

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fazeley, Nr. Tamworth

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124081

Headteacher: Mr P. E. Moon

Reporting inspector: Mr. G. S. Nunn
1185

Dates of inspection: 30th October - 3rd November 2000

Inspection number: 224890
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Coleshill Street
Fazeley
Nr. Tamworth
Staffordshire

Postcode: B78 3RQ

Telephone number: 01827 475010

Fax number: 01827 475010

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr W. Jones

Date of previous inspection: 19th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G. Nunn 1185	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Mrs. C. Murray-Watson 9510	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs. S. Brown 1189	Team inspector	English	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Physical education	
Mr J. Collins 27541	Team inspector	Science	
		Geography	
		Information and communication technology	
		Equality of opportunity	
Mrs. J. Dickins 6752	Team inspector	Art and design	
		Design and technology	
		Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
Mrs. N. G. Moss 22685	Team inspector	History	
		Music	
		Religious education	
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This larger than average size primary school is situated in Fazeley some two miles south of Tamworth, in Staffordshire. The school currently has 392 pupils on roll aged 4 to 11, organised into 14 classes. At the time of the inspection 51 pupils were in the Foundation Stage (Year R). The number of pupils on roll has remained stable since the last inspection. The school attracts pupils from Fazeley and the social composition of the population living in the area around the school is mixed. School assessments indicate that, although the range of abilities is wide on entry, attainment overall is about average when compared with children of a similar age nationally. Nine pupils have an ethnic minority background which is slightly higher than similar schools of this size. Fifty-one pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the national average. Sixty-one pupils have special educational needs with seven having a statement to that effect. Again this is broadly in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Millfield Primary School provides a good quality of education for its pupils. It is an improving school with several good features. It provides a good start for the youngest children where they make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills in particular. Good progress is made throughout Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, high standards have been attained in mathematics and science whilst in English pupils are attaining national standards overall. However, in the writing element of English, pupils' standards, particularly at the top of Key Stage 2, are below the national standards for eleven-year-olds.

Of the other subjects pupils study, they also exceed nationally expected levels in information and communication technology (ICT), history, music and design and technology. They attain the levels expected nationally of eleven-year-olds in all other subjects.

Good progress has been made by the school since the last inspection largely as a result of the good leadership and management shown by the governors, headteacher deputy headteacher and senior teacher in particular. The quality of teaching is good overall. There are effective arrangements in place to support the care and welfare of pupils. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to their work are also good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain high standards in mathematics, science, ICT, history, music and design and technology.
- The governors, headteacher and senior teachers provide good, effective leadership for the school which has contributed significantly to the school's improvement.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development.
- The provision for the youngest pupils, as well as for those with special educational needs, is good.
- Good teaching overall produces effective quality learning for pupils.

What could be improved

- The standards of pupils' writing by the age of eleven.
- Assessment procedures in those subjects without them.
- The current system for monitoring pupils' work and the quality of teaching they receive, in order to raise further the standards of teaching and learning.
- Playground arrangements particularly at lunchtime, as well as accommodation improvements for special educational needs pupils, the school library and the Year 2 classrooms.
- The use of ICT in other curriculum areas.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1996, the school has done well to address many of the weaknesses identified at that time. The quality of teaching overall has improved considerably since the last inspection and particularly so in Key Stage 1. The school monitors closely the provision made for lower attaining pupils and has begun to monitor that for higher attaining pupils also. Standards in English have risen, particularly in reading. Systems to improve the monitoring of the curriculum and teaching have been introduced, although further work is required in these areas. Subject co-ordinators are now fully in place although the monitoring aspect of their role is not fully developed. The school now has a very good strategic plan with very good systems in place to monitor its progress towards identified priorities and targets.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	D	D	E
mathematics	D	C	C	E
science	C	A	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that when compared with all schools in the year 2000, pupils' standards at the age of 11 are about average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results in all three subjects are well below average. An analysis of pupils' attainment levels shows that a quarter of the pupils in that year group had special educational needs and that this had a marked effect on the school's overall performance.

Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 pupils' standards are in line with national standards in English overall, but still below that standard in the writing element. These pupils' standards are above national standards in mathematics and science. Pupils' levels of attainment exceed nationally expected levels in history, music, ICT as well as in design and technology. In the remaining subjects, pupils attain the nationally expected levels. Pupils

make good progress in Key Stage 2 in mathematics, science, history, design and technology and ICT, with satisfactory progress being made in all other subjects.

By the time pupils reach the age of 7, at the end of Key Stage 1, they attain standards that are above national standards in mathematics and science and in line with national standards in reading and writing. Their levels of attainment also exceed nationally expected levels in history, music and ICT. They attain nationally expected levels in all other subjects. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in mathematics, science, history, music and ICT with satisfactory progress being made in all other subjects.

When pupils begin school, their overall attainment is about average. They settle in well to the school and make satisfactory progress right across the Foundation Stage and so do well to attain the nationally required Early Learning Goals. They are well prepared by their teachers to go onto the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school, enjoy their lessons and are confident in their approach to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are developing care and sensitivity to the needs of others. Relationships across the school are good.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are in line with those found in primary schools nationally.

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.

In 95 per cent of the lessons observed the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. In 53 per cent of those lessons it was good, being very good in a further 11 per cent. In 5 per cent of lessons the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Within the overall pattern there are variations. The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage (4-5 years old) is never less than satisfactory and is often good. A high proportion of good and very good teaching takes place in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. A higher proportion of satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching occurs in Years 5 and 6 than elsewhere in the school. Where teaching is good and very good, pupils make good progress in their learning. Less progress is made where teaching is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been introduced into the school and these are being successfully taught. In addition, teachers' planning for lessons is good and in successful lessons, pupils are challenged by the work set, behave well and work at a brisk pace. The contribution of classroom support staff has a positive effect on standards. Where teaching is unsatisfactory

pupils are not challenged by the work they are required to do. As a result of this, little work is completed and standards of behaviour deteriorate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is in place which reflects the aims of the school and meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, particularly when taught in small groups. As a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. As a result good provision is made for pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe and caring environment where every child is valued.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school maintains productive links with parents and benefits from considerable support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior teacher. The school is well managed. There is a clear vision for the future of the school based on a commitment to high academic standards. The roles and responsibilities of curriculum leaders are now in need of review and this is recognised by the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective in helping to shape the direction of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good analysis of national test results as well as other formal assessments has taken place in recent years. This is now being used effectively, along with other strategies, to evaluate the school's performance and to set clear and appropriate targets for development.
The strategic use of resources	There are enough teachers and support staff to promote good learning. There are also sufficient learning materials. Although some aspects of accommodation are very good, the playground is too small, the library inadequate, there is no small teaching space for pupils with special educational needs and the high ceiling in the Year 2 classrooms causes an unacceptable level of noise.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children make good progress in school.• Behaviour in school is good.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• The school is well led and managed.• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.• The teaching is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of work their children are expected to do at home.• The amount of information they receive about how their child is getting on.• The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons.

The above views are taken from the parents' meeting that was attended by 19 parents, and 203 responses to the parents' questionnaire.

The inspection team support parents' positive views. With regard to homework, the inspection found that there were variations in the practice of giving homework, largely in Key Stage 2. The amount of information sent out to parents was considered to be sufficient. The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons was considered to be adequate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The previous inspection report found that pupils' attainment at the age of 11 was in line with national levels in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history, geography, physical education and religious education. It also found that the levels being attained were above national levels in art and music, but below those levels in design and technology. Since that time, teachers' expectations have been raised and a number of initiatives have been put into place to improve standards. These include a noticeable improvement in the quality of teaching, detailed and thorough analysis of National Curriculum results, target setting and pupil tracking, the revision of many schemes of work and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. All these factors have had a positive impact on pupils' standards and the amount of progress they make in their learning. This is most noticeable in mathematics and science, where pupils are now attaining standards that are above the national standards by the time they leave the school.

2. The Year 2000 National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds show the proportion of pupils attaining national standards is similar to the proportion that do so nationally in mathematics, below that proportion in English and well below in science. The proportion who exceed national standards is below the proportion who do so nationally in all three subjects. The teachers' own assessments largely confirm these findings. A consideration of the trends in pupils' results since 1996 shows that results have fallen slightly in English but risen in mathematics and science.

3. When pupils' results in the school, at the age of 11, are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they show that pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science is well below average.

4. Since 1999 there is a clear indication that standards have fallen in mathematics and science and remained broadly similar in English. This overall fall in standards was significantly influenced by a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that particular cohort of pupils, than found in the previous year or in the current year. Indeed, inspection findings show that the current Year 6 are well on line to exceed national standards in mathematics and science and to attain national standards in English. Within the overall picture there are variations, notably in English. Whilst standards in speaking, listening and reading are similar to national standards, pupils' performance in writing is well below average. The school has recognised this and identified it as a major issue in its strategic plan. The need for more writing opportunities in other subjects has been identified as has the need to continue and extend the moderated self-review programme. The school hopes that these steps, together with the growing impact of the National Literacy Strategy, will have a significant and positive effect on pupils' writing standards. The rising standards in mathematics and science are largely due to improved teaching techniques, in-service training for teachers, the setting of high but achievable targets for pupils and, in the case of mathematics, the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

5. The National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds in the Year 2000 show that the proportion of pupils attaining the national average in writing is similar to the proportion that does so nationally, but exceeds that proportion in reading and mathematics. Teacher assessments also show that pupils' standards in science are above national standards. The proportion of pupils who exceed national standards is above national proportions in mathematics and science and similar to those proportions in reading and writing.

6. When this school's results are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they are similar to the other schools' results in writing and reading and above average in mathematics. Since 1996 the overall trend in pupils' standards has been upwards in reading, writing and mathematics.

7. Inspection findings show that the standards of the current Year 2 pupils are above national standards in mathematics and science and in line with national standards in reading and writing. This is a noticeable improvement on the previous inspection findings, particularly in mathematics and science. There are several factors that have contributed to the rising trend in standards, notably the significant improvement in the quality of teaching since that inspection, the very careful analysis of pupils' performance and the setting of high but attainable targets for them.

8. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly average but within that there is clear evidence of a very broad spread of ability. During their time in Year R, children, in their Foundation Stage of education, make satisfactory progress in their learning in all the areas of the curriculum they study. Many, by the end of their reception year have attained the Early Learning Goals outlined nationally for pupils of that age and are ready for the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1. Sound and often good teaching, together with a good working environment, ensures that these young children settle quickly into school life and have a good start to their education.

9. In English, most pupils in Key Stage 1 listen well and follow instructions, gaining confidence in oral work and in learning to express their thoughts and ideas. This satisfactory progress is similarly built upon during Key Stage 2 so that by the time pupils are eleven, their speaking and listening skills are appropriately developed. They are confident when asking questions and also when speaking in class. Progress in reading is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils throughout the school enjoy books and by 11, most are keen to talk about their favourite authors and the characters in a book. They can read with a satisfactory degree of fluency, accuracy and expression. In writing, pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2, so that by the age of 11 many pupils' writing has a lack of variety and limited range. In addition, punctuation marks are often incorrectly used, spelling is unsatisfactory and the standard of many pupils' handwriting and presentation skills is too low.

