

INSPECTION REPORT

THE FABER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cotton, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 131984

Headteacher: Mrs F Devine

Reporting inspector: Mr B Holmes
15215

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th March 2001

Inspection number: 230491

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cotton Lane
Cotton
Staffordshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. J Shenton

Date of previous inspection: 10 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15215	Brian Holmes	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Science Geography History Physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? School's results and achievement. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
31713	Selwyn Roberts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its' pupils?
22740	Margaret Leah	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Special educational needs Equal opportunities Music Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Faber RC Primary School, Cotton, Staffordshire is a very small primary school with 45 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11. There are two classes in the school, one for children in the Early Years and infants, aged between 4 and 7, and one for junior-age pupils between 7 and 11. The school is rural, serving a small village and its surrounding environment and is set in a nineteenth century building. It is also Catholic and aims to provide pupils with a Catholic Christian education. The pupils come mainly from an indigenous background. The proportions of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who have a special educational need are both well below the national average. Most pupils come to school, at the age of four, without any formal nursery education and their attainment level on entry to the school matches what is expected for most pupils at the age of five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, where pupils achieve well and attain good standards in the core subjects. It is a caring school, where the pupils are happy. The school sets pupils high standards for their behaviour and their work. Pupils show very good attitudes towards school, and achieve very good standards of behaviour and of attendance. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and staff and, as a result, gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are above the national average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils are 7 and 11, and in ICT by the time pupils are 7.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, including those with special educational needs.
- The quality of teaching is good for pupils between the ages of 5 and 7, and provides a firm foundation for pupils' achievements throughout the school.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and to ensure pupils have equality of opportunity in their education. The literacy and numeracy strategies are applied well and have a positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment.
- The pupils achieve very good standards of behaviour, show positive attitudes towards school, and form very good relationships in a happy, caring environment.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a good partnership with its parents. Parents have very positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- The role of the governing body in ensuring a clear direction for the school, working together as a body, ensuring that they fulfil all their duties.
- The use of assessment to set pupils targets for improvement, especially in the core subjects.
- The range and depth of learning in non-core subjects, especially art and design, design technology and history for infant pupils.
- The curriculum management of non-core subjects – geography, history, art and design, design and technology.
- The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress in non-core subjects.
- Learning resources in science, design and technology, geography and history for infants.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and has made satisfactory progress since then. A key factor in the recent progress made by the school has been the good leadership of the headteacher. Pupils' standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily, particularly by the age of seven, and been maintained for pupils at the age of eleven. The overall quality of teaching has been maintained and has improved in the infant class, where it is now good. There has also been good improvement in the progress and learning of children under five, who now receive a relevant curriculum that meets their needs exactly. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning. In

relation to the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing them. Schemes of work have been developed in all curriculum areas, and policies are in place in most subjects and for whole school issues. Further work is needed on improving the range and depth of provision in some subjects. Satisfactory progress has been made in establishing co-ordinating roles for teaching staff, but the current staffing situation, with the headteacher as the only permanent member of staff, means that this situation has not been fully resolved as yet. Arrangements for appraisal have been put in place and are now within the school's arrangements for Performance Management. The period of transition when the current headteacher took up her post in 1999 proved a difficult time for the school, especially when she was away from school ill for four months at the end of that year. This period slowed the rate of improvement of the school. The evidence of the inspection shows that, since her restoration to good health and return to the school, good progress has been made under her guidance and leadership, and the school has made satisfactory progress overall in addressing its key issues.

STANDARDS

The results of the National tests for pupils at the age of eleven show that most pupils attain at least the level expected in English, mathematics and science, and that a significant proportion attain the higher level (Level 5). Trends over time show an overall improvement in English, mathematics and science since 1997. Inspection findings agree with this. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above what is normally expected at eleven. In reading, standards are well above the average for most pupils at the age of eleven. The results of the 2000 National tests for seven year-olds show that results are well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. When these results are compared with similar schools they are well above average in reading, above average in mathematics, and in line with the average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that standards in reading are well above the average for most pupils by the age of seven and above the average in writing and mathematics. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in the three core subjects. The impact of the literacy and numeracy strategies is helping to raise standards. In information and communication technology, by the ages of seven, pupils' attainment is above that normally expected, and in line with it for most pupils at the age of eleven. Across the school, pupils achieve appropriately in most subjects. This shows that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, and improved in some areas, notably for pupils at the age of seven in reading, writing and mathematics. No major differences in the achievements of boys and girls were seen during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. The school is making good progress towards achieving the targets it has set itself, which are suitably appropriate and challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils show very positive attitudes, and enjoy school. They are keen to learn and show interest in their tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in lessons, and in and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships at all levels are very good and are a strength of the school. Pupils' personal development is good, and they show good levels of responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The school effectively promotes and monitors pupils' attendance and punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall. Teachers successfully meet the needs of most of their pupils. