

INSPECTION REPORT

**Edensor Church of England (VC)
Primary School**

Longton, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124227

Headteacher: Mrs J. Gould

Reporting inspector: Mr R. W. Burgess
20950

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th June 2002

Inspection number: 225514

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and Infant
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Byatts Grove Longton Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST3 2RH
Telephone number:	01782 235051
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev'd D. Heywood
Date of previous inspection:	13 th March 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20950	Roger Burgess	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20281	Gill Dunkling	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Foundation stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21858	John Pryor	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Edensor Church of England Primary School is situated in the Longton area on the south eastern side of Stoke-on-Trent. It is an average sized primary school for pupils aged from three to 11 and currently has 210 on roll, including 22 children who attend the nursery full time. Most pupils come from the immediate area where most property is rented. Children are admitted to the nursery class on a part time basis when they are three years old. They join the reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. When they start the nursery most children have levels of attainment which are well below those expected for their age. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, approximately a quarter, is above the average for schools nationally. The percentage of pupils identified as having individual needs on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where pupils make good progress and have achieved very well this school year. The headteacher, governors and staff work effectively together to provide a very good quality of education for all pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school and make excellent relationships. The quality of provision is very good, with all teaching being good or better and all staff contribute significantly to the success of the school. In relation to their previous work pupils achieve well in most subjects, including English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Learning benefits from the very good attitudes of the pupils which the school is successful in developing. The governing body make a very good and effective contribution to the work of the school. The headteacher and governors are clear about what needs to be improved and how to achieve it. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- ◆ The headteacher, governors and senior staff provide very good leadership.
- ◆ The excellent monitoring of the work of the school resulting in the identification of areas for improvement and appropriate action being taken.
- ◆ The excellent provision for pupils' personal development.
- ◆ Pupils achieve very well in relation to their previous attainment (achievement refers to the progress that pupils make over time in relation to their starting point).
- ◆ Excellent monitoring of behaviour and promoting high standards. As a consequence pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to school.
- ◆ Relationships are excellent, reflecting the school's very good provision for the care and protection of pupils.
- ◆ The school works well in partnership with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- ◆ The quality and range of resources – this is recognised in the current school improvement plan.
- ◆ Standards of handwriting.
- ◆ The reporting of pupils' progress in Foundation subjects in pupil's annual written reports.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in March 2000 has been very good. A visit by HMI in March 2001 judged improvement to be reasonable. Since that visit the school has continued to effectively implement the good plans to tackle the weaknesses identified in the last report. The implementation of some of these, for example, assessment and the development of the curriculum, have been addressed well and are having an increasing impact on standards. The work of the senior management team and co-ordinators has been addressed well and they become actively involved in the monitoring and development of their subjects. The school improvement plan has been developed and schemes of work have been produced for all subjects. Assessment arrangements have been extended and practice is consistent, reflected in work which is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The most significant improvements have been in target setting for individual pupils and the use of assessment information in planning lessons which have resulted in significant improvements to the standards attained. Since the previous inspection standards have improved at a greater rate than those in other schools. This was recognised with the award of a School Achievement Award in 2001. The headteacher, staff and governors have made improvements in many aspects. There is a strong commitment to improve the quality of education through a programme of review and development. The school now has much better information to enable it to assess pupils' progress and set targets, which have been well met. The school recognises that further progress can be made and is well placed to continue to build on its recent improvements with clear and positive leadership, which promotes high standards of provision and attainment.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E*	D	B
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	E*	E*	E	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Although the performance of 11 year olds in these tests was below or well below the national average, as the table above shows, it was above that achieved in schools in similar contexts in English, below in science and well below in mathematics. Targets set with the local education authority were met. The trend in test results in all subjects has been upwards, particularly in English and science. In the 2001 national tests and assessments for 7 year olds, pupils' results were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results compared with those in similar schools were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. These represent a significant improvement on results in 2000.

From a low start, pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. In the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress but a significant number of children do not reach the early learning goals for children of their age. From current inspection, the majority of 7 and 11 year old pupils now attain the expected levels in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In religious education, pupils achieve in line with the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very interested and involved in activities. Pupils work hard and sustain concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils understand the school's firm and fair rules and follow them well. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Incidents of bullying are very rare and they are dealt with promptly.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are very thoughtful for others and welcome opportunities to take on responsibilities. Relationships are excellent. This creates a positive atmosphere in which pupils learn confidently.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has made a concerted effort to improve levels of attendance.

The school's strong, caring ethos supports the development of pupils' very good attitudes and values. Pupils listen attentively and respond well in lessons. In their personal development, pupils willingly take responsibility for tasks and show initiative, such as when undertaking independent research and supporting different charities. Despite the best efforts of the school, a significant number of absences are due to holidays during term time. This has a detrimental effect on the progress and achievement of these pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The overall quality of teaching is very good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the raising of academic standards. Teachers work hard, exhibit a strong loyalty to the school and serve the pupils well. All teaching was good or better. These findings are an improvement on the good standards reported in the last inspection. Teaching was of a particularly high quality for the two oldest classes, with examples of excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils make particularly good gains in learning in these classes. The quality of teaching is always good or better in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music. It is also very good for children in the Foundation Stage. The high quality of teaching is helping to ensure pupils make good gains in learning

throughout the school. Their needs are met well and they gain skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is enhanced with interesting visits and a very good level of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils progress well because of the good levels of curricular and adult support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. There are well-organised opportunities, such as the Anti Bullying Council, for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. Teaching of the broader multicultural aspects of life in modern society is developed very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for the care and protection of pupils. Health and safety issues are dealt with appropriately. Assessment and monitoring procedures are very good. The school makes good of the wealth of information gained to plan effectively for future learning.

The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent and reflected in the behaviour of pupils throughout the school. Procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are excellent. There are good links with parents. The school makes a strong effort to work in partnership with parents. This has been of particular benefit where the parent response has been good. Homework has a positive effect on children's education and progress. Regular information is sent to parents on school events. Annual reports on pupils' progress do not give parents enough information on how their children are doing in all subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads the school well. She is very ably supported by key staff. There is a clear management structure with well-focused job descriptions to define senior teachers' responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very conscientious and they fulfil their statutory duties well. Their role in creating a community spirit and caring for the pupils is very good and they are developing their role as critical friend to the headteacher effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The headteacher and co-ordinators analyse the school's performance in national and other tests rigorously and shares the information appropriately with staff and governors. The school improvement plan helps governors to evaluate how well the school has done.

The strategic use of resources	Good. Funds are used appropriately for the purpose for which they are intended. Governors manage the finances of the school well and give appropriate consideration to the effectiveness of their spending.
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The level and quality of support and administrative staff are good. Learning resources and the accommodation, which are used very well, are satisfactory. Leadership provides very clear direction for the school and promotes collaboration and high standards. The governing body provides active support in the management of the school. The principles of best value are used well, for example, through the use of individual teacher's subject specialisms, for example, in music. This enhances the quality of provision. Professional training for teachers and classroom assistants is of very good quality and new staff are integrated into the school well.

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 and make good progress. ◆ They feel comfortable about coming with questions or problems. ◆ The school has high expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Homework. ◆ Activities outside of lessons.

Inspectors support the parents' positive views of the school. The school has surveyed parents' views on homework and has an appropriate policy and practice. The range of activities is very good and includes a variety of visits linked to the curriculum and visitors to the school as well as a range of different clubs, including sporting and musical activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has taken a rigorous approach to improving standards. The upward trend in the school's results for English, mathematics and science for 11 year olds is in line with the national trend from 1996 to 2000. Since the time of the last inspection in March 2000, the percentage of 7 and 11 year olds achieving the expected levels has risen in English, mathematics and science. Fewer pupils reach the higher levels than happens in many schools. The school's successful introduction of assessment linked to targets for individual pupils has had a significant effect on pupils' attainment.

2. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, in comparison with all schools pupils' performance in English was below the national average, it was well below the national average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was above average in English and below average in science and well below average in mathematics. The performance of boys was well below that of girls. These results represent a significant improvement in English and science. Early indications are that there has been a similar improvement in mathematics results in the most recent tests in May 2002. The school is monitoring gender performance and providing classroom support and learning resources to redress the situation.

3. From current inspection, standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science for most pupils. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 4 and 5 shows that standards are improving and pupils achieve well. In its drive to raise standards, the school groups pupils in Years 3 to 6 by prior attainment in mathematics and English. The targets set with the local education authority for English and mathematics in 2000 were exceeded and this year's targets have been raised to present a real challenge for the school.

4. In the 2001 national tests for 7 year olds, the school's performance in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average compared with all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. These results show a significant improvement on previous results particularly in writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards for 7 year olds are in line with expectations in reading, writing and mathematics for most pupils. This represents good achievement from a low start. The staff have analysed the school's results in national and voluntary tests in order to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses.

5. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment which are well below those expected for their age. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress, particularly in their personal and social development. The children achieve very well although a significant number do not achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children make very good progress because of the very good teaching and support based on a clear and secure understanding of the needs of young children. The planning of the curriculum is very good and staff create a happy and purposeful atmosphere in which children learn confidently.

6. By the time they are 7 years old, most pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding of English at a good rate and achieve well from a low base. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively and acquire appropriate specific subject vocabulary so that they are able to express their ideas clearly. They ask questions and share their thoughts openly during discussions. Pupils enjoy reading and experience a wide range of texts so that they practise their skills in all subjects. Slower learning pupils use illustrations to help them to understand stories. The school emphasises the step-by-step teaching and learning of letter sounds and patterns so that pupils achieve well in reading, writing and spelling and gradually learn to build simple words. A significant number of pupils do not use capital letters and full stops consistently to demarcate sentences. Higher attaining pupils use interesting vocabulary and show a clear sense of narrative in their writing.

7. In mathematics, the majority of pupils acquire a good range of strategies to answer the teachers' brisk questions in mental arithmetic sessions. Pupils benefit from the skilful intervention of the teacher and support staff to tease out their thoughts during individual and group work. Pupils develop an increasing awareness of the use of mathematics in everyday life, for example, in weighing, measuring and shopping.

8. In science, the school's increased provision of practical investigations helps pupils to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of the world around them. Most pupils develop skills of systematic observation and recording at a good rate and their use of appropriate vocabulary supports their good progress.

9. By the time they are 11 years old, pupils use their skills in speaking and listening effectively, for example, they support their arguments effectively during discussions and take part in the school council. The high quality of relationships in the school ensures that pupils are able to express their views without fear of criticism. Most 11 year olds answer teachers' questions confidently and are keen to contribute their ideas. Pupils benefit from reading together from enlarged texts during the literacy hour. They explore spelling patterns, look for specific punctuation and consider how words are used to create a range of effects. Consistent teaching of spelling and regular practice in basic grammar give pupils a good grounding so that they achieve increasingly effective writing skills. They write for a good range of purposes and use their literacy skills effectively in other subjects.

10. In mathematics, pupils' positive and enthusiastic approach to mental arithmetic helps them to gain increasingly secure knowledge of the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers. Pupils increasingly use this knowledge to solve practical problems which are expressed in words rather than figures. In science, pupils gain knowledge and understanding at a good rate because of the school's increasingly practical approach to the teaching and learning of the subject.

11. Seven and 11 year olds achieve at levels typical for their age in information and communication technology. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Younger pupils use the mouse confidently and are adept at using the keyboard for word processing and simple editing. They use simple programs to extend their learning in literacy, numeracy, geography and art and design. As they grow older, pupils gain increasing experience with data handling, control and modelling and the use of a wide range of electronic equipment to achieve above average standards. Most pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet confidently by the time they are 11.

12. In religious education, pupils aged 7 and 11 achieve standards which are in line with expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. This concurs with findings at the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school gain appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding which enable them to know about a range of faiths which are practised in modern Britain. Christianity is the principal religion studied and pupils know Bible stories, including those about the life and work of Jesus. Pupils achieve well in all other subjects. In art and design, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for their age. These standards represent a clear improvement since the last inspection.

13. Higher attaining and talented pupils are achieving well because teachers now have high expectations of them and convey this very clearly. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Realistic targets are set for these pupils to achieve regular success. Teaching support is good and classroom assistants help pupils to achieve well in lessons.

14. Factors which enhance the progress of pupils with special educational needs include the good quality of pupils' individual education plans, the close teamwork between teaching and non-teaching staff, the highly qualified staff for dyslexic pupils, the good links between school and home, the very good use of the school's resources, especially in information and communication technology, and the good links with the support services of the local education authority.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes and behaviour have strengthened further and are now very good. Pupils say that the school is 'a friendly place where your views are listened to'. They say that their teachers 'work hard and help them to learn'. They have a clear sense that they come to school to learn as well as to have fun. These high standards have been achieved through very good support and encouragement which raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence in themselves and their work. Parents are particularly pleased with the high expectations of teachers that their children will work hard and do their best.

16. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Attendance levels are just in line with national averages although there is a slightly higher incidence of authorised absence. The school is aware of the number of term-time holidays, particularly during the traditional period of 'potters' holidays' which disrupt pupils' education. Most pupils arrive on time for school and registrations are carried out quickly at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. This means that little learning time is wasted.

17. Pupils are highly motivated, enthusiastic and eager to contribute and participate in lessons and other activities in and around the school. This has a significant impact on the quality of their learning. Pupils settle to work quickly and purposefully. They are well focused on their tasks and can concentrate for extended periods of time, putting in maximum effort to their work. They are confident to both ask questions and volunteer information in discussions and listen well to their teachers and to other pupils. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and have very positive attitudes in all subjects of the curriculum.

18. Standards of behaviour in and around the school are very good. Most parents are pleased with the high standards of discipline and feel that their children behave very well as a result. Pupils say that children behave well and that they have lots of friends. They are happy that, when there are problems, teachers listen to their concerns and help them to sort out their difficulties. The school is a welcoming, orderly community where pupils have

a very good sense of self-discipline. Although class rules are clearly displayed, teachers rarely have to refer to them because pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

19. Pupils are friendly and courteous to staff and adults in the school. In class, pupils are very happy to talk about what they are doing and are willing to show their work to inspectors. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils were seen to behave very well in assemblies, at lunchtime and in the playground. The school works hard to include and support all pupils, especially those with individual behaviour problems. There has only been one exclusion in the past year.

20. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. Relationships in the school are excellent and help pupils to feel fully included in the school community where everyone respects and values each other. Pupils themselves say that everyone is treated equally. Teachers and pupils have relaxed relationships with each other and there is a lot of good-natured humour between them. Pupils help each other and show consideration for others' feelings, values and beliefs. They co-operate well and enjoy working together in pairs and groups.

21. Pupils demonstrate high levels of initiative and personal responsibility. They carry out jobs around the school willingly. Older pupils organise and run school fund-raising events. They are very aware of their own learning and say that the class and individual targets are good because 'we can work towards them.' Year 5 and 6 pupils in the Anti Bullying Council are proud of their role in helping pupils to behave well and resolve their problems. They say that they 'want to set an example to others' and recognise that their roles will 'help us for when we are older – it gives a chance to try team work.' Year 6 pupils feel that they have been very well prepared for their move to secondary school and are looking forward to new opportunities. They welcomed the chance to talk to inspectors and their mature and positive discussions were a credit to the pupils and to the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching is very good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was good. During this inspection, it was very good or better in nearly three quarters of the lessons seen and good in the remainder. The best teaching was in Years 5 and 6 and four excellent lessons were seen for the oldest pupils. As a result of this overall good teaching, most pupils learn at a good rate and achieve well. Rigorous attention to the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is a prominent good feature. The good quality of teaching reflects the teacher's good planning of lessons, so that pupils build effectively on what they already know. Throughout the school, the best lessons are characterised by the teachers' high expectations of pupils.

23. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the quality of the teaching gives the children a positive start to their schooling. Staff recognise the importance of children's language development and there is appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with rigorous

teaching of letter shapes and sounds and thorough practice of early arithmetical skills. The nursery nurses are closely involved in the teaching and all staff are involved in the planning of activities. The staff value the children; they listen to them patiently and are interested in what they have to say. This builds children's confidence and helps them to express their views and ideas. Staff prepare a bright and stimulating environment which encourages children to want to learn. The children's development is monitored closely and work is planned to meet the needs of individuals and groups, including children who have special educational needs. In the reception class, the pace of teaching increases and children benefit from more structured lessons as they get older.

24. The teachers' high level of interaction with the pupils mean that learning takes place at a very good rate. Teachers manage the pupils well and deal with a wide range of pupils' needs. In English and mathematics, the teaching was characterised by the teachers' effective implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. In all subjects, the best lessons were organised well and moved along at a brisk pace. The 'quick fire' mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of each numeracy lesson were particularly effective. Throughout the school, teachers gave clear explanations of what the pupils were expected to do so that they could get on with their work and did not waste time.

25. Teachers use a wide range of methods to stimulate pupils' interest. In science, teachers' attention to the development of pupils' skills of scientific enquiry was demonstrated by their use of probing questions which made pupils think hard before they answered. The good level of intervention and support in physical education lessons helped pupils to experiment with ideas and refine their work critically. Very good relationships were a major feature in all lessons and were a strong and positive element in the integration of pupils with special educational needs. All staff work hard with these pupils and look thoughtfully for ways to help them. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well by following the school's code of conduct and by creating a positive atmosphere in which pupils strive for rewards and want to be successful.

26. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and teachers plan carefully to meet their needs. They set targets for both individuals and groups of pupils with similar needs so that pupils are challenged appropriately. The main thrust in support for these pupils is in literacy and numeracy and teachers plan well and involve classroom assistants effectively during activities so that pupils make good progress in line with their classmates. In other subjects, good support with language and literacy helps pupils to do research, organise findings and explain what they have done with increasing success. Support staff play an important role in the education of all pupils; their support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly valuable. Pupils make good progress because of the sensitive management and thorough understanding of their needs.

27. Staff have worked well to raise the standards of pupils' attainment. Literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school and are promoted effectively in all subjects. The regular and thorough teaching of letter sounds and spelling patterns helps pupils to improve their spelling, especially in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, the teachers' thoughtful selection of interesting literature helps pupils approach new texts with increasing confidence. Marking of pupils' work is good in mathematics, but it is not used consistently as a tool for teaching and learning in all written work. Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to correct their work.

28. Teachers evaluate their own work critically and note how pupils have progressed in lessons, with particular rigour in English, mathematics and science. This helps them to form a continuous picture of how each pupil is doing and to plan appropriate work for groups and individuals, including those pupils who have special educational needs or are talented.

29. Teachers have also developed effective assessment procedures in information and communication technology. In other subjects, teachers keep brief and useful records which help them to prepare lessons, give a short summary at the end of each term and report annually to parents. The school has helpful systems for teachers to record how pupils are acquiring knowledge and skills systematically, for example, in history and geography, in order to provide clearer information for parents and the pupils' next schools.

30. Teachers deploy non-teaching staff effectively to support pupils during activities. Learning resources are chosen effectively to help pupils to understand and remember what is being taught and to bring life to their learning. Information and communication technology is used increasingly to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. For example, pupils explore the use of computers to collect and collate information in the form of graphs in many subjects. Teachers use a broad range of information and communication technology, including audio and video recording equipment, to bring excitement and interest to lessons. Throughout the school, teachers plan for pupils to search for information in CD-ROMs and on the Internet.

31. Homework is set regularly and teachers work hard to involve parents with their children's learning, both in and out of school. They are particularly successful with the reading programme, in which many parents play a valuable role in listening to their children and maintaining dialogue with the school through entries in reading diaries.

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

32. The school provides a curriculum that is very broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The allocation of time to each subject is in accordance with national guidelines. The school has undertaken a significant review of its curriculum and the planning for its delivery since the last inspection. All key issues have been addressed.

33. There is very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The very wide range of first hand experiences for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that very good opportunities are provided in all areas of learning. The teacher and nursery nurses work very closely to plan and develop stimulating activities for the children. The curriculum provided in the Reception Class makes a smooth transition into the National Curriculum programmes of study.

34. At Key Stages 1 and 2, effective learning opportunities are provided for all pupils, in the different subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education. There is appropriate provision for sex education and drugs misuse awareness through the curriculum and the personal and social education programme, with support from the school nurse. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. In their personal development, pupils throughout the school willingly take on responsibility for tasks and show initiative. The school places great emphasis on its personal care of pupils.

35. There are policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects. The school development plan contains review dates for each subject, providing an opportunity to improve continuity and progression in curricular planning.

36. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are effectively in place. Teachers follow the guidelines very well. They structure their lessons to ensure that the balance of direct teaching and pupils' activities maintain high levels of application and motivation in the pupils. In both literacy and numeracy, teachers carefully plan activities that are appropriate to pupils' differing prior attainment.

37. Central to the school's ethos is the excellent provision of equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and pupils with special educational needs receive good support to aid their learning. Health education is an important component of science teaching and learning. Good displays around the school indicate pupils' interest in healthy living. Through the physical education, games and swimming activities, the school contributes to the development of pupils' physical fitness.

38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are used effectively and these pupils' special needs are being targeted. The pupils are supported through the provision of differentiated activities and through the work of support assistants. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into this caring environment. The school encourages high levels of co-operation and support to enable pupils to participate fully alongside others in the life of the school.

39. The very good provision of extra-curricular activities strongly enhances the curriculum. At present, activities include gym, art, drama, library and information and communication technology clubs, recorder teaching and football coaching by Stoke City Community Football Association. Links with the community make a good contribution to pupils' education. Recently local businesses donated prizes for the school initiative "Books and Beyond". There are sound links with other local schools. Subject co-ordinators attend local meetings and there are sound transfer arrangements in place to ensure that pupils move from one school to another with minimum disruption to their learning.

40. The school makes excellent provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Developing their self-esteem, sense of belonging to a caring and cared for community, their understanding of what it means to be a responsible member of society and their appreciation of the wide variety of cultural experiences open to them, lie at the heart of the school's aims. The high quality of this provision results in the excellent mutual relationships between everyone associated with the school and especially between pupils and staff that are the hallmark of the school. This represents a very good improvement on the previous inspection.

41. The clear but gently stated Christian ethos of the school defined in its Church of England Voluntary Controlled status is visible in the concern of teachers and governors for the rounded development of the pupils as people. A very important feature of the provision for pupils' personal development is the Anti Bullying Council for which pupils volunteer for selection. The pupils themselves manage this, they are trained to help their fellow pupils who experience any sort of harassment and encouraged to bring concerns to appropriate members of staff. This body has not only been very effective in its primary purpose, but as the pupils became more self-confident it has become a means by which they can affect the life of the school positively. Not only the members of Anti Bullying Council but the other pupils also feel, as a result of its efforts, that their opinions matter and that the school really cares about them.

42. As well as feeling comfortable with themselves in an everyday fashion, the pupils are provided with the means of expressing their deepest feelings through prayer and reflection in the well-managed and sensitive acts of collective worship. Following an initial assembly on thanking God for their city pupils were invited to make their own prayers, attached to a cardboard "candle", during the week for any aspect of city life that moved them. Each day the number of candles used increased. Pupils are also invited to offer prayers before meals and at the end of the day and are thus provided with an appropriate language in which to express their feelings of awe and thanksgiving.

43. The provision for the pupils' moral development is also excellent. The behaviour policy is implemented in positive ways so that pupils are encouraged to behave well, rather than discouraged from behaving badly. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils create a climate in which pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and behave naturally in harmony with one another. The methods of encouraging positive relationships and hence good behaviour are practised by all the adults involved in the school. They support the very good work of the Anti Bullying Council pupils who also contribute to the other pupils' perception of what is good and what is bad behaviour.

44. The very good teaching methods, which encourage co-operative working, also support the development of a well founded ethical community within the school. This is achieved without the pupils developing a superior and self-regarding holier-than-thou view of themselves. They behave well because that is the way it is.

45. The very good provision for the pupils' social development is related to the provision for spiritual and moral development and is grounded in the excellent relationships promoted and experienced in the school. The pupils have very good models of social behaviour in the work of volunteers and governors who give of their time and talents to support the school and create in it a welcoming community, supporting the very good work of the staff in this respect.

46. The recently revived breakfast club, named the "Cornflake Club" by the younger pupils and with a logo devised by older ones, is run by parents and other volunteers from the church and the community. This is well supported by pupils and provides another very good model of how societies depend on the help people give to one another. The visits the younger pupils make within the local community help them to understand how society functions. In much the same way the discussions in subjects, such as English and geography about social and environmental matters, provide the pupils with insights into how society functions.

47. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' cultural development through the curriculum in subjects such as art and design, music, English, history, geography and physical education, and does this consciously. Throughout the school pupils are made aware of the range of music which is available to them and they learn about composers from a variety of traditions and cultures. This is also introduced through dance. The books selected for literacy and provided in the library or used as models for the pupils' own writing are drawn from both the British European culture and those from more distant lands.

48. In religious education the pupils learn to understand the Christian background and cultural heritage, for example, in the visit to Lichfield Cathedral by Year 6 and local churches by the younger pupils. They also study the beliefs and cultures of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam at appropriate levels. This develops their sympathetic awareness of the variety of cultural traditions they may come across.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The school continues to provide a caring, supportive and inclusive environment where pupils flourish because the staff know and value them as individuals. Parents feel that their children are safe and well cared for in a happy and friendly community.

50. The school has very good systems for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. Child protection procedures are followed correctly and the school has a good understanding of its responsibilities towards any pupils in public care. All staff show sensitivity to pupils in need and make good provision for their care when they are hurt or unwell or have specific medical needs.

51. Midday staff care well for pupils at lunchtime and actively promote happier playtimes by playing with pupils and providing indoor activities for those who feel that they need a quiet space or reassurance. The Breakfast Club, run by governors and volunteers, provides pupils with good levels of care, including nutritious food and a range of interesting activities. Arrangements for health and safety are good and the school regularly reviews its routines and procedures through risk assessments to ensure pupils' health and safety, for example, when undertaking visits.

52. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Good links are established with the educational welfare officer who visits regularly and follows up individual cases where necessary. Registrations are carried out efficiently and unexplained absences are followed up by staff who have a good knowledge of individual pupils who are regularly absent or late for school. The school is aware of the traditional culture of 'potter's holidays' which affect authorised absence and continue to impress upon parents the importance of uninterrupted education.

53. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour and for eliminating any oppressive behaviour are excellent. This is reflected in the very good behaviour of pupils and the calm atmosphere in the school. The behaviour policy provides clear guidelines for promoting good behaviour and ensures consistency of approach in behaviour management from all staff. Pupils are involved in negotiating class rules and, as a result, are clear about what is expected of them.

54. The school is also very effective in supporting individual pupils with significant behaviour problems and monitors them well. An outstanding feature of the school's behaviour management procedures is the involvement of pupils in the Anti Bullying Council. Through this council, older pupils, with the support and guidance of staff, learn to promote discipline amongst their peers and to mediate between pupils who are not getting on well. Their role in school is highly valued by staff and pupils alike and has an excellent impact on pupils' personal development and levels of self-discipline.

55. The school has made very good progress in improving its procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This area is now a strength of the school. From baseline assessments in the nursery and reception classes, the school has developed very good testing and record keeping procedures in English, mathematics and science, which are now being extended and developed in other subjects.

56. The school makes very good use of detailed comparative data from the local authority to extensively monitor and analyse the data from testing. With this information it identifies trends and variances in achievement, places pupils in ability sets for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and tracks the progress of pupils of all abilities to ensure that they are progressing fast enough against predicated levels of achievement. Answers in tests are closely analysed so that staff can pinpoint exactly where pupils have gaps in their understanding, for example, the use of data handling in mathematics or characterisation in writing.

57. Through their assessments in lessons and monitoring of pupils' records, teachers are setting good, and increasingly precise, targets for pupils to work on. The assessment co-ordinator has been successful in unifying systems and overseeing all assessment procedures. She is now working with staff to develop individual pupil portfolios with pieces of pupils' work chosen by teachers, and sometimes pupils, in order to build up a clear picture of pupils' progress. The school is now further developing whole school portfolios of pupils' work, in subjects other than English and mathematics, so that teachers can more accurately assess work against specific National Curriculum levels.

58. Overall, the quality of educational and personal support and guidance is very good and there is excellent support and monitoring of pupils' personal development. Teachers' marking helps pupils to understand how well they have achieved and where they need to make improvements. Teachers take a great deal of time to celebrate special pieces of work in class or at 'praise assemblies'. In addition to a whole class target, all pupils have half-termly individual targets that are shared with parents and are referred to regularly.

59. There is a strong emphasis on independent learning in all lessons and good displays which indicate to pupils the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to achieve a higher level. This enables pupils to understand their strengths and those areas needing further work. For example, at the end of Year 4 science lesson, the teacher asks pupils if they think they have fully understood the work on conductive and insulating materials. Pupils have to evaluate their own performance and respond by putting their thumbs up or down, or by moving their thumbs half way to indicate that they need more practice. The teacher notes this response in order to assess what she must teach at the next lesson. This simple, yet effective, approach allows pupils to take additional responsibility for their own learning.

60. Teachers and staff know all the pupils very well and give good guidance and support in lessons and around the school. The system of reward, such as stickers and team points, is well understood by pupils and teachers ensure that all pupils are included in the celebration of achievement over the school year. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and has a very positive impact on the quality of their learning and their personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. The school's partnership with parents is good and remains a high priority for development for the school and the governing body. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its effective links with parents and provides them with good quality information. Most parents have very positive views of the school and some wrote letters to the inspectors to emphasise their appreciation of the quality of education provided for their children. They are particularly positive about the 'praise assemblies' to which they are invited each week and which enable them to participate in celebrating their children's achievements.

62. Parents are particularly pleased with the progress that their children make as a result of good quality teaching, high expectations for their children's achievement and the support that pupils receive to help them behave well and grow up. As at the last inspection, a significant number of parents were concerned about the range of activities provided outside school. The inspection team considers these to be very good. Some parents still express concerns about the school's provision for homework, although these range from those who would like their children to have more work to those who do not wish their children to have any. Although the school involved parents in its discussions about homework during the writing of the current home-school agreement, it recognises the need to consult with them further in order to address these concerns.

63. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well written and give detailed information about the school and its activities. There are good quality newsletters which help parents to know what is going on in school and which encourage parents to get involved in school life and their children's learning. Regular consultation evenings are held for parents to review their children's progress and achievements and to discuss the targets set for pupils. These are usually well attended and parents make good use of these opportunities to look at their children's work.

64. The annual reports to parents regarding pupils' progress and attainment cover all subjects of the curriculum. They clearly identify what pupils are able to do and how well pupils achieve in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. There is too much similarity in reporting in other subjects of the curriculum because teachers are not using the assessment information available to them well enough to more clearly indicate to parents what pupils know, understand and can do, rather than merely describe what they have done.

65. The school is aware of the need to continue to encourage more parents to be involved in their children's learning at school and home. Through its community links in the parish, it develops links with parents through 'Sure Start' and the Mothers and Toddlers Group before children start school. An Early Years Open Day is a good feature which gets parents involved at the beginning of their children's education. The school holds workshops on mathematics and science, has offered computer courses for parents in conjunction with Cauldon College and has encouraged parents to participate in Family Literacy schemes such as the 'Books and Beyond' family focused reading project. Those parents who participate in school life make a good contribution.

66. A small number of parents and grandparents help regularly in classrooms. They support activities such as group work and one grandparent has made a significant impact to the school's appearance through his gardening expertise. Pupils use the garden outside the front door as a good resource for learning, for example, when looking at the habitats of insects. The school no longer has a Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association due to lack of interest but parents do give their support to any fund-raising activities organised by the school. There is very good attendance by parents at church services, praise assemblies and consultation meetings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The quality of leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good and it ensures a clear sense of purpose in the school. The headteacher provides good educational direction, which is focused on the achievement of good standards and positive learning experiences for all pupils. Her vision guides the school's work effectively. It is reflected in the aims of the school and is shared by staff and governors. There is a strong and successful commitment to the development of very good relationships and a caring ethos, which are greatly valued by the whole school community. The school's robust sense of community and clear sense of educational direction, together with strong elements of leadership which are being drawn together, provide it with the good capacity for further improvement and success.

68. At the last inspection, the leadership and management by the headteacher and governing body were judged to be sound. The rate of improvement has been good. The identified need to introduce procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has been met. The headteacher monitors lessons throughout the school and other members of staff play an increasing role in the process in order to support the enhancement of teaching skills and the development of individual subjects.

69. Management is very good. Governors are well informed and discharge their statutory duties effectively. There are appropriate policies for the education and care of the pupils and for the management of the school. The school embraces the principles of equal opportunities and the inclusion of all pupils in its work. The governing body includes experienced, skilled and involved governors who recognise and celebrate the school's achievements, particularly in relation to its place within the community. Governors support the headteacher well in dealing with community and parental issues and take a keen interest in curricular matters. The governors' role as 'critical friend' to the headteacher on wider aspects of school improvement, monitoring and evaluation is developing well.

70. The school is led very well. The headteacher has the goodwill of key staff, who fulfil their roles very conscientiously. The recent stability in staffing has enhanced the work of the senior management and this is reflected in the current very good rate of progress in effectively raising standards, making the best use of available expertise. Teachers have shown a high level of commitment in taking on responsibility for a range of subjects and co-ordinators make a valuable contribution to raising standards. Job descriptions have been reviewed to match teachers' new responsibilities.

71. Staff involvement in the formulation of the school development plan is based well on their knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This knowledge has enabled the school to bring about improvements in the quality of provision in key areas such as mathematics and information and communication technology. It has also enabled the school to meet targets set for pupils' performance in national tests in 2000 and to raise those set in 2001. The current development plan has clear priorities and is useful as a management tool. There is clear written criteria to measure the success of the different aspects of the plan, there is a shared commitment to improvement. The school's action to achieve success in these areas is very good. The plan identifies appropriate staff training to meet the needs of the pupils and to prepare and support staff in the implementation of initiatives, such as the strategies for assessment and target setting.

72. There are an appropriate number of teachers and their qualifications and experience provide a well balanced staff. Recent difficulties in staffing arrangements have been dealt with to the best of the school's ability. The quality of teachers' work is enhanced by regular professional development, some of which is provided in the school. The headteacher has

developed an effective strategy for appraisal and performance management, which has been discussed with and agreed by governors. The new policy has been implemented and has already had an impact on the development of all staff. The induction and training of new staff are well organised. This enables them to adjust to school routines and provides early opportunities for them to become integral members of the staff team. Support staff are deployed effectively. They are clear about their own roles and make a good contribution to the pupils' education.

73. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and provides appropriately for the teaching of the National Curriculum. Most classrooms are sufficiently large for the number of pupils and there is a computer suite and a library. The classrooms are enhanced by bright displays of pupils' work providing a pleasant working environment. The hall is large and attractive and provides ample space for physical education, assemblies and lunches. Outside, there are extensive hard playing areas. The school is currently developing plans to improve the grounds and seeking funding to achieve this. Children in the Foundation Stage and nursery are well provided for and have separate safe play areas. The school is well maintained and a programme of improvements is well managed.

74. The resources available to support learning are satisfactory. There are satisfactory resources for mathematics and good facilities for information and communication technology. The library offers a satisfactory range and quantity of books; this is an improved area since the last inspection. Co-ordinators have developed good plans as part of the current school improvement plan to develop resources within their subject areas. The local environment and local community is used well to aid learning and pupils' education is enriched by the wide variety of visitors coming to school and by visits to various places of interest.

75. Financial matters are managed well. Good use is made of information and communication technology for the storage of information and for planning and managing the budget. External advice is purchased from the local education authority to support this process. Funds have been carefully prioritised, with particular attention to the size and formation of classes. Secure accounting systems produce accurate and useful management information, so that governors are able to reflect on how they are getting the best value for the school. The school is using funds well to improve the quality of provision and the standard of accommodation and has good plans within the current school improvement plan to continue with this programme of improvement making good use of the funds available.

76. Specific grants, for example, for pupils with special educational needs and for staff training, are used effectively for their designated purpose. Funding has been used effectively to improve pupils' achievement through raised self-esteem. Governors manage the finances of the school well and give appropriate consideration to the effectiveness of their spending. Resources are obtained at the most competitive prices and the school uses them in the best possible way. Day-to-day routine matters are dealt with promptly and teachers are left to get on with their teaching uninterrupted. Overall the school offers good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to further raise standards in the school:

- ◆ Improve the range and quality of resources to support teaching and learning throughout the curriculum;

(paragraphs 74, 110, 125, 134, 141 and 146)

- ◆ Improve the handwriting of pupils by:

- *establishing a whole school policy and practice for handwriting;*

(paragraph 101)

The school is already aware of these issues and is addressing them.

- ◆ Improve the information to parents on individual pupils' progress in the Foundation subjects by:

- *Improving pupil's annual written reports;*

(paragraph 64)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This are indicated in paragraphs 27 and 152:

- ◆ Consistency in marking.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	27	15	0	0	0	0
Percentage	9	59	32	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	188
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	36

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	11	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	11	10	10
	Total	24	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (76)	82 (69)	86 (83)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	23	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (69)	86 (79)	86 (79)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	21	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	12
	Girls	16	12	17
	Total	25	21	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (52)	60 (58)	83 (67)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	7
	Girls	12	17	14
	Total	19	27	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (48)	77 (55)	60 (55)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	167
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9 : 1
Average class size	26.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	127

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	526,030
Total expenditure	508,769
Expenditure per pupil	2,423
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,430
Balance carried forward to next year	53,691

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	57

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	4	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	41	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	44	15	4	0
The teaching is good.	46	48	4	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	39	9	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	32	10	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	4	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	54	10	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	39	11	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	44	4	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	32	19	9	5

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

77. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children are normally admitted to the Nursery in the September following their third birthday and move to the Reception class in the following September. Evidence from the school's assessment of these children on entry indicates that most have attainment that is well below average for their age. Although children make good progress in the Nursery, most children on entry to the Reception class are deemed to be of below average attainment. Information from the baseline assessment, administered soon after children transfer from the Nursery, confirms this picture. Children in the Reception classes also make good progress but a significant number are not on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

78. Children have a very well planned introduction to the Nursery, which includes meetings for parents, an Open Day and preliminary visits to the school. The majority of children adapt quickly to regular routines. There are good procedures in place to ensure a smooth transfer from the Nursery to the Reception classes. Children in the Foundation Stage follow a broad and relevant curriculum based on the nationally recommended areas of learning for children of this age, which prepares them well for transition to the National Curriculum. The warm welcome extended to parents and children helps children to adjust to the school very quickly.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. The excellent relationships between the children and all adults have a significant impact on the quality of the personal, social and emotional learning. The promotion of personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority, thus enabling children to settle quickly and make very good progress. Achievement is very good and a significant number of children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals which set out what most children should achieve by the end of the Reception year.

80. Children in the Nursery are beginning to recognise the importance of hygiene when washing their hands before lunch and caring for "Bramble" the rabbit. Many are learning to fasten their own coats and to put on aprons before undertaking messy or wet activities. They know the rules for the safe use of tools and behave very sensibly. They are learning to make choices from the wide range of purposeful activities available. In the Nursery and the Reception Class many children show curiosity and fascination with the caterpillars and tadpoles.

81. Children in the Foundation Stage behave very well. They quickly learn to take turns. For example, when playing inside or outside, they take turns through taking part in games and with the wheeled toys. They co-operate very well with one another. Children also effectively develop their social skills at lunchtime, when they enjoy their school dinners, an activity, which reinforces the use of 'please' and 'thank you'. They become aware of the differences between right and wrong and the importance of consideration for others.

82. The quality of teaching by both the teacher and the nursery nurses is very good and has a positive impact on the progress being made. Very good opportunities for children to develop their personal, social and emotional skills are provided across all the areas of learning. This very good provision results in excellent educational inclusion across the school.

Children are challenged very well and their keenness to learn is a major feature in all the activities. Assessment procedures are good and include careful record keeping, especially in the early stages. Staff have high expectations of behaviour to which the children usually respond very well. All staff are consistently encouraging consideration for others and praise children for effort and co-operation; this has a positive effect on children's self-esteem and promotes the very good behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

83. On entry to the Nursery, many children's skills in communication, language and literacy are very low. All the children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in this area of learning. Because of this significant progress, some children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. For a significant number, attainment is below that expected of children of a similar age.

84. Children enjoy books and are beginning to handle them confidently and with care. They share them with adults and parents and are encouraged to take books home regularly. They also enjoy using tape-recorders to play listening games. The youngest children concentrate well on stories such as "Pass the Jam Jim", but a significant number find difficulty in describing the main events and ordering them correctly. They learn to relate what they hear to their own experiences, for example, after visiting the local pet shop the children were able to draw on their own experiences of keeping pets. They enjoy listening to stories, poems and rhymes.

85. Children respond well to the imaginative settings that are provided for them. In the Reception class, children play in the classroom shop, "café" and "office". In the Nursery, there is a "McDonalds Restaurant" where children engage in good quality imaginative play. More able children in the Reception class begin to learn the high frequency words from big books such as "The Giant Sandwich". Nursery children draw and paint and are encouraged to give meaning to the marks they make. In their writing, a significant number of children in the Reception class form letters to make legible words. Those with higher prior attainment spell common words accurately and independently. Those with lower prior attainment are beginning to write familiar words to accompany a picture. Overall, children are gaining confidence in making marks and developing early writing skills.