10. In mathematics, pupils' standards at the age of seven are above national standards. They can count and order numbers to 100, solve simple mathematical problems and identify simple fractions. They correctly identify basic shapes and use an increasingly wide vocabulary of mathematical terms in the correct context. Pupils make good progress in the number aspect of mathematics because of the high proportion of good teaching they receive throughout the key stage. This good teaching continues in Key Stage 2 and enables pupils to make good progress and thus attain standards that exceed national standards. By the age of 11, pupils can multiply and divide numbers to six figures, they can use all four number processes to two places of decimals and are confident with vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. In addition, they can construct angles of varying degrees and know the various properties of both two and three-dimensional shapes. They are most confident in carrying out mathematical investigations and in the handling and interpretation of data.

11. In science, pupils' attainment by the time they are seven is above national standards and, by the time they are 11, their attainment also exceeds national standards. In both key stages, progress is good in experimental and investigative science as opportunities are provided for pupils to plan their own experiments, select appropriate equipment and make decisions for themselves. In both key stages, pupils make good progress in their knowledge

and understanding of living and non-living things, plants and animals in their habitats, of forces and, particularly, of the properties of materials. As a result, by the age of 11, they know the main functions of most body organs and the various parts of plants. In addition, they are well aware of the concepts of change, evaporation and condensation and can discuss confidently issues such as how various materials can block out light as well as how light can travel through some objects but not others.

12. In the other subjects that the pupils study they make good progress in their learning right across the school in history, music and ICT, so that by the age of 11 pupils' levels of attainment exceed the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age. They also exceed the nationally expected levels for eleven-year-olds in design and technology. Whilst the progress overall is good in this subject, they make better progress in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, where their progress is satisfactory. In addition, more opportunities need to be provided to increase the use of ICT in other subject areas in order to assist in the raising of pupils' overall standards.

13. In geography, physical education and art and design they make satisfactory progress in their learning right across the school so that by the age of 11 the levels being attained by pupils are similar to those levels expected of eleven-year-olds nationally. In religious education, pupils at both seven and eleven attain the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils of that age. Their progress in both key stages is satisfactory. The satisfactory and sometimes good progress pupils make in their learning in the various subjects is directly attributable to the high proportion of satisfactory, good and, on occasions, very good teaching they receive.

14. Higher attaining pupils are adequately catered for by the school and the amount of progress made by this group is similar to other pupils given their prior attainment levels. There are variations, however, in the provision for this group of pupils. The progress they make is directly related to the quality of teaching they receive. In some classes, teachers plan work specifically for this group that is geared to their high prior attainment levels. However, this is not the case in a minority of classes where such pupils are expected to complete work that is similar to the rest of the pupils in the class. In these classes their progress is just satisfactory. The few pupils who have English as an additional language have appropriate provision made for them and, as a result, their progress is similar to that made by their peers.

15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This is largely as a result of the effective and sensitive support they receive from their teachers and particularly other support staff, as well as the good provision established by the special educational needs co-ordinator in order to help these pupils.

16. National test results for the past few years have been very well analysed and the school monitors pupils' overall attainment and progress. In response to this analysis, targets for improvement have been appropriately set in English, mathematics and science. There is every indication to suggest that the school will be successful in meeting the performance targets it has set in 2001. There is no significant difference in the amount of progress made by boys and girls. A survey of parents showed that 88 per cent of parents are well satisfied with the amount of progress their children make whilst only six per cent were dissatisfied.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The previous inspection report found this aspect of the school to be good. Since then standards in this area have been maintained. Pupils' attitudes to their learning, right across the school are good. They arrive promptly at the start of the school day, ready and eager to

learn. With the support they receive through well-established classroom routines and the very positive encouragement of the teaching staff, they are developing into confident learners who show enthusiasm for the tasks they are set and the skills they are acquiring. For example, in a science lesson seen, their eagerness to explore simple electrical components and the speed with which they completed a working circuit were matched by a real sense of achievement and satisfaction. Even those pupils who found the task hard initially persevered until it was completed. This willingness to persevere was seen in other lessons, such as mathematics and English. There are several classrooms where the level of noise generated because of high ceilings and lack of partition walls is a constant distraction both to teachers and pupils. Pupils do their best to concentrate, but the difficult working conditions limit the quality of learning that is possible.

18. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. The pupils respond well to the consistently high expectations of staff that conduct throughout the day should be thoughtful, sensible and show due regard for the needs of everyone in the school. Whilst there are individuals who find it difficult to attain the standards of self control expected, they are generally well managed and their behaviour is not a distraction to others. Both behaviour and attitudes to learning are of a very high standard when the quality of teaching is very good. In particular, this occurs when the lesson topics are well chosen to engage the interest of the pupils and when the level of challenge is well pitched to match their abilities and prior learning. In a small number of lessons seen where these elements were not present, the standards of behaviour fell and the pupils became noisy and inattentive.

19. Relationships between the pupils, and with adults, are good. Considerable emphasis is placed in the school on showing appreciation for what individuals have achieved and on the need for care and consideration of others' needs. As a result, pupils are developing into thoughtful and sensitive young people who are learning to contribute to the well-being both of the school community and to the wider local community through a range of charitable giving and community service. Within the classroom, pupils listen attentively to each other and appreciate each other's successes. They share ideas and offer each other support during paired and group activities. Pupils of all ages take responsibility for a range of routine tasks within the school day. The older pupils respond well to the opportunities that they are given to show initiative as well as to contribute ideas on how things might be improved.

20. The pupils with special educational needs display the same good standards of behaviour, attitudes to learning and personal development as other pupils in the school. Within the small groups where they are given additional learning support they want to succeed, try hard and are pleased with what they are achieving. In a whole class setting, some older pupils became noisy and inattentive in a few lessons seen where the quality of teaching was not sufficient to engage their interest.

21. The levels of attendance are in line with those found in primary schools nationally and levels of unauthorised absence are below the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Across the school, the quality of teaching, including that of children in the Foundation Stage, is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons. Of these lessons the quality of teaching is good in 53 per cent and very good in a further 11 per cent. In five per cent of lessons the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in numeracy is particularly good. No one single subject is the focus for unsatisfactory teaching. Within this overall pattern though there are noticeable variations. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is never less than satisfactory and very often is good. This high proportion of good and often very good teaching continues throughout Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. In

Years 5 and 6 a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching occurs and there is also a higher proportion of satisfactory rather than good teaching found in these year groups compared with elsewhere in the school. This variation in teaching quality has a direct impact on pupils' learning. Pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4 make good progress in learning. The amount of progress levels out in Years 5 and 6 and whilst the progress in their learning in these year groups is not unsatisfactory overall, it is not as good as the progress in learning made by pupils elsewhere in the school.

23. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. At that time 85 per cent was considered to be satisfactory or better. This has now risen to 95 per cent. Of particular note is the improvement in teaching in Key Stage 1 where, in 1996, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 55 per cent of lessons only. This has now risen to 97 per cent of lessons. In addition, the proportion of good and very good teaching has also increased throughout the school. This increase in the quality of teaching is as a result of an increased awareness of the need to monitor teachers' practice within their classroom. The headteacher and other senior teachers visit classrooms to both monitor the teaching and to work alongside teachers in order to develop their skills. The discussion that follows identifies focussed areas for improvement. Whilst this process is relatively new and in need of some further refinement, it nevertheless is having a positive impact on teaching quality. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in recent years has also given teachers a good framework for planning and more precise direction in the delivery of lessons. All these factors have made a contribution to the improvement in the quality of teaching and this in turn has had a favourable impact on the amount of progress pupils make in their learning. The teaching of literacy is variable and ranges from unsatisfactory on a few occasions to good on others. Particularly good practice was observed in Years 3 and 4. The National Literacy Strategy has been soundly implemented but one or two areas require further development. For example, time is not well managed in one or two classes and on occasions one or two teachers do not follow plans with sufficient care. In the best practice, teaching is lively and exciting with very good use being made of texts to stimulate pupils and challenge their thinking. This ensures that pupils in these lessons make good progress.

24. The teaching of numeracy is good. There is an effective focus on the development of mental arithmetic with regular, challenging questioning at the start of most lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculating solutions to problems. Lessons develop well with appropriate activities being set to match pupils' prior attainment levels. The pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons, being well motivated by the work set. As a result most pupils make good progress in their learning of mathematical skills and concepts.

25. The high proportions of good and very good teaching are characterised by a variety of factors. Lessons are introduced in a way that catches pupils' imagination and gives a clear focus to the lesson. Similarly, teachers ask clear, concise questions which challenge pupils' understanding and require them to articulate their thoughts clearly. This was particularly noticeable in a very good Year 3 mathematics lesson where pupils were initially required to play a game identifying various two-dimensional shapes from a description of their properties. The pupils really enjoyed the game and were keen to get the answers correct. The teacher then moved quickly onto number triangles explaining how all numbers on each side of a triangle had to add up to a particular number. The pupils were keen to answer and, even though some answers were incorrect the teacher through skilful questioning helped her pupils find the correct answers. Group work followed based on similar tasks of increasing difficulty, the level of difficulty being dependent on the pupils' prior attainment levels. Some pupils found the process difficult at first but, as a result of the teacher's high expectations and her persistent challenging of her pupils, all of them made very good progress in their learning during the course of the lesson. Many had the knowledge of number facts to 20 reinforced and most learnt about the properties of various two-dimensional shapes.

26. Such good lessons are well structured and proceed at a brisk pace. This was particularly noticeable in a good Year R physical education lesson. The lesson opened with a brisk warm up activity. This involved pupils moving around the hall and responding quickly to the teacher's stop and start instructions. In addition, they had to change both pace and direction as required. The lesson quickly moved on to similar movement activities using appropriate gymnastics apparatus. Individual children were asked to show the others their particular sequence of movements. This they did with skill and pride. The lesson finished with a calm down activity. These young children worked hard, with enthusiasm and at a good pace, being well motivated by both the task and the teacher. The teacher ensured that they remained working briskly by moving the lesson on at the appropriate time, with targets being set for children to achieve. As a result of this good teaching, all pupils made good progress in the development of their physical skills. An additional feature of this and many other lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, was the very good support that both pupils and teachers receive from the support assistants. They were seen making most effective contributions in many lessons and, as a result, the quality of pupils' learning was greatly enhanced.

27. Other characteristics of good lessons are where teachers manage their pupils well, expecting and getting good behaviour as well as managing the use of resources in such a way that enhances their pupils' learning. This was evident in a very good Year 4 history lesson. Pupils responded well to their teacher's opening remarks where it was made clear to the pupils what they were expected to learn during the course of the lesson. The focus of the lesson, building on the previous lessons about the Viking invaders, was carefully and clearly explained. In groups, pupils were required to examine photographs and copies of Viking artefacts. They were asked to act as historical detectives and archaeologists to try and piece together a picture of Viking life. Continuous high quality open-ended questioning by the teacher ensured that her pupils' historical skills of chronology and deduction were developed. Pupils became totally involved in the lesson and many were excited by it. Despite the pupils' obvious enthusiasm the skill shown by the teacher in challenging her pupils ensured that they remained engrossed in their work and that very good standards of behaviour were maintained. As a result, very good progress was made in pupils' learning.

