be sited in the grounds. Pupils throughout the school are more confident in the making process than with the design element. Whilst pupils discuss their work confidently and say what worked well or what was difficult, only a small number of pupils reason how they could have overcome their difficulties. There is evidence of pupils in both key stages using their mathematical skills to measure and discuss shapes.
90. The quality of teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. Teachers plan work that is of interest to pupils and linked to other subjects, for example, relating moving figures to the topic "Ourselves". Both lessons had good introductions with clear instructions that enabled pupils to understand what they had to do. Pupils extended their specialist vocabulary as the teacher emphasised new words such as "flexible" and "malleable". Good emphasis was placed on health and safety issues as when cutting the wire. Both teachers moved around the class to give pupils confidence, though in both lessons teachers were too directive, not giving pupils sufficient time to work problems out for themselves. In the lesson where teaching was satisfactory, pupils did not have sufficient opportunity to design and list the materials required for their product. Pupils enjoyed both lessons and showed good concentration.

91. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Although the previous co-ordinator left at the end of the last school year, he has produced a useful portfolio of pupils' work and other documentation to enable the new co-ordinator to continue to develop the subject. The scheme of work and portfolio of pupils' work show evidence of the systematic teaching of skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Resources are adequate to teach all aspects of the subject. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development by recycling discarded materials and by providing good opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or as part of a team.

GEOGRAPHY

92. The standard of the work seen in both key stages is of a higher quality than is seen in many schools. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This is due mainly to the enthusiasm and commitment of all the staff and the good subject knowledge of the co-ordinator. The subject also benefits from the strong links with the school's commitment to Education for Sustainability.
93. Pupils in Key Stage 1 gain an understanding of their local area through studying shops and exploring the types of goods sold. Pupils further their research and speaking skills by deciding questions to ask the store manager during a visit to the local supermarket, particularly considering sustainability and the countries of origin. They use their knowledge of compass directions well and plot a route between the school and the church. Pupils extend their mapping skills by locating and naming the countries which make up the United Kingdom. They demonstrate an understanding of the difference between physical features such as hills and human features such as buildings by labelling a picture appropriately. Having participated in the "Walk to school" week, pupils of all ages have a good knowledge of the features of the locality and most have a good awareness of safety. Following the activity, a number of pupils wrote to the council to ask for traffic lights to be erected near to school.
94. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2. Following a visit to Cannock Wood, pupils in Years 3 and 4 compare the area to their locality and explain the reasons for the differences. They use their research skills well to produce individual studies of a country within the European Community. The work seen was of a high quality and demonstrated good research skills. In examining the weather they consider the reasons for storms and floods, and even why the sky is blue, discussing where they might find the answers. Older pupils consider the currencies of the European Union and debate the merits of the Euro, making some very valid points. As part of their work on rivers, pupils study the River Severn and produce detailed individual work with one pupil designing a very helpful information leaflet. Pupils acquire a good understanding of their environment with pupils in Years 5 and 6, who form the School Council, considering ways in which they might improve their school environment. Their debate demonstrated a mature understanding of issues such as safety when considering a tree house and the viability of building a mini-golf course. The task provided an important contribution to their personal development as they considered not only their own needs but also the needs of all the members of the school community. Pupils make good progress in mapping skills as they use a variety of increasingly detailed maps and plot co-ordinates.

95. Teaching is good in both key stages. Staff have a good knowledge of the subject and use the locality and resources well to make geography meaningful to pupils. As a result pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Activities are interesting and relevant and enable pupils to develop good enquiry skills. Good use is made of homework to extend learning, for example younger pupils question their parents about their shopping habits and older pupils work on their own projects. Pupils in both key stages have a good attitude to their work. They find the work interesting and challenging and respond well to the opportunities for involvement and responsibility. Parents report that the care for the environment fostered in school is also apparent at home, with pupils switching off lights and recycling where possible. Teachers present pupils with useful opportunities to extend their skills of numeracy and literacy for example, when writing to the Council and compiling questionnaires. Pupils use their numeracy skills in traffic surveys and recording the information on a pie chart. Limited use is made of information technology to present information in graphic form and to obtain weather information.
96. The subject is very well led by a very knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has planned well for the new curriculum, which is now in operation, and appropriate methods of assessment are being tried. Resources are adequate for the curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by using the local area, including the school's extensive grounds, and by trips further afield for pupils in Key Stage 2.