86. The quality of teaching is very good. Staff provide very good opportunities for the children to develop their skills in communication, language and literacy. A particular strength of the school is the quality of relationships between the staff and the children. All staff make a very positive contribution to children's learning and the quality of team work is very high.

Mathematical development

87. Although many children enter the Nursery with very limited mathematical awareness, many are likely to achieve the national Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage although a significant number are unlikely to. Most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in this area.

88. All the children are learning to count. In the Reception class, the higher attaining children can count reliably to 10 and some can write the correct numeral when counting objects. A significant number can recite numbers to 10 but are unable to reliably relate the number of objects to the correct numeral. Children in the Nursery use numbers in their play, for example, when counting the number of people allowed at a particular activity. They know a

range of number rhymes such as “One, Two, Three, Four, Five” and “Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer”.

89. Children in the Reception class recognise simple shapes such as circle, square, rectangle and triangle through sorting games and by making prints of three-dimensional shapes. They weigh ingredients for their cooking and gain an introduction to using money through the “Greengrocer’s Shop”. The school provides opportunities for children to practise sorting and counting and shape recognition through computer programs. Children enjoy the mathematical activities provided. They like counting and using blocks and beads to make patterns. They work purposefully on their activities, stimulated by the satisfactory range of resources, which they handle carefully and appropriately.

90. The quality of teaching observed was very good. Teachers make very good use in all activities to reinforce and extend learning. They spend much valuable time developing mathematical language especially language used in comparisons, for example, more, less, bigger and smaller. Teachers often refer to children who are absent to effectively reinforce work on ‘more than’ and ‘less than’. Good support is provided for children with special educational needs.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

91. Many children come to school with very limited experiences of the world beyond the home. Observations made during the inspection, together with evidence of previous work, including photographs, indicate that the children are given a very wide range of valuable first hand experiences in the Nursery and Reception class. They learn how to use the computer mouse and keyboard. Children show a natural curiosity about the world and how things work through activities with magnets and magnifying glasses. They study the caterpillars and tadpoles and learn about the life cycle of a frog. Many are likely to achieve the national Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.

92. Children observe and manipulate materials, for example, they enjoy working with play dough and with water and different types of sand. They investigate a good range of construction kits and materials and realise that tools are for a purpose. As part of their topic on the environment they plant seeds in the garden. In Reception children learn about plants and name the parts, such as leaf, stalk and petal. Through experiences such as cooking cakes and biscuits all children are given good opportunities to build and consolidate their skills in hygiene, speaking and listening, measuring and observing changing materials.

93. Technological skills are developed through the use of construction toys and computers. Water and sand play encourages children to explore scientific ideas, for example, pouring or floating and sinking. Many have a good understanding of weather and can talk about conditions being sunny, rainy, cold and hot. They experiment with folding, cutting and joining. When making frogs in a pond, children in the Reception Class cut and stick with a reasonable degree of accuracy. On walks in the neighbourhood they develop a good understanding of their own locality. The very good rate of learning for children in the Foundation Stage is very well supported by visits to Shugborough, Cannock Chase, Longton Park, the local church, travel agents, chip shop and pet shop. Children in Reception visit Longton Market to buy a giant loaf and ingredients to make a giant sandwich to link with activities in literacy.

94. The quality of teaching is very good and has a clear impact on the quality of the children's response, on their behaviour and on the progress being made. All activities are very well planned. The parents provide good support.

Physical development

95. Children make good progress in physical development many are likely to achieve the national Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage although a significant number are unlikely to. Younger children show an increasing awareness of space and move in a safe, controlled way when moving around the Nursery. When playing outdoors children make good use of the available space to hop, skip, jump and balance. The Nursery has a play area that allows children to steer wheeled toys to develop good co-ordination. Children learn to take turns and to share toys. Children in Reception have some outdoor activities but these are more restricted than those offered in Nursery. Outdoor play is mostly unstructured but teachers use their time effectively giving children guidance on how to improve their skills. Through a wide range of free play activities to develop fine motor skills, children learn to control tools for writing, drawing, cutting and gluing. Children make imaginative models using the good range of construction kits.

96. The quality of teaching is very good. The good routines established by staff help to give the children confidence and good self-esteem and this is an important contributory factor to the progress they make. They behave very well whether sitting on the carpet around the teacher or waiting for others to complete their turn when using apparatus.

Creative development

97. Most children have very limited creative skills when they enter the Nursery but they make good progress in most of the activities and many are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

98. The children enjoy the wide range of creative activities, which the staff provide. They experiment with malleable materials such as clay, plasticine and play dough. A significant number of children know the basic colours red, orange, blue, green and yellow. Nursery children create pictures using paint and marbles. Children in the Reception Year paint pictures of things they are learning about, for example, flowers found in the garden, following close observation. They enjoy painting, showing increased control of a brush. Children enjoy musical activities and are able to join in the actions when singing songs, for example, "The wise man built his house upon the rock". They show an interest in the sounds made by various musical instruments banging and striking them with an increasing sense of rhythm.

99. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers produce a wide range of interesting creative activities. Relationships are very good and teachers are very supportive. Teachers train children well in using apparatus with care and in tidying away. They frequently reinforce safety rules. Behaviour is very good whether or not there is close supervision. Teachers allow children time to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities.

ENGLISH

100. The standards of English achieved by pupils when they are 7 have improved significantly as a result of the staff's careful analysis of test results and the close targeting of

groups of pupils matched with identified areas of relative weakness. Pupils at the end of Year 6, when they leave the school, are also achieving levels of attainment which are in line with national expectations in all aspects of English, when compared with schools both nationally and from similar backgrounds. They have achieved and bettered the school's ambitious targets and are now set to be in line with national expectations for all schools. This inspection judgement is supported by the unverified and unanalysed result of the 2002 standard test scores.

101. These results signify a good level of improvement on previous years and on the previous inspection and HMI review. The results in writing, which are now in line with national expectations, are the gratifying result of the extra effort put in by the staff to improve this aspect of English. Reading and speaking and listening, which have made similar, if less dramatic, improvement are also up to expectation. Handwriting is less well done, but the school is taking steps to improve that also.

102. The progress the pupils make is most significant in their last two years in the school. An important feature leading to the improvement in standard and in the enjoyment of the subject, among the pupils from Years 3 to 6, has been the decision to arrange the pupils in each pair of year groups in sets according to their potential. This has provided a good level of challenge for the higher attainers while at the same time ensuring that those pupils with more modest attainment are successful and attain well. The good quality support provided for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress and achieve results which are not too far short of those of their peers and about which they are led to be justifiably proud.

103. Since the children arrive in the school with levels of language and literacy which are well below average, the achievement of average levels of attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening and spelling by the time they leave the school represents very good progress. The improvement in standards overall results from improved achievements on the part of most of the pupils rather than more dramatic improvements by only a few, and this is in line with the underlying philosophy of the school, which is that all pupils are important.

104. Pupils in Year 1 write engagingly about their visit to Longton Park and use past and present tenses with understanding and care when writing simple records of their personal experiences. In Year 2 the pupils learn successfully how to find information from books. They can clearly differentiate between fiction and non-fiction books, not only with reference to the content of the books, but their layout and style. They know about libraries and how to use them, having experience not only of the school's library but also of public libraries and the work of librarians. They use dictionaries to find the definitions of words.

105. Pupils' researching skills were being developed very effectively, and enjoyably, when they fell energetically upon books about mini-beasts. This was also a clear example of the good way in which the work in English is planned with an eye to its use to support, and be supported by, other subjects in the curriculum. The pupils with special educational needs developed their own literacy skills well through the use of a computer program on the "Magic E" to support their phonic understanding and their spelling to which they were guided by a well briefed and competent classroom assistant.

106. When they produce clearly written accounts of their holidays the pupils in the Year 3 and 4 groups recognise the different styles of different sorts of writing and they explain about writing for different purposes. They learn to be self-critical and to edit their own work. They also develop the skills necessary to help one another with clear and careful comments designed to

help their colleagues to improve their writing. These skills are developed much further among the pupils in the Year 5 and 6 groups. When writing descriptions about imaginary beasts they made very clear and appropriate comments about each other's work, suggesting different ways of expressing ideas or arranging the work to best effect. This is a most mature way of working and one which supports the work the school does to build up the pupils' self-esteem. It also improves the quality of writing that the pupils produce. Pupils in one group carefully considered the subtle difference between "purply blue" as childish and "bluish purple" as more adult. Another suggestion was that "eroding and decaying" was a better phrase to use in a formal piece of writing than "falling apart".

107. Careful use is made of work from other subjects to enrich the work done in English, so that the descriptions of animals used the accurately spelled proper scientific terms correctly. The older pupils analysed examples of persuasive writing, such as a leaflet against smoking, looking closely at its content and choice of language, layout, potential audience and the fitness of these for its purpose. They write their own letters of protests about new supermarkets or roads, or leaflets supporting different issues, using these techniques well.

108. The teaching of English overall was very good, none was less than good and the teaching of a quarter of the lessons was excellent. The school has adopted the national literacy strategy for planning and for teaching the lessons in English and has supplemented that by sessions for extended writing in which the pupils return to the class groups. This adaptation of the national scheme to meet the needs of this particular school has been beneficial in improving standards of language work all round. Lessons throughout the school are taught with no time wasted and almost none used in establishing order even in those classes where the very much higher incidence of boys than girls has a potential for disruption. This is due to the high level of teaching skills and the very good planning which provides challenging work for all the pupils whatever their current levels of ability.

109. The teachers are clearly committed to improving the pupils' grasp of literacy and its use in clear writing; this enthusiasm is conveyed to the pupils who respond by trying much harder with their work. They are well aware of the targets they have been set and work towards them conscientiously. The pupils are involved in their own learning; lessons begin with an outline of the learning planned for the session and end with a review of what has been accomplished. They are carefully taught to work independently and do so well. The support staff are also thoroughly involved in the planning and delivery of the work in the class, especially that for the groups, usually those pupils with special needs, for which they are responsible. Their work with national schemes for giving extra support to groups of pupils has been very effective in improving standards. The teachers are knowledgeable about the teaching of English and have an enthusiasm for the subject; this results in imaginative planning of the work and a matching enthusiasm from the pupils. The teachers have high, but realistic, expectations of the pupils to which they respond well.

110. English is well managed by an experienced co-ordinator who monitors the teaching and learning of the subject, carefully analysing the results of tests to identify areas of possible weakness so that the future planning in the subject can avoid them. The resources for the subject are good, though some of the library books in classrooms are growing tired through use. The school is aware of this and funds for library purchases, especially for books to maintain and extend the boys' interest in reading, have been earmarked.