28. Where teaching is less successful and on occasions unsatisfactory, such a high standard of behaviour is not always achieved. In addition, the pace of the lesson is slow and pupils are unclear as to what they are required to learn. This was most evident in a Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils in their group work session in particular, were unclear about what was required in their work on chronological report writing. As a result, some pupils did very little and began to disrupt the work of others. The pace of the lesson fell as a result of the teacher constantly having to try to get those pupils back to work. Consequently, little work was completed and, as a result, the amount of progress made by pupils in their learning was unsatisfactory.

29. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is most noticeable in mathematics and science. In subjects where such knowledge is most secure, pupils' learning is enhanced.

30. Teachers' planning of pupils' work is good and clearly identifies what pupils of different levels of prior attainment will be required to do. This is particularly so in English and mathematics. In addition, such plans identify what resources will be required to be used during the lesson. These are used well by teachers to enhance pupils' learning and the amount of progress they make.

31. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment are sound. Most teachers are skilled in using questions to check and challenge pupils' thinking and understanding and most are

adept at asking good follow-up questions to pupils' initial responses. Good use is made of plenary sessions at the end of many lessons to assess what pupils have learned in that lesson and to further reinforce their subject knowledge and understanding. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, teachers' recording of their pupils' attainments and the subsequent use of that to plan the next pieces of work for them, is limited and as a result is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the marking of pupils' work is variable, ranging from unsatisfactory, where work is not marked at all, to very good, where pupils are given a clear indication of how well they have done and what they now need to do to continue to improve.

32. Pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who have English as an additional language, are fully integrated into classroom activities. They are given tasks appropriate to their learning needs. Where relevant, these relate directly to the pupils' good individual education plans. Teachers give good support to their learning needs and extra effective support is often given by learning support assistants. Teachers effectively monitor the progress made by special educational needs pupils. They are well supported in this by a good special educational needs co-ordinator. The teachers and co-ordinator in partnership, regularly assess and record pupils' progress in order to plan the next work for them. Very occasionally, in some classrooms, these pupils' needs are not sufficiently catered for. This is usually where there is insufficient recognition of some of these pupils' limited attention spans. Overall, these pupils are well taught and make good progress in lessons at a level commensurate with their prior attainment levels.

33. In a survey carried out prior to the inspection, a group of parents were concerned about the work their children were required to do at home. The inspection team, however, feels that the work pupils are required to do at home is, in most cases, appropriate and well related to work that is going on in classrooms. They also feel that, particularly in Key Stage 2, the setting of homework is more variable and that a more consistent approach in each year group is necessary.

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

34. The previous report found the curriculum to be broad and balanced. It reflected the aims of the school and the statutory requirements in all respects. A concern at that time was the appropriate coverage of subjects on timetables and that the best use was not always made of time. To some extent this issue has been addressed although the additional time allocated to English is not always used to best purpose. For example, such time was used inappropriately in a lower ability set to extend the literacy hour for a further forty minutes, when a significant proportion found it difficult to remain on task for the original hour. A further criticism in the previous report was that work set did not always match the needs of the lower and higher attaining pupils and this was hindering progress. Decisions about the grouping of pupils were not based firmly enough on the needs of the pupils. It was felt that teachers did not focus on the needs of the individual pupils in planning and monitoring progress.

35. Since then, the curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been developed and this is good, linked firmly to the Early Learning Goals for children in the reception class. Planning for these children is good. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 remains broad, balanced and continues to reflect the aims of the school. Statutory requirements are met. Inconsistencies remain, however, in the matching of work to the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils. Whilst pupils are set into two broad groups for English and mathematics, there are occasions when higher attaining pupils are presented with tasks which are undemanding, whilst lower attainers are expected to cope with the same work as the rest of the large set of pupils. The quality of planning is good, with a consistent approach by all teachers in long, medium and short-term planning. A weakness, however, is the evaluation section within planning. The practice of completing this part of the plans has not yet become standard. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects. Some are in the process of being modified and updated to take account of the latest national guidelines.

36. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively implemented and is having a noticeable effect on raising standards in reading, but has not yet had the desired impact on spelling and writing, particularly where the older pupils in Key Stage 2 are concerned. The school is aware of the need to address writing and has made this a priority in its strategic plan. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and has been very effective in raising standards in mathematics. The use of literacy in some other curricular areas has yet to be realised. For example, written work in religious education and history is limited. There is a good emphasis placed on the development of subject specific language in other areas of the curriculum which is helping to widen pupils' vocabulary. Other strategies such as 'Additional Literacy Support' and 'booster classes' are effectively contributing to improving standards. An area for development is a more balanced approach to the use of ICT in the classroom in order to support all areas of the curriculum.

37. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs as well as for those for whom English is an additional language. They are given as many opportunities as other pupils to be involved in all areas of the curriculum, particularly in developing their basic skills, knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. Good provision is made for such pupils much of this being within classrooms where tasks, in the best practice, are adjusted to meet their requirements. Such pupils make good gains in learning as a result. Pupils' individual education plans are good and move their learning forward well, with work being matched to targets in these plans. The good focus on oral work in some subjects, for example art and design and design and technology, ensures good access to learning.

38. The range of extra-curriculum activities is adequate. There is little in the way of provision for Key Stage 1 pupils. Older pupils have an adequate choice of musical and sporting activities. The oldest pupils have the opportunity for a residential experience to Coven Outdoor Pursuits Centre. These activities make an effective contribution to pupils' personal development. The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including citizenship, permeates the curriculum and also underpins pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The scheme of work gives good attention to raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of drugs' misuse and provides sex education for the oldest pupils. It is well supported through the good links established with outside agencies, such as the police, and with the school nurse. The use of circle time effectively promotes an awareness of others, as well as a sense of empathy and caring, reflecting well the positive ethos of the school.

39. The school has established a good range of links with the local community. For example, pupils deliver harvest baskets for the elderly and take them Christmas presents. There are good links with Tamworth Football Club, and pupils have been involved with the development of the Fazeley Nature Trail with British Waterways. Industrial links are well established with the Staffordshire Newsletter and the reading support that was provided through Foseco, a local company. The school enjoys very good links with the local pyramid of schools with shared activities, joint curriculum development initiatives and termly meetings with members of the senior management teams.

40. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and is active in promoting a model of school and daily life where individuals are valued and pupils are able to gain insights into the needs and concerns of others. Every opportunity is taken, both in classrooms and in school assemblies, to celebrate achievement and to express gratitude for the contribution each person is making to the life of the school. Most parents feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals.

41. Provision for social and moral development is very good and has a positive effect on the character and ethos of the school. Time is given each week for personal, health and social education and a wide range of topics is covered. For example, during the inspection week, a calm and sensible approach to both Halloween and Guy Fawkes' Night was being fostered through careful discussion and clear instructions on personal safety. Simple and relevant class rules are established through discussion between the pupils and staff. The good use of "circle time" teaches pupils to be respectful of feelings and opinions other than their own. The positive and consistent approach of the class teachers towards maintaining mutual respect and the recognition of adult authority helps the pupils to develop confidence and self-discipline within a secure and supportive learning environment. Pupils are also made aware of the needs of the wider community and how they can make their own contribution towards helping others. This is done through the charitable giving and practical service offered to a wide range of local charities.

42. Whilst provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, it is less evident in the life of the school than that for their social and moral awareness. For example, the teaching staff do not always take advantage of, or plan for, the opportunities that are available, within assemblies and class lessons, for pupils to reflect on their own experiences. Within the brisk daily round, moments of quietness and wonder are rare. The provision for raising the cultural awareness of the pupils has some good areas. For example, a wide range of recorded music is played before and after school assemblies and music and drama are a strong feature of school productions. However, little was seen in the school to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society, the contribution that different cultures make to our daily lives, or cultural elements within subject areas other than religious education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school's procedures for the welfare of its pupils are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school provides a clean, safe and caring environment where every pupil is valued. Due regard is paid to the health and safety of the pupils, with orderly movement around the building. Safe practice, in physical education for example, is actively promoted.

44. Playground provision, however, is unsatisfactory. The area available for pupils at break and dinner times is too small for all the pupils and contains little in the way of play equipment or designated areas where pupils can be quiet. The school is aware of the difficulties presented by the lack of space and has plans to enlarge and enhance the area. In the meantime, more needs to be done to provide pupils with more to do than simply rush about, with the constant possibility of knocking into each other.

45. Appropriate procedures are in place for child protection. The school liaises with outside agencies as required.

46. Academic progress in English, mathematics and science, is closely monitored and work is generally well chosen to provide an appropriate level of challenge so that the pupils can make good progress. This level of monitoring does not extend as fully to the other subjects of the curriculum. The assessments that the teachers make of what each child knows and can do, are not always reflected in the planning of subsequent lessons. This can sometimes affect the progress pupils can make. Assessment arrangements for pupils in the Foundation Stage are good and used effectively to inform teachers' planning. The school's marking policy is not always consistently followed. Written work is sometimes not marked and when it is, the comments are not always sufficiently detailed to help the pupils improve their work. Pupils nonetheless receive considerable encouragement to give of their best and the school rewards good work through "achievement" assemblies each week.

47. The school's very good provision for pupils' social and moral development has a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement. Standards of behaviour and relationships are good as a result, so that the pupils work well together and are prompt to follow instructions. The consistently high expectations of staff that the pupils will behave well and work hard contribute positively to the amount that is achieved by each child.

48. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional learning support by a well-managed team of learning support staff who make a positive contribution to the progress these pupils make. The school has good systems in place to track the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. When support staff work with pupils they complete records carefully and this provides good information for the class teacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator, and the additional literacy support manager. This information is well used to plan new work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school enjoys a good measure of support from the parent body and maintains productive links both with parents and with individuals and organisations from the wider local community. A high proportion of parents returned the questionnaires prior to the inspection and the great majority expressed positive views in nearly all areas of school life. Of concern to a significant minority, however, was the amount of work their children were expected to do at home, the amount of information received about how their child is getting on and the range of activities provided by the school outside of lessons. The inspection found that there were variations in the practice of giving homework, largely in the classes containing the older children. The amount of written information given to parents, both about day to day events and the progress that individual pupils are making, is sufficient and of good quality. This also applies to the good quality of reports that parents receive and which not only indicate a pupil's successes, but also set targets for improvement. The range of activities provided outside of lessons is adequate, although they are confined to after school activities, as the midday break is too short for any lunchtime clubs.