HISTORY

97. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 during the week of the inspection and only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 2. However, evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions indicate that standards have been maintained and that attainment is in line with that expected of pupils of this age. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards commensurate with their abilities.
98. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a sense of the passage of time first of all by looking at the history of their own family. They extend their understanding by sequencing a variety of homes in the order in which they were built, ranging from a thatched cottage to very recent tower blocks. They compare equipment and utensils used in the Victorian kitchen with their own modern kitchens.
99. In Key Stage 2, pupils build upon their knowledge through more detailed studies and through visits to local places of interest. Years 3 and 4 gain an understanding of life in Victorian times through their experiences during a visit to Shugborough Hall. They begin to understand the hardships of washday when using the dolly tub and mangle and also in scrubbing the kitchen clean. They also compare Victorian schooldays with their own experience of school. Pupils gain knowledge of famous Victorians such as Dr. Barnardo and discuss the plight of the poor in comparison to the more affluent members of society, including the effects of disease before the discovery of modern day medicines. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study the Tudor period and compile a timeline of significant events such as the Armada. They understand the aspects of life in the large country houses as they spend a day as courtiers and Beefeaters on a visit to Middleton Hall. History is brought alive to pupils in Key Stage 2 as they enjoy an Ancient Greek day, eating Greek food, painting vases and printing snakes to produce from the head of Medusa. They also study the ancient civilisations of Rome and Egypt, comparing these with modern times. Pupils of all

abilities suitably develop their skills of enquiry and research through using a range of sources such as books, photographs and objects from the time.

100. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that activities are interesting and varied and good use is made of visits to places of interest, particularly in Key Stage 2. Learning is also extended by using the expertise of visitors and by using the facilities of the Birmingham Museum. Teachers provide useful opportunities to develop pupils' research skills, for example through the use of information technology using CDROM and the Internet to discover information about the Egyptians. This enables pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and is good improvement since the last inspection. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 2 the teacher used questioning well to encourage pupils to think about the importance of the Nile to Ancient Egyptians. She managed the pupils well, dealing quickly with potential disruptions without interrupting the flow of the lesson. As a result pupils made sound progress in this lesson.
101. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Good planning, based on a two-year programme, ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered and there is continuity of learning from year to year. A good start has been made on planning for the new curriculum, though the school recognises that assessment procedures need to be reviewed accordingly. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' literacy skills through research and writing about the topics. Pupils have some opportunities to develop their numeracy skills through the study of chronology and the use of time lines. Resources for the teaching of history have improved since the last inspection and now include a number of real objects for pupils to handle. The teaching of history makes a useful contribution to pupils' understanding of their cultural heritage.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

102. Standards of attainment are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. This judgement is based on a scrutiny of a portfolio of work and lesson observations. In the previous report the standard of attainment was judged to be satisfactory and at times good. The drop in standards since the previous inspection can be explained by the increased requirements of the information and communication technology curriculum and the changes in the school population and outdated equipment. The school has only very recently taken delivery of a number of machines.
103. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made some progress using a range of software. However, many need adult support to perform even simple functions. Though pupils know the names for keyboard, monitor, mouse, cursor, shift key and backspace, however, they are not always certain how to use them. Using word processing software some pupils make labels, write a letter, change the font, change the font size and use upper case letters. Using a special program they create designs. With help, they are able to use music software to compose simple tunes. They also have experience of using a carpet robot. Some compile pie charts, pictograms and block graphs for example giving information about eye colour in Year 1. With the help of the teacher pupils printed their result. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, a group of pupils using the computer for the first time this term found the task of entering three sentences very challenging. Whilst they knew the function the shift key fulfilled they were not always able to identify the key on the keyboard. Some pupils are able to use a digital camera and with help print out the

photograph, for example, "An Ant" in work linked with mini-beasts. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have widened their experience of a range of software but many need adult help to produce the finished product. The scrutiny of work indicated steady progression in their ability to use word-processing to produce letters, poems, instructions, cards and a programme for a musical evening. Some incorporate clipart into their work as well as pictures using a digital camera. There is satisfactory progress in using technology to support musical composition, art and graph work. Pupils suitably develop their research skills to support learning in other subjects, for example in their study of Egypt and Italy using CDROM. Whilst some pupils use computers competently, many lack confidence. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson pupils needed help to access a file and their limited computer skills reduced the effectiveness of their learning in the literacy task set.