111. A very good feature of the provision in English has been the development of the "Books and Beyond" scheme to encourage not only pupils to read but also parents to read to them, in each case earning points towards prizes. There is also a successful group for parents to

develop their skills in learning alongside their children and for supporting their learning, especially reading more effectively.

112. All pupils of whatever gender, family origin, level of ability, range of personal interests or talents are treated equally well as individuals with particular needs. The school works on the belief that all children are special so it is thoroughly inclusive in the provision for English.

MATHEMATICS

113. At the time of the last inspection in March 2000, standards were judged to be below average throughout the school. A visit by HMI in March 2001 judged standards to be improving. Evidence from current inspection concurs with this view. The rate of improvement has increased resulting in significant improvements with a majority of pupils attaining levels expected nationally. There is still a significant number who attain below this level and fewer pupils than expected nationally attain above this level. Standards are satisfactory overall at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since 1998, results have risen slightly from year to year. Inspection evidence indicates a significant increase in standards during the current school year. Standards are improving throughout the school because of the good and often very good quality of teaching; the systematic procedures for the assessment and analysis of pupils' progress contributing to the identification of individual targets; the good lesson planning which takes account of the assessment procedures and the very good attitudes towards mathematics by most pupils.

114. In the 2001 tests for 11 year olds, the school's results were below average when compared with schools with similar intakes. The percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the nationally expected standards for 11 year olds was well below average. On the evidence of the current inspection, standards are broadly in line with the level expected for 11 year olds. The current inspection identifies that five to 7 year olds make good progress and that 7 to 11 year olds make good and often very good progress. No significant differences were noted in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the thoughtful levels of support which help them to achieve regular success. Talented pupils are appropriately challenged in most lessons so that they extend their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively.

115. In the 2001 tests for 7 year olds, the schools results were well below average compared with those of schools with similar intakes. They were well below average compared with those of all schools nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected standards for 7 year olds was below average. The percentage of pupils exceeding the nationally expected standard was close to the national average. Early indications from tests in May 2002 indicate a significant improvement. Pupils have achieved well and the inspection identifies that current standards for most 7 year olds are broadly in line with those expected nationally for their age. This represents good achievement from a low start.

116. By the age of 7 pupils add and subtract small numbers mentally. On paper, they can multiply small numbers and add together three numbers over 10. Many recognise that subtraction is the inverse of addition. Pupils identify and name a range of shapes, such as rectangle, circle and triangle and know the number of sides and corners in each shape. Higher attaining pupils become increasingly confident in applying their knowledge and understanding of mathematics to solve everyday problems. For example, they can calculate mentally the total cost of three items each costing 30p and know that they would receive 10p change from £1.

Quicker-learning pupils are beginning to recognise that the opposite sides of a rectangle are equal in length. Most pupils are able to apply their understanding of one area of mathematics to another, for example, when they reflect a shape in a mirror and use their knowledge of rectangles to support their learning of symmetry.

117. By the age of 11 pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed effectively. Most pupils are confident with using number. They can calculate accurately using numbers up to 10,000 and recognise equivalent fractions and percentages. Pupils have a clear understanding of different mathematical shapes and are able confidently to explain the properties of various regular and irregular shapes. They use previous knowledge well and confidently apply this to areas of work which are new. Pupils work well together to look for and try out new ideas.

118. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in mathematics through the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is appropriate emphasis on the development of specific subject vocabulary and the school has increased opportunities for pupils to learn through investigations in mathematics lessons. This provides opportunities for them to tease out their thoughts and develop their mathematical ideas. Pupils are confident in the use of computers and information and communication technology is used well to consolidate and extend mathematical understanding. Pupils throughout the school play games to speed up their arithmetical skills, collect and collate information, make graphs and explore shape. As they studied and gained deeper understanding of reflective symmetry, older pupils worked together well on the school's suite of computers to construct shapes and investigate different ways of rotating them. Pupils who need extra support to reach the expected levels for their age are supported through 'booster' lessons which help them to progress more quickly.

119. Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and become increasingly positive towards the subject as they get older. The positive ethos of the school has a major impact on pupils' attitudes in lessons. A few younger pupils have a tendency to become more easily distracted from their work; this hampers their progress. As they grow older, pupils settle down and become more productive. Most pupils work at a good pace and they are attentive and well behaved. They work effectively both individually and in groups. Pupils' relationships with teachers and with each other are very good. Because pupils are encouraged to support and praise one another, they appreciate what others can do and like to share their ideas.

120. The quality of teaching is good. It is good for five to 7 year olds and frequently good or very good for 7 to 11 year olds. The good teaching for five to 7 year olds is characterised by the good planning of appropriate work for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs. This ensures that they make good progress. Lessons are well structured. They begin with a review of the previous lesson so that pupils build on what they already know. New learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they are aware of what they are supposed to know and do by the end of the lesson. The teacher demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and basic arithmetical skills are taught well.

121. Brisk sessions of mental arithmetic encourage and motivate pupils, who are keen to answer. This pace is not always maintained and managed effectively during the main part of the lesson, when a few pupils have a tendency to become distracted from their work. At the end of each lesson, the teacher provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learned. In one lesson, the teacher made good use of a computer program to help pupils to explain what they had been doing. The pupils' written work is usually well presented and constructively marked by the teacher.

122. The good quality of teaching for the 7 to 11 year olds is characterised by the enthusiasm of the teachers and the well-matched levels of challenge and support for pupils in most lessons. Teaching is very good for the older pupils. There is usually a brisk pace to lessons so that pupils learn at a good rate. Management of pupils is usually very good. When the pace of lessons sometimes slackens for younger pupils in the age group, they become restless. Very high expectations are a particular feature of the teaching of the older pupils, where teachers have very secure subject knowledge. This engenders confidence and pupils respond with considerable enthusiasm to the creative and sometimes inspirational style of teaching. Lessons are planned effectively so that there is a balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to work through tasks and investigate aspects of mathematics. Discussions at the end of lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learned.

123. Support staff play a significant role in helping pupils to focus closely on their work and sort out their mathematical ideas. This is particularly beneficial for pupils who have special educational needs. Parental support is deployed well in classrooms; it is a positive feature which promotes pupils' good progress. Teachers ensure that the adults who support pupils are clear about what is to be learned. Homework is used effectively to consolidate and reinforce what is learned at school. Older pupils receive regular formal homework and often have additional, creative tasks to complete at home. They respond to this type of work with great enthusiasm. Teachers' regular marking of work includes helpful comments which encourage pupils and give clear indications of what should be improved.

124. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership of the subject. Working with colleagues, she has formed an action plan to meet the priorities identified through analysis of the school's needs. This provides a clear focus for improvement. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and reviews pupils' work. The assessment of the attainment and progress of each individual pupil is now well established. The school's performance in national tests and assessments is analysed robustly to identify areas for improvement for individual pupils and for the school as a whole.

125. There is a satisfactory level of resources for mathematics, including supportive materials for pupils and new sets of books to support the implementation of the numeracy strategy. There is a satisfactory range of software which is used effectively to support the teaching and learning of mathematics through information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

126. In the 2001 National Curriculum assessments pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was below the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining higher than average results was also below the national average. Teacher assessments in science at the end of Year 2 also indicated that the number of pupils achieving level 2, which is the expected level for pupils of this age, was below the national average. The number of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was also below the national average. An improvement in opportunities for learning and the quality of teaching has resulted in a significant upward trend in attainment over the past three years at both key stages. Inspection findings reflect these results and find that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attainment is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average.

127. Progress in learning is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and gifted pupils. The significant improvement in the quality of teaching, a stronger

emphasis on investigational work and teaching of scientific vocabulary has made a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

128. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to talk about their findings and make sensible suggestions. They are beginning to develop an understanding of fair testing, with the higher attaining pupils making appropriate predictions about their work. They recognise that under different conditions seeds grow at different rates, know the names, such as root and shoot, and can talk about the conditions required for plants to grow. They record an experiment to discover the best conditions for plant growth. During the week of the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were studying and recording information about forces. They visited Longton Park to test playground equipment in order to discover the force or forces needed to make it move. Pupils in Year 2 observe, collect and record data about the variety of mini-beasts found in the school grounds. In learning about electricity, pupils learn how to make a simple circuit, write relevant accounts, record their work and annotate their work. They are developing understanding that taking exercise and eating the right kind and amounts of food helps to promote good health.

129. Year 3 pupils have an appropriate understanding that animals are suited to the environment in which they are found. They study the habitats of invertebrates leading to a practical hunt for minibeasts in the school grounds. Pupils study the water cycle as they learn about the evaporation of liquids and how materials change state between solids, liquids and gases. They learn to select appropriate equipment and how to use it. Most can confidently explain and demonstrate their results. They are able to classify materials into groups according to their different properties. Many understand the complexity of fair tests, for example, in their experiments on how sound travels and different ways of creating sound, pupils understand the need to change only one variable at a time when conducting experiments or undertaking investigations. Observations and measurements are recorded in different ways, by written accounts, diagrams, graphs and sometimes using information and communication technology.

130. Year 4 pupils' understanding of electricity is good. They know how to construct circuits, incorporating batteries and switches. Most pupils are able to explain their findings. Pupils in Year 5 plan detailed investigations looking at different rates of evaporation. By the end of Year 6 pupils are effectively developing their skills and can suggest ways of improving their work and give reasons. Pupils are very good at discussing and sharing their ideas. All pupils are well trained in logging on to the Internet to further research for information.

131. Pupils respond well to their work and make good progress. They behave responsibly, stay on task and co-operate well together. Pupils enjoy science, are enthusiastic and respond well to a challenge. They are keen to explain their work.

132. The teaching of science is good and often very good at both key stages. Teachers have high expectations and succeed in challenging the pupils. They choose interesting and enjoyable practical activities, which promote pupils' enjoyment in science. Correct scientific language is used well, so as to enhance pupils' language skills. This work makes a positive contribution to the basic literacy skills of all pupils. Opportunities are also given for pupils to develop their basic numeracy skills by using graphs and tables to record the results of their investigations.

133. Gifted pupils and those with special educational needs are given appropriate work and are supported well, both by their class teachers and by well directed support staff. Pupils make good progress and participate fully in the work of the class. The combination of good or very good teaching and the provision of interesting and stimulating activities together promote

good or very good learning. Teachers are developing strategies to assess pupils' work effectively and satisfactory records are kept.