50. The school benefits from a good measure of help from parents, both in school and with the homework projects undertaken by their children. A course, linked to the local college of further education, provided a group of parents with extensive guidance on how best to work in school, whether with children in class or with practical administrative tasks. This additional support for pupils and staff has a positive impact on the work that is done, as well as giving the parent-helpers a greater understanding of school life. Another example of good collaboration between home and school was the creation of attractive 'story' bags for the youngest children to take home. The bags were made by a parent with considerable craft skills, which gave a boost to the provision the school was making for the pupils to share books and toys at home, with their parents assisting in their reading. There is also an active parent teacher association, which organises social events and raises valuable funds for the school. There is a good partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs, who are encouraged from the beginning to be fully involved with the education of their children. Parents are fully involved in the review process, establishing and revising review targets. This is appreciated by parents, the majority of whom are well satisfied with the provision.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The previous inspection report described the leadership and management of the school as being purposeful and having managed the expansion of the school well. This has not only been maintained but successfully built upon. Indeed a high proportion of those parents who responded to the questionnaire about the school felt that the school was well led and managed. This good quality leadership and management has a positive effect on many aspects of school life. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior teacher and together they give the school a clear purpose and direction. The headteacher works closely with his governors and members of staff to continue to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. His clear vision for the future is evident in his determination to raise pupils' standards of attainment by focusing on several key strategies. For example, the need to continue to improve standards of numeracy by the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In addition he recognises the need to raise pupils' standards of writing, which was identified as an area of concern a year ago, and which has now been built into the school's strategic plan as a major priority. The good strategic plan also identifies other areas for development notably related to raising standards, improving teaching quality, ICT and various building developments. It is a very good plan in which costs and success criteria are clearly identified. The staff are well

supported by an able and caring headteacher who recognises the importance of developing a strong team identity. Under his leadership, teachers and support staff work together effectively.

52. The aims of the school, reviewed most recently in Spring 2000, are good and clearly defined. They underpin much of the school's work and life. On occasions, not all policies are reflected in the practice of the school. For example, the school has an appropriate marking policy. However, this is not always adhered to by all members of staff. Within school, all pupils are valued and cared for and are encouraged to develop into well-motivated and self-disciplined pupils. The school is particularly successful in achieving its aim of creating positive attitudes towards work in its pupils. The school has an explicit commitment to the attainment of high standards and is aware of the importance of meeting the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. With lower-attaining pupils it is most successful. Its success with higher attaining pupils is more reliant on the skills and abilities of individual teachers.

53. To assist its basic aim of raising standards the school has collected a very good range of data to enable it to monitor pupils' progress. The analysis is very well managed by the deputy headteacher and senior teacher who can provide detailed information on every year group of pupils in the school. The information is well used to provide realistic and challenging targets for the school, particularly in English and mathematics.

54. There are some structures and procedures in place to monitor standards and provision. Overall, these procedures are satisfactory. The headteacher monitors teaching in classrooms and he also monitors pupils' learning by scrutinising teachers' planning and, on occasions, pupils' work in books. Some members of the governing body also monitor work in the classroom. However, this is not a frequent occurrence although more work in this area is proposed.

55. The curriculum co-ordinator for numeracy monitors teaching and learning by direct observation in classrooms. However, this is not a practice common to all subject areas. Other subject co-ordinators rarely monitor progress by scrutinising pupils' completed work or by monitoring teachers' planning. Many have yet to observe teaching directly through classroom observation and support for their colleagues. Staff meet to discuss the effectiveness of curricular provision and examine results of statutory tests in order to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress.

56. The special educational needs co-ordinator carries out her responsibilities very effectively. She maintains an accurate register and ensures that all pupils' individual education plans are regularly reviewed. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and have received good guidance on the national Code of Practice for these pupils. The additional funds made available for pupils with special educational needs are used well to provide very effective learning support assistants and appropriate resources. These are well used in order to achieve the school's priorities for special educational needs. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress given their prior attainment levels.

57. The governing body is very effective in its work. It is well led and fulfils its responsibilities most efficiently. The governing body is appropriately constituted and has the relevant committee structure in place to consider such areas as finance and personnel as well as curriculum and strategic planning. As a result, governors play a very good part in working alongside the headteacher to provide effective leadership for the school. Most governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They carry out their statutory responsibilities fully.

58. The school has sufficient teachers and has recruited more support staff than usual.

This investment represents good value for money because they make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. As a result the youngest children and pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress. There is a co-ordinator in charge of each subject and aspect of school work and within the terms of their existing job descriptions they succeed well. However their role as subject managers in under-developed and most lack the confidence, skills or time to monitor pupils' learning and the delivery of their subject effectively. Sometimes support staff work too far away from the classroom and this practice needs to be formally reviewed.

59. Accommodation is of varying quality. The most recent developments at the school have enhanced provision and improved the quality of teaching and learning. However there remain some areas of weakness. The playground is small and more thought needs to be given to its use, particularly at lunch time. The library is too small; there is no suitable quiet space in which to work with small groups and the poor acoustics and high ceiling in the Year 2 classrooms means that noise interferes with learning. The good quality of displays, evident in many areas of the school, greatly enhances pupils' learning environment.

60. The quality of financial planning is very good. The headteacher and governors monitor the school's expenditure closely against the planned budget. The governing body is fully involved in planning, setting and monitoring the school's budget. Financial decisions are taken to address priorities, which help to raise the standards of learning. Financial administration is detailed and thorough, through the careful management of the headteacher and the knowledgeable administrative officer. Specific grants received for special educational needs, staff training and other national initiatives are all spent as intended. They are effectively used to improve educational provision. The most recent auditor's report in 1998 found that the school's financial procedures were satisfactory. Recommendations contained within it have been suitably carried out. Daily administration of the school is well carried out by the most able school administrator.

61. The governors' finance committee and the school's financial administrative staff keep careful records of spending. They constantly seek to gain good value for money. The school is careful to ensure that it purchases goods and services at competitive rates and applies the principles of best value. It uses its resources of staffing, accommodation and learning resources to good effect to ensure that effective use is made of available money. It continues to provide good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to build on the many positive aspects of the school and further improve the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff, in co-operation with the local education authority should:

- (1) raise pupils' standards in writing by the time they leave the school, as well as increasing the amount of progress they make, particularly in Years 5 and 6 by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing through sharing the best practice seen in the school;
 - improving the quality of pupils' writing as well as the amount and range of work pupils are expected to produce;
 - improving pupils' spelling;
 - improving the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.(Paragraphs: 4, 9, 77, 80, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90)

- (2) review the current approach to the monitoring of pupils' work and the quality of teaching by:
 - developing a more structured approach to enable subject co-ordinators to be able to check the rate of pupils' learning and to provide support for other teachers in their particular subject area;
 - reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the school's senior managers with regard to the monitoring of teaching and other aspects of school life.(Paragraphs: 54, 55, 58, 91, 100, 111, 117, 122, 125, 130, 136, 142, 147, 154)

- (3) extend the systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment, currently in place for English, mathematics and science, to all other subjects of the curriculum so that:
 - accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in learning are made in these subjects and that they are then used by teachers to help them plan the next stages of work for their pupils;
 - the best practice in the marking of pupils' work is effective across all subjects so that it not only recognises pupils' efforts but also shows them how their work could be improved consistently.(Paragraphs: 31, 35, 46, 87, 91, 99, 117, 122, 125, 130, 135, 142, 147, 154)

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

- increase the opportunities for the development of ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum.
(Paragraphs: 12, 36, 110, 122, 130, 136, 142)
- seek ways to improve playground arrangements for pupils, particularly at lunchtime.
(Paragraphs: 44, 59)
- address accommodation deficiencies with regard to the school library, pupils with special educational needs and the Year 2 classrooms.
(Paragraphs: 17, 59, 91)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	120
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	53	31	5	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)	392
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	28	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	26
	Girls	25	26	27
	Total	48	49	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (82)	86 (87)	94 (89)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	26	27	26
	Total	51	53	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (78)	94 (80)	92 (82)
	National	84 (82)	85 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	20	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	34	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (59)	70 (71)	70 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	19	20
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	27	33	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (41)	65 (57)	72 (65)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	383
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	662 560
Total expenditure	663 300
Expenditure per pupil	1 740
Balance brought forward from previous year	19 153
Balance carried forward to next year	18 413

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	381
Number of questionnaires returned	203

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	44	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	54	5	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	59	4	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	43	18	7	9
The teaching is good.	34	56	3	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	47	18	3	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	32	45	16	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	46	46	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	22	32	15	20

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

63. The good quality provision made for children in the reception class seen during the previous inspection in 1996 has been well maintained. Teaching is good because staff work confidently together and this means children benefit from much individual attention. Learning activities are well planned and, because this makes learning fun, children are highly motivated. Staff know children well. Assessment is used to track individuals and make sure all are doing as well as they can. Children are enthusiastic, work hard and make satisfactory progress.

64. Children enter the reception class at the start of the school year in which they become five. Initially they attend part-time and this period is used to make sure all children settle well and to carry out entry assessment. In the present reception classes there are 51 children in two inter-connecting classrooms. Staffing levels are good and the two teachers and two nursery nurses work very effectively as a team. This is one of the reasons why provision for the youngest children at the school is good.

65. Children's attainment is assessed on entry to the reception class and great care is taken to ensure that the results are reliable. In recent years results have indicated that children's skills and knowledge on entry are similar to those seen in most primary schools. Observation in the classrooms and discussions with staff indicate that the full range of ability is present. Staff monitor children's progress carefully and this means they are well aware of children making accelerated progress and consequently make good provision for them. They also monitor closely those children whose slow rate of progress may indicate a special educational need and take appropriate action.

Teaching

66. Teaching is satisfactory and often good and this leads to satisfactory progress overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. All aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum are addressed well. There are no significant areas of weakness. Staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals and plan together effectively to ensure quality learning experiences. Personal and social skills are fostered well and the way staff relate to each other and to the children provides a good example for the children to follow. After only eight weeks in school, children are confident, well-behaved and familiar with class and school routines.

67. Staff give high priority to the development of literacy and mathematical knowledge and skills. They organise the children into small groups for learning activities and this means they are able to pitch the work at different levels. Each day they plan worthwhile learning activities that ensure children are learning letter sounds and words, beginning to write and count and know numbers to ten. Staff make sure children have good opportunities to learn about the world around them. Some particularly effective teaching about the importance of electricity in our daily life, early geography skills around the school and work at the computer make sure children are being well prepared for the National Curriculum. Physical and creative development are also well provided for. Physical activities that help children exercise and develop control are well planned and delivered. Overall the teaching of music is of a high standard but the venue is too remote from the reception class should any assistance be required.

68. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They provide clear parameters for behaviour and expect children to behave well. They make sure children know when they have

misbehaved and expect them to apologise. In this way they are helping them to understand the difference between right and wrong. Homework is provided and children take their reading books and word cards home regularly.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. The children had been in school for eight weeks when the inspection took place. However they were observed to be already familiar with school and classroom routines and demonstrated their confidence by the way in which they made use of all the equipment and facilities in the area. They share and take turns readily. They know how to tidy up, organise themselves in a circle and change quickly for physical education in the hall. They behave well, act kindly towards each other and show respect for the equipment and toys with which they work. They are enthusiastic learners and keen to share a book with their teacher or a visitor and many have the confidence to speak to the rest of the class.