104. Teaching overall is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 teaching is satisfactory and one lesson was good. Where teaching is good the teacher's knowledge and understanding led to good planning with appropriate, challenging and assessable tasks which promote learning. In addition the teacher's approach is confident and encouraging and pupils are expected to work at a good pace thus producing a good volume of work. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 2 teaching was satisfactory. The planning was sufficiently detailed to enable the pupils to achieve the desired learning objectives. There was effective use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and promote learning. However, the teacher was not sufficiently familiar with the publishing program to teach with confidence and this affected pupils' progress. Teachers are becoming more confident in their skills and so are building the use of appropriate software programs into their lesson planning. Good use is made of word processing to label displays in all classrooms and corridors. This provides a good model for pupils. Pupils in both key stages have a positive attitude to information and communication technology. They are eager to use the machines and treat computers with respect.
105. The co-ordinator now has the knowledge and confidence to fulfil her clearly defined role, particularly with regard to planning. As a result the curriculum now ensures continuity and progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are in place but are being reviewed in the light of experience and the revised requirements in Curriculum 2000. An audit of staff's skills has resulted in some in-service training for teachers with more in-depth training arranged for the near future. Resources of hardware and software, much purchased since the previous inspection, are now satisfactory. There is a range of hardware, much of it new, but some of which is old and has a limited usage. The school has suitable software for developing pupils' skills in other subjects. As the school has only very recently been linked to the Internet, the use of this to research information and for e-mail is in its infancy. However, some Year 6 pupils have been introduced to electronic mail this term. The school has its own web-site entitled "From Trees to Sustainability" and is developing a second site. The new technology suite and the four computers in the library will significantly add to the learning opportunities of pupils. The school makes good use of digital cameras to record pupils' achievements and to support learning.

MUSIC

106. The last inspection judged found music to be a strength of the school. Music still holds an important place on the timetable but is no longer taught by a music specialist. Class teachers now teach their own pupils and are working hard to ensure that standards remain as high as possible. However some opportunities are missed to surround the pupils with music. Whereas children in one reception class work with Mozart playing in the background, pupils enter and leave assemblies in silence.
107. Owing to timetable constraints, only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and three at Key Stage 2. The lesson in Year 1 was an introduction to the school pantomime. It was packed with musical experiences for the pupils who were encouraged to play their instruments and categorise the sounds they made into catlike and giants' steps. They thoroughly enjoyed playing and listening to themselves and to each other; and displayed good control over their instruments. They applied their skills to defining the main tone of two contrasting excerpts of classical music. They attain beyond the expectations for pupils of their age. At Key Stage 2 the theme this term is timbre and again high emphasis is placed on pupils' developing the ability to listen intently and describe what they hear accurately. In a Year 4 lesson pupils tried to distinguish between high and low pitch. Many found it a challenging task. They also experimented with "crescendo" and "diminuendo". In a Year 6 lesson pupils described the quality of sound their instruments made using imaginative language such as "shimmering", and listened to classical music that imitated animal sounds. In all cases this was the first lesson of the new school year and pupils performed at the expected level for their age. Awareness of musical sound is highly developed in lessons. Tapes of music recorded last year indicate emphasis on pupils' composing their own music for specific purposes. There are well supported recorder groups. The school choir met for the first time during the inspection week, when emphasis was on enjoyment rather than quality of singing for this session.
108. In the lessons observed the teachers showed good subject knowledge. They all organised their lessons well with an interesting variety of activities, which kept their pupils interested, and with good levels of challenge so that pupils were stimulated to extend their thinking. There was a good balance between the pupils performing and listening, either to each other or to carefully chosen taped music. This developed their learning appropriately.
109. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is a music specialist. She has devised a simple, comprehensive assessment sheet but has not yet fully implemented this to include the recent changes to the music curriculum. Resources are good and pupils use them well and carefully. Opportunities to respond to recorded music and to join in with live music making help to promote spiritual development. The choir gives pupils the opportunity to mix with different children and develop social skills. The pupils have experience of listening to Caribbean and African music which promotes their cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Standards in physical education have improved since the last inspection, particularly for older pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' performance is in line with that expected of seven-year-olds. Older pupils attain higher standards than would be expected in most aspects of the subject, particularly in dance. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make the same rate of progress as others in their class. Pupils who experience physical difficulties persevere and take part in most activities. They make good progress in extending their range of movements as a result of the good support they receive from staff.
111. Pupils in Key Stage 1 successfully develop the skills of listening to instructions, taking turns and starting and ending a movement. The majority demonstrate an awareness of space. As they progress through the key stage pupils move in different ways and link activities such as balance and rolling to make a sequence. Most are developing a good level of co-ordination and control of their movements. Pupils of all ages understand the need to warm up to prepare for exercise and to cool down when exercise is over. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 they improve the quality of their movement and interpret music well. For example, when creating a dance to African music they perform large heavy movements to the drumbeat and their movements become faster as the music speeds up. In games, pupils develop skills in football, hockey, netball and cricket. Most understand the need to be aware of the position of the ball and their team-mates, and to improve their accuracy in passing and retrieving the ball. Their skills and knowledge have enabled teams representing the school to win the football league and be runners-up in netball. The oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6 undertake their outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential visit to Standon Bower. During this time they experience walking, climbing, orienteering and abseiling.
112. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, being good overall in both key stages. Very good teaching was seen in both key stages. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are now confident in teaching physical education. They are aware of the need for pupils to be safe and emphasise this in all lessons. For example, by giving very clear instructions as to how mats should be carried or the position of the head when performing a forward roll. All lessons begin with good introductions and clear instructions that enable pupils to understand what is expected of them. Careful planning of skills of increasing difficulty, for example when passing the ball, enables pupils to acquire new skills at a good rate. Teachers of Key Stage 1 pupils make good links to their topic "Ourselves" by encouraging pupils to feel their heart beat and take their pulse after strenuous exercise. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace which ensures pupils' interest is maintained and that they are active for the whole lesson. Very good use is made of demonstration by both staff and pupils. For example, a good demonstration of the position of the hands when making a chest pass in netball enables pupils to pass with increasing accuracy. Pupils are encouraged to analyse movements and sequences, to say what actions are good and how a sequence might be improved in order to improve their own performance. In the lessons where teaching was very good, teacher had high expectations and gave very good demonstrations, for example ways to travel, which sparked the pupils' imagination. Teachers endeavour to improve pupils' listening skills by giving increasingly complex instructions. They emphasise specialist vocabulary such as "motif" and use mathematical vocabulary where possible. For example "move diagonally" or "put your mat in the rectangle". Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy their lessons and are very well behaved. They strive hard to achieve high standards and are proud