134. The subject is well co-ordinated and managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator is appropriately qualified and experienced and is working very hard to support colleagues. Resources are of satisfactory quality, easily accessible and effectively organised. Due consideration is given to safety issues. The school's science curriculum is enriched by a variety of visits for pupils in different age groups. These include a visit to Cellarhead Environmental Studies Centre, Longton Park, Llandudno and the outdoor pursuit centre at Stanley Head. Photographs are also kept as evidence.

ART AND DESIGN

135. The previous inspection report identified standards in art as below national expectations at the end of both key stages. From the lessons observed, scrutiny of display, pupils' work and from discussions with teachers and pupils, it is clear that there has been considerable improvement throughout the school in this subject. Pupils in both key stages, including those who are talented or those with special educational needs, make good progress. The teaching of art and design is very good and the staff provide a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to develop skills and techniques in all aspects of the subject. Standards are judged to be at least in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages.

136. By the age of 7 pupils can express their ideas and record their observations in a variety of media. They know how to mix colours to produce various tones and shades and can use tools and techniques safely. Reception pupils collaborate to make an impressive collage of old bottle ovens and old pot banks they saw on their visit to Old Longton. They use magnifying glasses and thick and thin brushes to paint detailed observational illustrations of daisies and buttercups found in the garden. Year 1 pupils use thick paint to produce colourful pictures of their pets to link with their studies in religious education and science. They make sculptures, from their own designs using natural and man made materials. Year 2 pupils very effectively develop sketching techniques learned on an educational visit to Cellarhead Environmental Studies Centre to produce detailed observational drawings of lilies and geraniums.

137. In Key Stage 2, the teachers effectively build on these basic skills to produce an interesting range of artwork which includes stencilling based on investigating pattern, based on the work of Charles Voysey and William Morris. Older pupils produce detailed pictorial records of their trip to Stanley Head. They design and make hats for various people, such as a fisherman, a mother with a baby and a shop-a-holic.

138. As they move through the school pupils make good progress at all stages. Well planned work, which is presented in interesting and stimulating ways, captures the interest of pupils of all abilities and so enables all, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress.

139. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. In the lessons observed, they enjoy practising their skills, showing concentration and commitment. Art and design contributes significantly to the school's provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development and provides good quality enrichment for the curriculum.

140. The quality of teaching observed was very good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and of how pupils develop skills in art and design is very good. Enthusiasm for the subject enables them to motivate and enthuse the pupils. Relationships are very good and the lessons proceed at a good pace. The pupils' good progress in learning is helped by effective classroom assistants and by the hard-working atmosphere in the classrooms.

141. The co-ordination of the subject is very effective in maintaining good standards and developing skills among the staff. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure there is appropriate breadth and balance in the scheme and to address the lack of attention given to the systematic development of skills and techniques noted at the time of the last inspection. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory for the teaching of art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

142. Only one lesson in design and technology was observed during the inspection. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work on display, discussions with pupils and teachers' plans, show that pupils attain satisfactory standards in the subject. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment by the ages of 7 and 11 was below that expected nationally. A national scheme tailored to meet the needs of the school, with a progressive development of pupils' skills and capabilities has been introduced. Appropriate tools and resources have been purchased and staff expertise has been well developed. Progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs and gifted pupils, is good.

143. Pupils in both key stages competently discuss the reasons for the choices they make in the designing process. They also make reasoned evaluations of the success or otherwise of the constructions they make from their designs, introducing alterations to improve them. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils enjoy discussing the developments in the designs of vehicles with moving wheels to illustrate their studies of the new A50 Derby link road. Older pupils reinforce new skills and techniques of joining materials when taking part in the many tasks related to the making of puppets with rotating legs and sliding mechanisms involved in designing and making moving pictures. By the end of the key stage, pupils have satisfactorily covered all aspects of the designing and making criteria.

144. In Key Stage 2 pupils also develop appropriate skills in using a variety of materials, in methods of joining materials together and in the use of tools. They discuss their work using an appropriate vocabulary expressing their interest in the work. Younger pupils construct "Angels of Edensor" to link with their study of the Angel of the North. Older pupils design and make alarms and controllable vehicles such as moon buggies and shelters for a skate board track. Pupils understand the need for the planning and design stage before making. They make annotated sketches to show the details in their designs. Finished products are evaluated and pupils describe any improvements they could make.

145. From examples of work, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils, the quality of teaching is judged to be good. The activities selected are well chosen to develop skills, as well as to achieve effective models. The design activities challenge pupils to think creatively as well as practically. The provision of tasks that require co-operation enables pupils to discover together and learn from one another. Pupils use the correct technical terms in their planning and discussion. For example, pupils in Year 6 are confident in their use of specific vocabulary such as "pulley, cog and axle" when planning three fairground rides with a focus on

appearance, rotation and electrical circuits. Their accuracy in measuring is enhanced by the work undertaken in numeracy.

146. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge. She supports her colleagues very well. She monitors teachers' planning in the subject in order to ensure progression and coverage throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory, used well and easily accessible for pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

147. At the last inspection, standards were found to be in line with national expectations for 7 and 11 year olds. Current inspection concurs with these findings. Standards have been maintained at the levels expected for both age groups. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress from a low start in Year 1.

148. By the age of 7, pupils acquire a good range of geographical skills, increase their knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the physical and human aspects of the subject. They appreciate that maps provide different types of information and use their skills of geographical enquiry to ask questions and look for answers. They recognise how physical features are represented on maps and are able to identify areas of high land. Pupils know that a globe is a representation of the world and understand that much of the earth's surface is covered in water. They appreciate the essential similarities and differences between places such as Stoke and a Scottish island. They are becoming more aware of the features of their local environment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported with appropriate materials and adult help. Higher attaining pupils attain well and achieve high standards.

149. By the age of 11 pupils' geographical skills are extended and they use their knowledge and understanding to gain a growing appreciation of the world. Progress is good. Pupils have studied physical features of geography through studies of Mount Everest and the valley of the River Nile. They appreciate that although the temperature there is high, rainfall may cause flooding. Pupils appreciate that different types of transport suit different purposes. Pupils' skills of geographical enquiry develop well. Pupils confidently use text in books, CD-ROMs and the Internet, together with maps and aerial photographs, to gather information as they search for information. Pupils refer to atlases confidently and they use keys and grid references to gather information and locate places on maps.

150. Pupils have positive attitudes and are interested in geography. They usually present their work well and draw diagrams carefully. Pupils usually complete their work and are keen to do well. They work collaboratively on tasks and demonstrate respect for one another. Most pupils, especially in the older classes, become involved in their work, concentrate hard on what they are doing and behave well.

151. Literacy and numeracy are promoted and developed effectively in geography. Pupils record their work in charts, grids, graphs and reports and illustrate their work with careful drawings. Reading skills are enhanced as pupils improve their skills for research. Information and communication technology is used appropriately for pupils to collect and collate information but there are few programs for them to extend their skills further in the subject.

152. The quality of teaching in those aspects seen was good and sometimes very good, particularly for older pupils, reflecting the teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding. Effective planning includes a wide range of interesting learning opportunities for pupils so that they are well motivated. Teachers' expectations are high. In the best planning, teachers provide opportunities for investigative work and tasks which allow pupils to use their own ways of finding things out. Pupils' written work is marked but the quality of teachers' comments varies from class to class. At its most effective, marking provides pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to do next to progress further. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively.

153. The subject is led very effectively. The co-ordinator has analysed current provision for the subject and has identified the main areas for development. She recognises that the monitoring and evaluation of the subject is at an early stage and the development of a levelled portfolio of pupil's work is planned for the next school year. Assessments of pupils' attainment and progress provide guidance for teachers when they plan lessons and provide a cohesive record of pupils' achievement in geography.

154. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on first hand experience. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, have access to the full range of activities. The curriculum is extended through visits to places further afield, such as Llandudno, as well as the local area. Good use is made of the local area, for example, as a resource, to carry out traffic and shopping surveys. The curriculum effectively supports pupils with special educational needs. The level of resources is satisfactory but more are needed to extend pupils' experience in information and communication technology and to enhance opportunities for pupils to do research.

HISTORY

155. At the last inspection, standards were found to be in line with national expectations for 7 and 11 year olds. Current inspection findings are similar. Standards have been maintained at the levels expected for both age groups. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress from a low start in Year 1.

156. Since the last inspection, the school has worked effectively to put in place a scheme of work based on a cycle of history topics. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school and reach standards typical for 7 and 11 year olds.

157. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain an understanding of the passage of time as they study how they themselves have changed and grown older. As they look further in to the past, they compare old and new toys and learn about changes in the way children play. Pupils know that there have been developments in transport and domestic arrangements, including the way people wash clothes and cook. As pupils develop a deeper sense of history, they become more aware of how significant figures from the past, such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes, still have a considerable influence on life today.

158. Seven to 11 year olds build appropriately on earlier knowledge and extend their study to include the ancient civilisations of Egypt and Greece. In Year 3, pupils studied the invasion of Britain by the Vikings. They were enthusiastic and interested in searching for information from a wide range of books. They studied the types of boats used in the Viking period. Pupils

develop good links with geography as they found out more about the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. Pupils in Year 5 studied Victorian England and discovered the differences in everyday life between then and now. Pupils considered the significance of World War II. They studied the impact of the Blitz, the evacuation of children and wartime experiences in their own locality.

159. Skills in literacy and numeracy are developed effectively in history. The school's emphasis on discussion and investigation contribute well to pupils' interest in the subject. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they want to know more about the past. They listen carefully and respond enthusiastically to the teachers' questions. They behave well and work at a steady pace.

160. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning effectively to develop factual knowledge and deepen pupils' understanding. Lessons are planned thoughtfully to ensure time for pupils to ask questions and do research in books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. This has a positive impact on what pupils know and understand. Pupils behave well because they are well motivated and want to learn. Teachers use resources effectively to bring history to life and until recently the school had its own 'museum'. Everyday objects from the past add interest to lessons, as pupils consider their age and use.

161. The subject is co-ordinated very effectively and there is a helpful scheme of work which covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers keep brief records of pupils' progress and the school has a simple, formal system which is effective in recording what pupils know and do each year. Good use is made of the environment to study local history. Visits to places such as Shugborough Hall enhance pupils' experiences and bring relevance to their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

162. One of the key issues for improvement in the previous inspection in 2000 was to improve pupils' standards of work in information and communication technology. This has been thoroughly accomplished. Pupils at the age of 7 achieve standards in all aspects of information and communication technology that are in line with what is expected of pupils of that age nationally. The same is true of the pupils aged 11 as they prepare to leave the school. This represents a very good improvement over the past two years.