Communication, language and literacy

70. By the time children leave the reception class, most are likely to have achieved the expected levels and about a third to do better than expected. Many children speak clearly and confidently. For example, they explain where they went for a holiday and what presents they brought home. They list items that need electricity to make them work and try hard to describe the movements they make in physical education. They are active listeners and sit in rapt attention to stories and are able to recall the main events. Just under half the children have begun to read. They know most of their letter sounds and recognise up to ten words. They take their books home regularly and talk sensibly about the pictures and main events in them. Most children will achieve the expected level by the end of the year, but a small number are being carefully monitored in case they require additional support. Adults expect children to be able to write and children respond very well. In the top group about ten children can make sensible logical guesses to spell simple words. This was seen at its best when children wrote about Autumn leaves. They tried very hard to spell the words they had chosen such as crackling, spiky and yellow. Letter formation and size improves gradually and children are encouraged to hold their pencils correctly.

Mathematical development

71. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to have achieved the expected levels and some will exceed them. A small number of children know their numbers to ten and are learning to use first, second, and third correctly when they make a train. A few more children looked at a number line and tried hard to think which number was 'one more'. This was a challenging activity but at the right level for these pupils. Others work together to build towers of five, six or seven bricks and many count accurately. Of the remaining children most are working hard to learn numbers one to five but a few have yet to make a start. One of the advantages of the good team work amongst staff is flexibility. This means that staff are able to sort the children in small groups and provide activities at different levels of challenge. In this way all children are busy, well motivated and learn well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. By the end of the year children are likely to make satisfactory progress and have achieved the levels expected of children at the end of the Foundation Stage. During the lessons about electricity children demonstrated good knowledge of which items require electricity to make them work. They understood some worked from batteries and others required to be plugged in. They were well aware of safety issues. When asked, following a purposeful walk around the school, why most of the electrical items were in rooms they did not normally visit, they knew the answer immediately. Walking round the school contributed well to the early stages of geography. Children are confident users of new technology. They control actions on the computer screen using the 'mouse' well. Children begin to learn something about past events as they sequence pictures in order to retell a story. This

technique was well used by staff to introduce the story of 'Bonfire Night'. In a good religious education lesson children demonstrated their increasing knowledge about Christianity and the major events of the church year when they referred to Easter and Christmas and correctly said that we celebrate Christmas to remember Jesus.

Physical development

73. For their age many children show a good level of control over their bodies and all are likely to achieve the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. They know how to get changed quickly and without fuss for physical education and are confident in making use of the space available in the school hall. They listen very carefully to the teacher and respond promptly to instructions and to the beat of the tambor. They work hard in lessons, know the effect exercise has on their heart and improve their actions as a result of practice. The teachers have high expectations. She identifies good work by children and asks them to tell others what they did. They find this hard but improve by the end of the lesson. Staff provide many good activities to help children work neatly and accurately with pencils and scissors. Children's success in these areas varies but a few already have good standards and most will do so by the time they leave the reception class.

Creative development

74. By the end of the Foundation Stage creative development is likely to be at least as good as expected for children of this age and in some areas, such as music is better than expected. The main reason why attainment in music is high is because teaching is very good. A strength in music teaching is good subject knowledge but also the problem-solving approach to learning. This ensures all children are fully engaged and learn from each other as well as the teacher. Children can clap a simple rhythm or play it on a percussion instrument. They know how to hold it correctly to get the best sound. They show considerable self-discipline and do not fiddle with their instruments inappropriately. They are very pleased with their success. Children work confidently with paint, paper, card, glue and a wide range of other materials. They are confident in selecting materials for themselves and produce bold and colourful pictures of fireworks and patterns. They are encouraged to talk about their work and this adds to their confidence as speakers.

75. Classroom accommodation for children in the reception classes is similar to that seen in many schools the main shortcoming being access to good quality outdoor space. The classrooms are generally well equipped but currently the book areas are small and not particularly inviting.

ENGLISH

76. The results of the Year 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that standards in English are below the national average for eleven-year-old pupils. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels, that is above the national average, is also below the proportions that do so nationally. Standards are well below average when compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Test results at the end of Key Stage 1 for the Year 2000 show standards to be above average in reading and similar to the national average in writing. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was similar to the national average in both reading and writing.

77. Inspection findings indicate that standards vary in different year groups but currently, at the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils in the Year 2 classes are likely to attain average national standards in reading and writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, whilst reading is average, standards in writing, particularly for higher attaining pupils are below the average standard.

78. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in English were considered to be meeting national expectations although standards in reading and writing could be improved. The number of pupils achieving higher levels was lower than found nationally. Improvement was needed in accuracy in reading and in developing comprehension skills, including inference and prediction. Writing at Key Stage 1 lacked imaginative ideas and letter formation in handwriting required attention. At Key Stage 2 presentation of work was untidy and pupils worked at too slow a pace. Spelling standards in both key stages were said to be poor.

79. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented, resulting in a more focused approach to the teaching of English by many teachers. Good quality resources have been purchased to support literacy, particularly for guided reading. Teachers have worked hard to address standards in reading and these have risen as a result. Very effective use is made of new initiatives such as additional literacy support, booster classes and support for pupils with special educational needs and this is contributing to rising standards. The recently introduced target setting in literacy is used well by some teachers to focus on what needs to be improved, but this is not yet consistent in all classes. The co-ordinator and deputy headteacher are both confident and well equipped to teach the literacy strategy and provide good advice and support to colleagues.

80. Planning has been improved as a result of the National Literacy Strategy which now provides the long-term planning, although the evaluation and assessment opportunities are not consistently identified in planning by all teachers. A rigorous analysis of assessment data is undertaken to identify areas of weakness. This information is used appropriately to inform priorities for attention, such as the recent thrust on reading. Standards in writing show some improvement in Key Stage 1 but remain unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress across the year groups varies in writing, but the steady progress in Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key Stage 2 is not sustained because the expectations of some teachers are too low and work set is undemanding for higher attaining pupils in particular.

81. The standards of speaking and listening are average at the end of both key stages. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory listening skills. They listen carefully to their teacher and each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively in discussions. Speaking skills are generally well promoted, although there are missed opportunities, by some teachers, to engage pupils in extended conversations and to extend pupils' clarity and use of English when speaking. Most teachers and other adult support staff, encourage pupils to ask questions in order to develop their ideas. As a result, pupils develop confidence in speaking aloud and explaining their work. Good examples of speaking skills being well promoted were seen in a Year 1 class where the teacher encouraged pupils to share their news and used questioning effectively to extend their ideas. In a Year 3 class, focusing on playscripts, the teacher made good use of opportunities to extend speaking skills, encouraging pupils, through role-play, to express the characters in the traditional tale 'Red Riding Hood'. They were able to suggest appropriate dialogue and to use good expression in their voices.

82. Standards in reading are average at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils have satisfactory phonic skills and a sound understanding of what they read. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 read accurately and with good expression in most cases. Teachers work hard to develop oral skills in guided reading and to extend language across other subjects of the curriculum. Most pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'contents' page' and 'index' and enjoy sharing texts during literacy hour. They do not have a wide range of strategies to enable them to decipher words which they have difficulty reading. Average and higher attaining pupils confidently discuss their reading and predict what might happen. Lower attaining pupils build common high frequency words but their reading is mechanical and lacks fluency as pupils hesitate in their effort to build words. Reading diaries are maintained but do not include diagnostic comments. Pupils

are not encouraged to comment on their reading or produce simple reviews. These reading records lack teacher comments and do not involve parents enough in responding to pupils' reading.

83. High attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are not given sufficient guidance to ensure they read challenging texts. Often pupils choose books which are undemanding and do not extend their reading ability. This is also true of Key Stage 2 where standards are also average, but with few higher attaining pupils being extended through demanding texts. Reading records provide a list of books read. However pupils are not expected to comment on their reading preferences. Parents are rarely encouraged to comment on their child's reading and teachers rarely respond, through reading diaries, to ensure pupils' reading is moved on at a good pace and with appropriate material which challenges their reading. Reading records do not show what pupils need to do in order to improve. There is insufficient emphasis on the systematic development of library skills. This is compounded by the unsatisfactory library provision. The location of the library, limited range and quality of books, particularly to extend higher attaining pupils, affects the progress made in reading in both key stages but, particularly in the development of private study and research skills for older pupils in Key Stage 2.

84. Standards in writing are average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils write for a reasonable range of purpose as a result of the National Literacy Strategy, which is beginning to raise standards. Although pupils are set into two groups across year groups, tasks set for the higher attaining pupils are not always demanding enough and they are not expected to work at a fast enough pace. Handwriting and presentation of work are unsatisfactory for a significant majority of pupils because expectations are too low and marking does not place sufficient emphasis on the importance of these skills.

85. Teaching of handwriting is not systematically developed and few pupils join their writing in Key Stage 1. Most average and higher attaining pupils use basic punctuation accurately. They are encouraged to proof read their work, but the emphasis in these early drafting skills is on correcting spelling errors, rather than improving the quality of writing by choosing more imaginative vocabulary or extending ideas further.

86. Pupils' writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is below average and unsatisfactory for a significant majority of them, although better writing is evident at the beginning of the key stage. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils have a sound knowledge of basic punctuation and grammar. Writing is not sustained in many cases with too little work being produced. The range of writing is more limited than in Key Stage 1. There is evidence of the use of different forms of writing, such as letters, instructions, story and playscripts, but there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to express opinions through persuasive writing, for example, or to extend their ideas through purposeful tasks such as newspaper reports, maintaining journals, and writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education and history. Skills such as note taking are not well developed. Teachers do not expect good standards of presentation in pupils' workbooks and this is reflected in other subjects across the curriculum. As a result, many pupils lack sufficient pride in their work and few pupils use a neat cursive style by the time they leave the school.

87. Spelling is weak throughout the school. Year 6 pupils misspell simple words, such as 'handle' and 'finally'. Although pupils have a secure knowledge of letter sounds they have not been taught about spelling patterns and this is hindering their progress. Marking is inconsistent, being cursory in some books and failing to identify how pupils can improve their work. This contributes to the careless work produced by many pupils.

88. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and in spite of their

difficulties make good progress towards their targets in individual education plans. Small group support and one to one help by support staff within classes is successfully helping these pupils to extend their literacy skills.

89. Most pupils enjoy their work in literacy sessions. They respond positively, are eager to answer questions and keen to learn in many cases. Where this is not the case it is directly linked to weaker teaching and work not being matched to ability. There are not enough opportunities within the literacy hour for pupils to develop skills in working together as a group.

90. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages overall, but there are variations in teachers' skills and teaching for some of the older pupils is unsatisfactory. Most teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, although not all teachers use the time appropriately to ensure that the different elements are covered. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge and teaching methods inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are well motivated by interesting tasks and the lively pace at which lessons proceed. For example, in a Year 4 class, activities were carefully matched to the differing needs of pupils. The exciting text on 'Vikings' held pupils' interest and captured their imagination, the teacher's reading of the text adding to the excitement. The very good help from support staff contributed to pupils' learning and maximised the use of time in this lesson. As a result pupils worked hard and completed a good amount of work. In the weaker teaching the work set is not matched well for the range of pupils in the group and this leads to underachievement. Management strategies were sometimes weak in a Year 6 class and this caused unsatisfactory behaviour and affected the progress being made. The pace of the lesson was affected by the constant interruptions to deal with the behaviour issues. Pupils do not always complete enough work in lessons. The higher attaining Year 6 pupils are given the same writing tasks as the rest of the set and as a result the work produced is not always as good as it should be. The teaching of spelling and handwriting skills is insufficiently well developed to enable pupils to develop these skills appropriately. Pupils have few strategies, such as spelling strings, and do not learn spelling rules and this is reflected in the spelling errors in their work. A weakness in many classes is the lack of shared objectives at the beginning of lessons. Pupils are not always clear as to the purpose of the lesson.

91. Management of English is good, and is a contributory factor to the improving standards in the subject. The co-ordinator uses her knowledge and expertise well to support teaching and learning. However, the monitoring aspect of the role is underdeveloped. Assessment strategies are in place although assessment opportunities within teachers' planning are not consistently identified. A thorough analysis of data from national tests and other assessment information identifies strengths and weaknesses and is used to inform planning. Not all teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do and this results in some pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, underachieving. A good start has been made with target setting although this is at an early stage of development. The standard of marking is inconsistent and does not always reflect the marking policy. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. The use of literacy within other subjects varies. There is a good focus on language in most subjects but not enough attention is given to more extended writing skills in subjects such as history and religious education. Resources are good for literacy and enhance learning but the library provision is unsatisfactory. The high ceilings in the Year 2 classrooms mean that noise levels can be high even though pupils are working at the set tasks. However, this does affect pupils' learning and the progress being made.

MATHEMATICS

92. The Year 2000 national test results for 11-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils

attaining national standards is similar to the proportion that do so nationally. However, the proportion who attain higher levels is below the proportion that do so nationally. When compared with results of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, this school's results are well below average. This is explained largely by the fact that the Year 2000 cohort had a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in the previous or current cohorts of pupils. As a result this higher figure had a significant impact on the school's results in mathematics in particular. Inspection evidence shows that the present Year 6 are well on line to attain national standards in 2001 with many exceeding them. Trends for the last three years again show that, apart from the Year 2000 group, pupils' standards in mathematics are rising.

93. The Year 2000 national test results for seven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils who attain the national standard is above the proportion who do so nationally. Similarly the proportion who exceed the national standards is also above the proportion who do so nationally. When the school's results are compared with the results of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds this school's results are also above average. Inspection findings confirm these results and show that the proportion of pupils attaining national standards is above the proportion that do so nationally. Trends in results over the last three years show quite clearly that the standards of pupils aged seven have risen quite significantly during that time.

94. The rising standards of both seven and eleven-year-old pupils, as well as the good progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language in both key stages, is attributable to a variety of factors. Firstly, the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the impact it is now having. Secondly a significant rise in the quality of the teaching of the subject, particularly in Key Stage 1, since the last inspection. Finally the influence of the very good mathematics co-ordinator in helping and supporting her colleagues, arranging good quality in-service training for them and in selecting a good supply of high quality resources to assist her colleagues' teaching and pupils' learning.

95. As a result of the overall good progress pupils make in their learning in Key Stage 1, most pupils by the age of seven understand place value in numbers up to 100 and mentally recall addition and subtraction facts to ten and, for many pupils, up to 20. They can identify and use simple fractions. Many recognise and name two-dimensional shapes but their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes is more limited. Furthermore, approximately half the pupils have a secure knowledge of place value in hundreds, tens and units. Their mental recall of the five and ten times tables is good. They use an increasingly wide vocabulary of mathematical terms in the correct context.

96. Similarly, the good progress made in Key Stage 2 means that by the age of 11, many pupils are competent with long multiplication and division and have a good understanding of place value up to a million. They are familiar with the names of various angles and are able to convert vulgar fractions into decimals and percentages. They calculate areas of irregular shapes and are confident in the multiplication of decimals, the use of approximation and of co-ordinates. Discussions with pupils at the end of both key stages show that their knowledge and understanding of the number element of mathematics is particularly well developed.

97. The overall quality of teaching is good. When good and very good teaching occurs, lessons start at a brisk pace usually with some form of mental arithmetic. This is quickly followed by work that is appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment levels. This was seen in a very good upper set lesson in Year 4 where, initially, the teacher fired her pupils with enthusiasm by a quick recall game of three, four and six times table facts. The teacher

then taught her pupils how to multiply larger numbers, such as 18×5 , by using the partition method. Pupils quickly learnt to, first of all do 10×5 , then 8×5 and finally add them together to get the answer. The teacher's own knowledge and understanding of the subject, together with her good grasp of what her pupils could do ensured that, in a very short time, all pupils had a good understanding of this method of multiplication. The group work that followed was most appropriate to the various prior attainment levels of the pupils in each group. The higher attaining pupils explained the relationship between 17×3 and 17×30 . The average group continued with more examples of multiplication by partitioning, whilst the lower-attaining group continued work on their three, four and six times tables. All groups worked well and were challenged by the work set. At the end of the lesson the teacher asked all groups what they had done, in order to consolidate her pupils' learning. This very good teaching ensured that all groups of pupils made very good progress in their understanding of the multiplication of various numbers.

98. Good teaching also has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and hence the amount of learning that takes place. The above lesson shows how well motivated pupils with appropriate work persevere, work hard and co-operate well together in group work. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject and are most keen to learn. They take care of the resources available to help them and are most willing to share and take turns when using them.

99. The school has successfully adopted strategies associated with the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers explain things well and give clear instructions. They manage their pupils well, encouraging them to ask questions and to share their ideas in discussions. They use praise effectively to encourage positive attitudes and work habits. They encourage pupils to explain their mathematical thinking and place an appropriate emphasis on the development of mental mathematics. They use ends of sessions well to consolidate and assess pupils' learning. Some teachers generally use assessment, both formal and informal, effectively but this is not always the case. Most teachers, but not all, mark pupils' work regularly and make helpful and encouraging comments in pupils' books. This contributes to pupils' learning. Where marking is unsatisfactory some work is left unmarked and, as a result, standards of presentation fall. Teachers keep satisfactory records in their monitoring of pupils' progress.

100. The co-ordinator has a commitment to the raising of standards of pupils of all prior attainment levels. She monitors aspects of the subject, including teachers' planning, pupils' completed work and classroom teaching. She scrutinises assessment test results and uses the results of her analysis to build a view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Good support is provided to teachers and, where appropriate, suggestions are made for improvement. Learning resources are good and teachers use them effectively. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place with regular testing of pupils to inform teachers of their progress.

101. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in the development of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy is now in place, pupils' standards at the end of both key stages have risen and the quality of teaching has improved overall. In addition, all the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.

SCIENCE

102. In the Year 2000 National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds, the proportion of pupils attaining the national standard was well below the national proportion. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels of attainment was also below the national proportion. In comparison with pupils from similar schools, attainment was also well below average. The

cohort of pupils taking the tests in 2000 had a larger than usual number of pupils with special educational needs which had a significant impact of the year's results. The school has made a detailed analysis of the test results and made changes to the teaching and learning in the subject. In addition, the school has given more emphasis to experimental and investigative science. These are already beginning to have a positive effect, as attainment observed during the present inspection would indicate that attainment is likely to be above average by the time the present Year 6 pupils leave school.

103. Teacher assessments for 2000 show that the proportion of seven-year-olds attaining the national standard is above the proportion that do so nationally. Similarly the proportion of pupils who exceed the national standard is also above the national proportion. Current inspection evidence indicates that this rising trend in attainment has been maintained, and that by the end of the key stage the attainment of the majority of pupils will be above average.

104. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment at the end of both key stages was found to be in line with the national average.

105. While investigative skills are developed well by the majority of pupils as they move through the school, this is not true for higher attaining pupils. Tasks for these pupils are not always sufficiently demanding or challenging enough. These pupils are seldom given opportunities to set up their own experiments rather than follow one directed by the teacher. This remains an area of improvement for the school.

106. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in science. The good start pupils make in the reception classes is built upon in Year 1 where pupils study their own and other life cycles, such as those of the frog and butterfly. They measure the effects of water on plant growth and are able to sort a range of materials according to a variety of properties. They test, for example, the light properties of materials as to those best suited to make a pair of curtains. This knowledge and understanding in science is developed well in Year 2 so that by the end of the key stage the majority of pupils are able to describe the effects of exercise on the body and classify living and non-living things. They know that some materials such as ice and chocolate can be changed and higher attaining pupils understand that some changes can be reversed and some cannot. Pupils make a simple electrical circuit to light a bulb and have begun to study forces and their effects.

107. Pupils in Year 3 were seen beginning their new topic on magnets and were able to record their findings and observations using the appropriate vocabulary. Pupils in Year 4 were observed using their new knowledge of electricity to build and test a number of different circuits. By the end of the key stage pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the differences between gases, solids and liquids.

108. The knowledge they have gained during Years 3 and 4 is used well in their investigations on evaporation and condensation. They have tested the most suitable material to make a board game and use computer skills to make a database of their body measurements. During the inspection a Year 6 class was seen reviewing their previous knowledge of opaque, transparent and translucent materials at the start of their topic on 'How we see things'. From a scrutiny of previous work it is evident that lower and average attaining pupils have a good knowledge of fair testing. Higher attaining pupils show a clear understanding of the relationships between different animals and plants and different habitats. It is clear that pupils are making good progress in science in Key Stage 2.

109. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in science activities. They receive good support from teachers and support staff as well as their fellow pupils. There is generally a good match between the work set for these pupils and their

prior attainment level, which enables them to make good progress in most lessons.

110. No unsatisfactory teaching of science was seen during the inspection, and over 80 per cent of teaching seen was good. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The great majority of pupils respond well to this good teaching. They listen well when teachers are giving information and instructions, and are eager to show their knowledge by answering questions. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are usually well conveyed to pupils at the start of the lesson. Teachers demonstrate a secure subject knowledge which, again, is an improvement since the last inspection. This good knowledge is used particularly well in the way that teachers carefully target their questions so that all groups of pupils are able to answer and take part in the lesson. Good use is made of resources to interest and enthuse pupils about the planned activities. All this helps pupils to settle quickly to their work and maintain a good pace to their learning. This is a noticeable feature of learning in Year 3 and 4 classes. However, better use could be made of ICT to support pupil's learning across the school. Also more opportunities could be given to higher attaining pupils to take responsibility for their own learning through devising their own experiments. These are areas of improvement for the school.