when they acquire a new skill. During team games, pupils work well together, they observe the rules and try to make sure that all their team-mates have a turn with the ball.

113. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is a specialist and has provided suitable training and very good support for her colleagues. She has ensured that all the required elements are covered and that a good range of after-school clubs enables older pupils to improve their skills at a faster rate. There is now sufficient time allocated to the subject. Resources for the teaching of physical education are good for most aspects other than athletics. Very good use is made of the extensive grounds for games and orienteering and a fitness track. Many parents support their child well, for example by undertaking football coaching and taking part in the Fitness Focus Week. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development. This was particularly evident in team games and in a Year 2 lesson using the parachute. Pupils handled the parachute with reverence, they were very conscious of their actions and the need to work as a member of a team.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. Standards of work at the end of both key stages continue to meet the requirements of the Staffordshire Locally Agreed Syllabus.
115. Pupils in Key Stage 1 gain a good awareness of the Bible and Year 1 produce delightful books recording the story of creation as told to them from the Book of Genesis. This is developed in Year 2 as they write their own version of the Christmas story. Pupils of all abilities develop an understanding of the meaning of special, first of all by bringing in their own special object and describing it to a friend in class. They then look at special events such as Baptisms and the vicar baptises a doll and explains the significance of the ceremony. Pupils consider and learn to respect special objects for other faiths, such as a Muslim Prayer Mat, a Sikh Bangle and a statue of the Madonna. Their understanding of the meaning of respect is apparent as they examine artefacts and listen to each other talk about their families and their church.
116. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to explore special objects by looking at the special books of different religions such as the Bible and the Koran. Pupils understand the need to respect sacred books and some wash their hands before handling them. They have an awareness of the similarities between various religions, for example the significance of light in the celebrations of Christingle, Diwali and Hannukah. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 extend their understanding of religions by comparing the rules of each faith, the Ten Commandments, the Five Pillars of Islam and the five "K" s of Sikhism. Pupils make good progress in their moral development as they pass through the key stage. Younger pupils consider their response to temptations such as drugs, stealing and copying work, whilst older pupils examine rules for living in a community or belonging to a club or team. Through role-play they develop strategies to help them deal with bullying or people who encourage them to do wrong and to consider the consequences of their own actions.

117. Teaching is good in both stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All the lessons observed were good in Key Stage 1. Of the three lessons seen in Key Stage 2, one was satisfactory, one was good and the other was very good. In the good lessons, teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to think and in one class good use was made of role-play to examine moral dilemmas. All the staff make good use of the pupils' own experiences to examine wider issues, such as respect for special books and objects or the importance of rules for living. In the very good lesson, the teacher made good use of a candle as a focal point to create a suitable atmosphere to enable pupils to experience a feeling of spirituality and to appreciate the special nature of holy books. Teaching is enhanced by regular visits from the vicar to take assembly or to participate in lessons and by visits to local churches. Pupils display a good attitude to their work and respond well to the interesting activities provided. They enjoy participating in role-play for instance to enact the marriage service. They treat artefacts with great respect and listen well to the ideas of other pupils.
118. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator and it is well planned to cover the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Some assessment opportunities are highlighted in lesson plans. Resources are sufficient for the curriculum and the stock of artefacts has been supplemented since the last inspection. Visits to places of worship of other religions are sometimes undertaken as are visits from other religious leaders. However, these are relatively infrequent. The subject makes a sound contribution to literacy through written descriptions and retelling of stories. Some contribution is made to numeracy, for example, Year 2 count the glasses of wine at the Last Supper. The use of information technology is limited. The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.