163. The raised standards have been the result of improved teaching, the staff having received, and continue to receive, good quality support and in-service training. The creation of a well-resourced computer suite with a good number of modern machines has also supported good progress in the subject. The adoption and use of well structured plans based on the national Qualifications and Curriculum Agency suggestions have provided the staff with a good base on which to develop their teaching. The school has met, and exceeded, what was required to bring the subject up to standard so that it now plays a very significant part in the developing curriculum for the well rounded education of all the pupils.

164. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology throughout the school. By the time the pupils are 7 they use the keyboard and mouse with ease for simple word processing tasks, finding information and developing skills to support other subjects and to make pictures using painting and drawing programs. Pupils also learn how to program a floor

"turtle" to move in predictable ways. They are also familiar with how everyday items of school and household equipment, like tape players and television sets, are electronically controlled.

165. The older pupils continue to develop their computer skills and broaden the uses to which the apparatus is put. By the time they are 11 they confidently research CD-ROM encyclopaedias and the networked reference systems for information to support their learning, for example, in history, science and geography. They write stories and poems using word processing programs and create publications with various fonts, successfully mixing pictures with texts. They use spreadsheets to develop ideas and sort out data and work well independently or in small co-operative groups following instructions well.

166. All the teaching of information and communication technology was good or very good, as was that by the classroom support staff who successfully used information and communication technology with groups of pupils with special educational needs. The staff acknowledge that the training they received has made even the most timorous of them confident enough to teach the subject. They are also well supported by the co-ordinator and the technical services that the school buys in to maintain the equipment. Information and communication technology is used very effectively as a tool for learning especially among the older pupils, as well as being a subject in its own right.

167. The teachers use assessment of the subject to plan future work well and they have developed systems of self-assessment by the pupils so that they are aware of the progress they are making in developing skills and understanding. The teaching is planned carefully so that groups of pupils and individuals are presented with tasks that provide the right mix of challenging new work and the consolidation of familiar work. This ties in well with the school's ethos of developing the pupils' proper self-pride and sense of worth. They are particularly good at working co-operatively with one another, sharing the apparatus generously and helping one another to do well.

168. The subject is well managed, the funds are spent wisely and resources are being developed sensibly, plans are in hand to develop imaging through the purchase of a digital camera and scanning apparatus. There is a regular review and updating of software so that programs matched to the pupils' needs are purchased and available for them. A good feature of the provision is the Computer Club which is run for both pupils and parents. This supports the place of the school in the community as well as promoting higher standards in the subject. The school acknowledges that there is need for continuing staff training, though already good use is made of information and communication technology for individual school and lesson planning, as it is well used for management purposes.

MUSIC

169. The teaching of music is consistently very good. This results in a higher than usual proportion of pupils throughout the school achieving well in all aspects of the subject. A visiting specialist teaches the majority of the music lessons with class teachers following these lessons up and building on what has been learned. This pattern born of necessity is responsible for the strong motivation of the pupils and the good quality of music in the school.

170. The pupils make good progress so that by the time they are 7 and 11 they achieve levels of attainment in making music, as well as knowing about it and about musicians, that are in line with what is expected of pupils aged 7. They compose and then play simple tunes, clap

rhythms and learn to sing a range of songs of different types and for different purposes, but all enjoyed. During the next four years they continue to make good progress. By the time they are 11 standards are good for most of the pupils. They understand about making music and talk knowledgeably about it using the correct terminology accurately. They compose pieces of music to illustrate a variety of themes drawn from other subjects which they study, such as "Space". They become familiar with a wide range of types of music from different periods and places. They discuss their preferences and give reasons for their choices, doing so with reference to specific musical terms and different composers.

171. Standards of achievement in musical knowledge are supported by the use of music in other subjects such as paintings inspired by Gustav Holst's "The Planets" by pupils in Year 5 at one age level, and the singing of number songs and nursery rhymes among the younger pupils at the other extreme. The pupils sing enthusiastically and tunefully in the acts of collective worship. A range of music appropriate to the theme, drawn from a variety of sources is played, and explained, as they enter and leave the hall for the assembly.

172. All the teaching of music throughout the school is very good. It is based on a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as of how pupils learn to play, understand and appreciate music. The work is very well planned with the activities well matched to the pupils' levels of achievement so that they are challenged enough to make steady progress, but not overwhelmed by demands they cannot achieve, and their interest and involvement is well maintained. The pupils enjoy the well-structured and managed lessons and this contributes markedly to the quality of their learning and their performance. The lessons proceed at a good pace with no time lost through pupils' inappropriate behaviour, they are too busy making or thinking about their music. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress and all the pupils in each class are equally busily employed. The older pupils clap out the rhythm of musical phrases already planned and they then improvise rhythms co-operatively, using the experience to develop the texture of the compositions made and performed by the whole class in concert.

173. The subject is well managed; the work in class is well supported by a recorder club that performs in school shows and on other public occasions, such as the concert of musical items drawn from the decades of the Queen's reign. Music in the school is well resourced and suitably funded. It plays an important part in the excellent provision made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils' self-esteem is enhanced by their performing skills and they learn the arts of co-operation and mutual support through playing together. Their social skills are developed through the experience they have of offering and receiving helpful comments about their performances. The breadth of music that the pupils hear supports their cultural development very effectively. Music is a significant feature in the very good quality of school life.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. The pupils' standards of physical education at ages 7 and 11 are broadly in line with what is expected of pupils of that age nationally. These standards are similar to those noted in the previous inspection report. All the sections of physical education identified in the national curriculum are provided for, but the school does not have a level grass playing area for games that require that facility, so have to borrow facilities when they are needed. Swimming is undertaken regularly from Year 4 onwards and standards achieved by the time the pupils leave the school are good. Almost all the pupils, with very few exceptions, achieve the minimum

requirements, with a significant proportion attain standards higher than expected, often engaging in swimming as a voluntary sporting activity.

175. The pupils achieve well in gymnastics and good use is made of the hall for that purpose. The pupil members of the Anti Bullying Council, which acts as a pupil council, canvassed opinion among the rest of the pupils about the facilities for this aspect of physical education. They came up with a request for more challenging activities to be provided using apparatus. The building will not support fixed apparatus but as a result of this initiative larger and more challenging gymnastic apparatus is on order. This will extend the range of work that can be undertaken and this will inevitably improve standards further. In athletics and games skills the pupils also achieve standards that are generally in line with what is normal for pupils of their age. They run and jump with energy and skill, they throw and catch reasonably well, though the co-ordinator has made an audit of pupils' skills and found that there is room for improvement in these games skills.

176. The school joins in five-a-side games of football and rounders in season and performs creditably. The local city football club provides football coaching in the autumn and the pupils benefit considerably from that input. Dance is provided for all classes and is linked with the good provision for music, playing a significant role in the extension and development of the pupils' means of self-expression and creative activity, as well as providing opportunities for physical development.

177. Pupils of all ages understand the need for warming up before, and gentle cooling down after, exercise. The older pupils take it in turns to lead the class, in a very mature way, in their warm up exercises and clearly understand what they are doing and why. By the time they leave the school they have a good knowledge and understanding of fitness and healthy living. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress in physical development. The school is thoroughly inclusive in its approach to physical education. All activities are open to all pupils irrespective of gender or background.

178. The pupils in their relationships with one another follow the good relationships between the teachers and pupils. They are generous in their applause for success and helpful and courteous when they make observations about each other's performance, encouraging each other to do better, such as when a groups of Year 4 and 5 pupils were developing their throwing and catching skills, or timing each other's running.

179. All the teaching of physical education is good or better. The teachers have a very good understanding of the subject and their teaching of basic skills is good. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own performance, to become self-critical in attempting to improve the standards of their skills. This they do in an increasingly mature way. The enthusiasm of the teachers for the subject is conveyed to the pupils and maintains their motivation for the subject.

180. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and recently appointed co-ordinator who is moderating the planning and teaching of the subject effectively. Physical education plays its part in the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, by enabling the pupils to express themselves, handle challenging situations, learn to play by the rules and to work and play together. Work in dance introduces them to a range of dances, some from cultures other than their own. The Year 1 and 2 gymnastics club provides a good opportunity for the younger pupils to develop their skills further, adding to the range of their experiences.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

181. Standards in religious education in the school are at least in line with what is expected of pupils aged 7 and 11 in the local agreed syllabus of religious education. The standards achieved in religious education are similar to those identified in the previous inspection. The local agreed syllabus and the nationally supported Qualifications and Curriculum Agency suggestions for religious education form the basis of the scheme of work which is being revised to keep it in line with changes in the subject. The excellent provision made for the pupils' spiritual development both supports and is supported by this subject. The care with which religious education is promoted and the opportunities it provides for the pupils to discuss and determine their own values and beliefs makes it a significant contributor to the common values and beliefs of the school. The school's close links with the church provide the pupils with a good practical basis for their studies.

182. The pupils in Year 1 consider stories of changed lives, such as Zacchaeus in the New Testament and of Rama and Sita in the Hindu Scriptures. They look at the ceremony of confirmation which is also concerned with life changes. Pupils in Year 2 made very thoughtful comments about how inward goodness may be more important than outward beauty or possessions in a lesson that demonstrated that physical features do not show what people's personalities are like.

183. Year 3 pupils wrestled with ideas of communication, looking at different ways in which people convey their feelings to each other. In that year they also study Sikhism as well as Christianity. Islam is studied in Year 4 with Judaism in Year 5. Christian studies form a continuing thread. The distribution of world religions through the years reduces the chances that the pupils will be confused by too bewildering a variety of religious ideas at the same time. The wide range of faiths studied also supports the pupils' cultural awareness and development.

184. All the teaching of religious education was good. The teachers have a good grasp of what they are teaching and this is coupled with a good level of teaching basic skills. As a result the pupils learn quickly. The lessons are made interesting and are planned imaginatively so that the pupils' enthusiasm is maintained. Where the teachers are less secure in their subject knowledge, such as in some of the world religions, the co-ordinator has provided a file of support material. The suggestions provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency also provide teachers with a very easy to assimilate set of lesson plans and background information. These combine to ensure that the work provided for the pupils is suitably challenging and interesting. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The good quality teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well, relating what they learn about religions is related to their own experiences and contributes to their personal as well as their academic development.

185. All pupils are treated equally and none have chosen to withdraw from religious education. The open style of teaching encourages the pupils to form and express their own opinions and to try these out with each other and the teachers. The pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to explain why they think as they do, basing their opinions on evidence. There is a good connection between work in literacy, on for example persuasive writing, and religious studies of religious texts.