111. The subject at present is led by the deputy headteacher in a caretaker role, pending the appointment of a new science co-ordinator next term. She has worked hard to maintain the high profile of the subject during this time and gives good support to her colleagues. Resources have been re-organised and are now making a positive impact on the teaching and learning of the subject. There has been some monitoring of planning and pupils' books in the past. This aspect of the co-ordinator's role needs to be clarified so they are able to check more systematically and with greater rigour, the provision and learning in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

112. Standards achieved in art and design during the previous inspection were judged to be higher than usual at the end of each key stage, teaching was good, often very good and pupils made good progress. Now the picture is more mixed. Overall skill development is good by the age of 11 and some work of a high standard is evident. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and compare similarities and differences between the work of a range of artists and crafts people and evaluation requires more emphasis.

113. The lack of emphasis on evaluation and the study of famous artists, means that pupils' levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen since the last inspection. Now pupils' levels at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with nationally expected levels for seven-year-olds and skill development is progressing well. Sketch books are beginning to be used as art diaries but need to be used more regularly for sketching and design work. Pupils in Year 1 look closely at their reflection in the mirror and draw what they see. This skill also underpins their work in design and technology and provides them with information on which to base fruit and vegetable designs. Pupils in Year 2 draw detailed self-portraits and these reflect their growing observational skills. There are good links with literacy as pupils write about themselves. Pupils have the confidence to interpret what they know and feel about the Great Fire of London in a riot of hot colours, collage and different media. Some good work is seen when pupils firstly draw fruit carefully and then reinterpret their drawings using textiles and other media. From a young age pupils are encouraged to express their views about what they like and dislike although only a few can say why they do so, or suggest ways to improve their work.

114. By the age of 11 pupils' skills in drawing and colour work are good. Pupils in Year 3 show considerable draughtsmanship and colour control as they paint sensitive pictures to show relationships. In Year 4 pupils study Viking jewellery with great care and produce intricate designs for their own versions. The quality of observation is particularly good and pupils demonstrate considerable patience in recording every detail. As the next task was to make the jewellery, they quickly began to consider the technical problems involved and how they might be resolved. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to draw pictures of streets which show a good understanding of perspective, they interpret the New York skyline imaginatively and find out how difficult it is to draw and shade cube shapes convincingly. Parental support at home for work in art and design helped some pupils in Year 6 produce Tudor busts of very high quality. As a result pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in the subject.

115. Pupils in both key stages do not have enough experience of using computers to aid their work in art and design. There were some interesting water-colour experiments, completed after studying the work of Monet, in pupils' sketchbooks. However, pupils' work shows less evidence of investigation and response to the work of artists and crafts people than expected.

116. Pupils enjoy art and design because their ideas and designs are valued by teachers. Pupils of all prior attainment levels do well in art and some of the best designs for Viking jewellery were produced by pupils with special educational needs. Pupils behave well in lessons because they are well motivated to succeed.

117. Overall the teaching of art and design is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Some teachers have very good subject knowledge and this shows in the work their pupils' produce. There is less knowledge and insufficient resources to promote the teaching of different artists and crafts people effectively. The subject co-ordinator has recognised that assessment is an area of weakness and has plans to use nationally produced subject guidelines as the basis for assessment. Currently she lacks the time, confidence and skills to monitor pupils' learning although she does see teacher's planning to enable her to check the adequacy of the coverage of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. Pupils' levels of attainment in design and technology have improved since the previous inspection and are now better than the nationally expected levels by the age of 11. The subject co-ordinator has introduced a number of changes, such as a design book, and revised the scheme of work, and these have been successfully implemented. Teaching is now good overall and design skills are particularly well taught.

119. Pupils make a good start to their work in design and technology in Year 1 when they are introduced to a three-stage approach to their work. First design, second make the product and thirdly evaluate their work. By the age of seven most pupils can complete the first two stages well but find it hard to say how their designs and products could be improved, although almost everyone is clear about what they are pleased with in their work. Pupils in Year 1 make carefully detailed designs for a fruit or vegetable face. Next they study the fruit and vegetables carefully before they cut, slice, chop, peel and core them. Initially many pupils cannot name the fruit or vegetables but as teachers' planning always includes teaching specific vocabulary, these weaknesses are overcome. The faces they make show creativity and care in construction. Staff make sure pupils improve their cutting and measuring skills by providing specific tasks for that purpose. As results are stuck into the design book, it is easy for pupils to see how to improve and also what they need to do next.

120. Teachers build on this sound foundation in Key Stage 2 so that by the age of 11 skills are at a higher level than seen in most schools. The progress pupils make in Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils continue to be taught skills and they are provided with design tasks where they can apply them. For example in Year 4 pupils are taught to make a range of pop-up books which they then apply successfully to tasks based on their study of the Vikings. In Years 5 and 6 there are good examples of extended work. In Year 5 pupils have undertaken a detailed study of biscuits. They have devised tests and considered shape, size, colour and taste. Finally they bring all this evidence together to design and make the ideal Christmas biscuit. Overall this work is of good quality. However pupils' ability to explain why and how to improve their products is a relative weakness. Staff need to teach pupils, more specifically, the words and techniques they need in order to do this well. In Year 6 work is extended to include other dimensions when pupils take part in a cross-school technology day that involves them in working in teams with young people they do not know. They have the confidence to do this successfully.

121. Pupils enjoy design and technology lessons and respond well in class. They work co-operatively and handle materials and tools sensibly. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language succeed as well in design and technology as the rest of the class. Higher attaining pupils have good opportunities to demonstrate their ability because of the many open-ended tasks provided.

122. Overall teaching is good mainly because teachers adopt a problem-solving approach to the work and this engages the interest and enthusiasm of all the pupils. Work is well planned, the design books are well used to record developing expertise and most teachers have good subject knowledge. The subject co-ordinator is aware that links with ICT are not as strong as they should be. Assessment was a weakness during the previous inspection and it remains an area for development. The subject co-ordinator is undertaking a trial to see if she can put in place a manageable system to record steps in pupils' learning. Her proposals look useful and involving more of her colleagues is the next step. Currently the subject co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor pupils' learning although she does see teacher's planning in order to check on the overall coverage of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

123. During the inspection it was only possible to see two lessons in the subject in Key Stage 2. However, from talking to the subject co-ordinator, staff and pupils, and a scrutiny of planning and previous work, it is evident that the quality of pupils' work in both key stages is in line with the nationally expected levels. This is a reflection of the findings of the last report. The majority of pupils are able to make satisfactory progress through the planned range of topics and themes, which are well supported by educational visits. Geography is taught through a cycle of topics that provide appropriate coverage of the themes and places identified in the National Curriculum. The planned curriculum is well supported by a nationally approved scheme of work that fully addresses the development of geographical skills such as mapping. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

124. In the Year 1 classes, good use is made of 'Barnaby Bear' to help children to become familiar with the school and its immediate surroundings. 'Barnaby' is taken on local walks, which help to establish a sense of direction and place for the youngest children. This knowledge of places is extended through a study of contrasting localities such as the seaside and an island. In all cases opportunities are taken to introduce pupils to simple mapping skills. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have developed a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of their immediate world. This is extended in Key Stage 2 through topics which look at the wider world. Pupils study a village in India, and good use is made of topical news items with older pupils to develop their geographical knowledge. Year 3 and Year 5 pupils organised questionnaires for parents and other local residents to ask their views on the new school extension, as part of a job survey. Mapping skills are well developed through such activities as the plotting of local shops, houses and transport facilities by Year 3 pupils. Year 5 pupils visit Ilam in Derbyshire for the day for field studies, which help to develop further their sense of place. By the time pupils leave school, the majority have acquired a satisfactory depth of new knowledge and understanding in geography.

125. Due to the limited amount of direct teaching seen, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the two lessons seen it was good and pupils responded well to the questions of their teachers. Resources have been recently re-organised and are making a positive impact on the provision of the subject across the school. The scheme of work is supporting sound progress in learning through the school in the development of skills such as mapping. There is a need to clarify the role of the co-ordinator so that he is able to check the provision and learning of the subject in a more systematic and rigorous way. The school is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures to assess more accurately the attainment of its pupils and this remains an area for development for the school.

HISTORY

126. Pupils' levels of attainment in history are above those expected of pupils aged both

seven and eleven and have improved well since the time of the previous inspection. Planning and schemes of work are now good and comprehensive. Teachers use a good variety of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning. The consideration of evidence, the study of source material and practical activities are all incorporated in the teaching of the subject. The purpose of learning is usually made very clear to pupils, the pace of lessons is generally good and good planning is beginning to ensure the steady development of skills as pupils move through the school.

127. Pupils in Key Stage 1 successfully distinguish between past and present and begin to develop a sense of chronology. They study the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, as well as important historical events, such as the Great Fire of London, with enjoyment. Pupils from seven to eleven identify and date features in the past, evaluate evidence and begin to examine source material effectively. They study the Vikings, Ancient Egypt and Britain since 1930 with interest and enthusiasm, aided by imaginative use of the resources available. Throughout the school, pupils are able to absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period under study and the people associated with it. This was shown in the topic books of Year 6 pupils, where pupils were examining Ancient Greece and comparing it with their own experiences. There is evidence of independent research skills being promoted well, using a range of sources. This was most noticeable in a Year 4 class who were being encouraged to use a range of background material to decide the nature and purpose of Viking artefacts. Throughout both key stages pupils make good progress in the subject.

128. The curriculum, lately revised under the new curriculum plans for the Year 2000, is good. It ensures a full and wide coverage of topics and learning goals and provides a stimulating variety of activities to support the teaching. Emphasis is firmly laid on helping pupils to think for themselves and on the careful use of first-hand and secondary source material, borrowed from the library and museum services, to aid this process. Work is planned to ensure that higher attaining pupils can extend their skills and knowledge by undertaking personal research and that pupils with special educational needs are always involved and progress at a satisfactory rate.

129. Teaching observed in both key stages was generally satisfactory and often good. Lessons are effectively planned. Teachers explain the purpose of lessons well and quickly build on what pupils have learnt. Question and answer techniques are used very effectively, both to extend pupils' learning and to help them to understand people and period with ease and interest. The management of pupils is nearly always very good and having a significant impact on the quality of learning. It is clear that teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject. Pace, however, is sometimes allowed to slow down when pupils are engaged in group or individual activities and marking is not consistently useful in showing pupils how they could improve their work. History skills are also well developed and planned for in the areas of literacy, geography and art, though there is more scope for the use of writing at greater length, in order to advance pupils' writing skills.

130. The subject is well managed, though the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching in the subject and too little time to monitor pupils' written work frequently enough. The co-ordinator is beginning to put in place a system of assessment, but this is in the early stages of development. The impact of the subject is, however, well reviewed and planning carefully revised in the light of this evaluation. Pupils' personal development is well extended, as pupils study the ways of life of other cultures, their beliefs and values and learn to understand how the past has affected the present. Visits to sites of historical interest, such as Tamworth Castle, help to enhance the curriculum. Resources in the form of historical artefacts are few, but are very well used. An area for development is the use of ICT to supplement existing resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

131. Standards are above nationally expected levels by the end of both key stages. This is an improvement from the last inspection when attainment was in line with national levels. Much of this improvement is due to the new resources available to the school, as well as increased staff confidence and competence in teaching ICT skills. It is also due to the work of the co-ordinator, who has done much to raise the profile of the subject across the school. The issues over progression and continuity in the subject have been addressed through the new scheme of work and all the requirements of the National Curriculum are now met. These are all good improvements since the last inspection.

132. Although many classrooms have a computer, they were rarely used during the inspection. The school has yet to plan how these may make best use of the new skills being developed by all age groups across the school. This is an area of improvement for the school.

133. The majority of pupils are now making good progress in developing their ICT skills due to the good, direct teaching taking place in the specialist suite. The co-ordinator has written a new scheme of work for the Foundation Stage so that the youngest children can benefit from the resources available. By the time they enter Year 1 many are already confident in the use of the mouse to drag and drop features in a program. This was seen in a lesson on a new paint package where they were able to change the colour, size and shape of the 'brush' they were using. Higher attaining pupils were able to save their work with the minimum of supervision. By the time they are seven, most pupils are familiar with computers and can correctly identify and name the various parts of a computer. They have used their word processing skills to write stories on 'A puppy adventure', drafting and editing their work before printing their 'best' work. Pupils in Year 3 have produced some very striking patterns using a paint program based on geometrical shapes, and used a 'Roamer' to help plan a journey. Year 4 pupils were seen working on a database of their own making as well as learning to use this information. They showed good use of the mouse and keyboard and were able to save their work and shut down the systems properly. These skills are developed in Year 5 through the use of spreadsheets. Good word processing skills are evident in the 'Greek' menus they produced which included border designs and clip art inserts. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils are confident and competent in all aspects of the subject as was seen in one lesson where they were using their skills in spreadsheet calculations to plan a 'party'.

134. The quality of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. Teachers have given much of their own time as well as attending in-service training to develop their own ICT skills and this is having a direct impact on the learning now taking place across all age groups. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of both the hardware and software in use, which they use particularly well in the level of instruction they give to their pupils. This is an improvement from the last inspection. When things go wrong, they are able to lead pupils successfully through the steps necessary to correct the fault. All pupils are enthusiastic about ICT. They enjoy the opportunities to use resources individually or in pairs and generally take turns and share resources fairly.

135. Recent improvements are due to the enthusiasm and skills of the co-ordinator. She has led in-service training for staff and provides good support to her colleagues. This has helped to increase staff confidence and competence. The curriculum is making very effective use of the new facilities and helping to move the subject forward. The planned curriculum for the teaching and learning of the subject is good and closely follows the guidelines of the nationally-recognised scheme of work. Assessment of pupils' skills and attainment has started and is currently being trialed this year.

136. The subject is one of the areas identified for future development in the school strategic plan. The role of the co-ordinator should be made clearer so that she is able to check on the provision and learning in the subject in a more rigorous and systematic way, particularly in the use made of ICT right across the curriculum.

MUSIC

137. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1, one in a reception class, but none in Key Stage 2. It is therefore not possible to make any judgements about teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. At the previous inspection standards were above nationally expected levels. On the limited evidence available, the school has maintained this standard of attainment in music, both by the age of seven and by the age of eleven.

138. Pupils are acquiring good listening skills through songs and games such as 'I am the Captain', where they demonstrate an understanding of loud and quiet sounds, rhythm and the use of sound patterns. Pupils have a good musical vocabulary and are able to describe sounds that their percussion instruments make and to divide them into groups to achieve effective performance. Older pupils know the names of orchestral instruments and their function in an orchestra. Many learn to play treble and tenor recorders, while others receive extra tuition in playing the violin. All enjoy their music making and respond enthusiastically. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons and gain much from their music-making and pupils who are attaining higher levels in the subject are well encouraged. Indeed during their time in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress.

139. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, particularly when they join together in the hall for assembly. They learn to pitch their voices accurately and sing unaccompanied. They make commendable efforts at part-singing and it is obvious that the popular school choir sets a good example to the rest of the school. Pupils listen carefully and attentively to music played on entry and exit in assembly. They learn to appreciate the music of famous composers, to recognise many different kinds of music and to respond to them with interest and thought.

140. The school uses a mixture of two commercial schemes of work to support staff and to ensure that pupils have a suitable breadth of experience across the school. Teachers make effective use of this and the supporting taped material.

141. The recorder clubs are popular and some older pupils benefit from extra-curricular tuition such as the violin. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to use their performance skills, through performances in the local church, concerts in school on occasions such as Harvest Festival and celebration assemblies. Some members of the school choir sing in the Tamworth choir. Visits are also made by music-making groups. All these activities have a considerable impact on pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

142. The two key stage music co-ordinators are committed and enthusiastic and recognise the need to develop pupils' skills in composing, performing and appraising. They are ensuring that the new national guidelines and the scheme of work are providing the foundations for developing all pupils' musical abilities. The school is fortunate to have good resources and a music room for everyday use. There is, as yet, little use made of ICT in the teaching of the subject and no formal assessment of pupils' work or opportunity for the monitoring of teaching in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Pupils' levels of attainment are similar to those levels expected nationally for pupils at the end of both key stages. The standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained in Key Stage 1 although in Key Stage 2 they are lower, except in swimming, where standards by the time pupils leave the school are above average. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. Pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in both key stages. However, there are variations in the rates of progress of learning and this is linked directly to the quality of teaching and the level of teachers' understanding and expertise in the subject. There is uneven progress across some year groups with some of the oldest pupils making unsatisfactory progress in some lessons.

144. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work with enthusiasm in games, for example, learning to control a ball, when sending and receiving both with hands and feet. The quality of teaching for older Key Stage 1 pupils is good. The careful teaching of basic skills results in most pupils developing accurate skills in throwing, catching and kicking a ball. A weakness is the missed opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate for themselves. There is insufficient use made of pupil demonstration, by some teachers, in order to raise the expectations of others and improve performance as a result. Most seven-year-olds show good awareness of the space around them although some are frustrated with too little work space when kicking a ball to a partner. They are able to work independently and with a partner, but progress is affected when too many pupils are kicking a ball to a partner within the confines of the hall.

145. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Work progresses soundly in most classes. In gymnastics, Year 3 pupils perform a range of stretches and curled movements and most are able to link these movements into simple sequences successfully, many with imaginative ideas. However, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might because, on some occasions, teacher expectations are too low. In dance, in Year 4, pupils' performed actions of boat building linked to a Viking project. Most pupils could mime actions but few managed to relate their actions to the rhythm of the music. The high standard of work produced by a very able pupil was missed by the teacher and, as a result, the pupil gradually became less involved. In a Year 5 dance lesson pupils performed in groups following a football theme of 'Sport and Pastimes'. Sequence work was not well developed. In this lesson, because the teacher did not give enough emphasis to pupils working together as a group the basic skills were not refined. Low teacher expectations resulted in superficial sequence work and as a result some pupils did not achieve as well as they might. When skills are carefully taught, for example, in games in a Year 5 class, pupils show increasing skill in controlling a ball when working at different levels. The high expectations of the teacher resulted in pupils acquiring and refining skills well. Pupils work accurately and at speed when sending and receiving a range of balls. However, these skills are not always built upon successfully in Year 6. In the weaker teaching, low expectations and ineffective management strategies result in underachievement for a significant proportion of pupils in one class. There is insufficient attention paid to footwear by teachers which does not set a good example to pupils. Pupils are not made aware of the impact of exercise on the body and there is little opportunity for

pupils to reflect and evaluate their own and each other's performance in order to improve. As a result, pupils do not achieve well enough.

146. Pupils enjoy physical education, and when tasks are sufficiently demanding, they concentrate well, work with sustained effort and behave well.

147. The recently appointed co-ordinator has not yet had time to influence standards, particularly in some upper classes in Key Stage 2 where teaching needs to improve. There are weaknesses in assessment procedures and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to remedy this in order to gain a clear picture of the quality of physical education throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory and together with the other site facilities make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The organisation of the resources is a weakness, and is not helped by the clutter of other items not related to the subject. An adequate range of extra-curricular activities make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and to their personal development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. Whilst it was only possible to observe two religious education lessons, these observations together with a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them show that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the subject. Pupils at the age of seven and at the age of eleven reach standards at least in line with the requirements and demands of the locally agreed syllabus used by the school. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection and are now rising rapidly with the new scheme of work being implemented.

149. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 display a good knowledge of the concept of the importance of the community, with a specific focus on the family. They also become accustomed to exploring their feelings and those of others. They begin to acquire some understanding of respect for Christianity and other faiths, as observed in a Year 2 lesson which explored ways in which sacred texts are regarded. In a Year 1 lesson, good exposition and sensitive open-ended questions by the teacher enabled the pupils to come to an understanding of Diwali and the artefacts associated with its celebration. By the end of Year 2, pupils have knowledge of basic religious stories and many religious festivals.

150. The idea of community is explored in greater depth in Years 5 and 6, where pupils study specific religious communities, particularly Hinduism and Islam, as well as Christianity. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to consider and discuss how these religious communities celebrate their festivals. This was particularly noticeable in the Year 3 lessons observed in which pupils came to a good understanding of the theme of light and its importance to many religions. The good progress made in these lessons was aided by the teacher's skilful use of resources, such as candles in a darkened room. Good planning by the teachers enabled pupils to make good progress. The good progress made within lessons owes much to pupils' ability to approach their studies in a committed manner, and to listen to and respect the opinions of others. Teachers do not, however, use religious education lessons to promote literacy skills sufficiently, by encouraging pupils to produce good quality written work.

151. There are good links between religious education and assemblies, with one often reinforcing the other. A good example of this occurred during the week of the inspection, with assemblies continuing to explore the idea of the need for obedience and respect for God, families and friends through the scenario of an imaginary primary school. Assemblies were also well linked with the themes of fire and light, which were part of the current curriculum topic.

152. The quality of teaching across both key stages is good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, well supported by the scheme of work in their planning and can convey concepts to pupils in a meaningful manner. They create and promote a reflective atmosphere where good learning can take place.

153. Examinations of teachers' plans and pupils' work indicates that over time pupils are provided with the opportunity to explore and extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths, including Islam and Hinduism. Pupils learn about the gods, religious writings, festivals and stories of each of these faiths, and come to an understanding of shared beliefs and how they come to impact upon and influence our daily lives. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides good management for the subject and is writing many productive units of work as well as revising others. She is aware that there is too little opportunity for pupils to strengthen their understanding of other faiths through visits to places of worship, though the school does invite visitors of different faiths to come to the school.

154. With its focus on different religions and cultures and the regular opportunity to discuss a range of spiritual and factual issues, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The subject is carefully monitored against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the co-ordinator evaluates the success of each topic covered. There is, however, little opportunity for the monitoring of teaching and no assessment of individual pupils' progress.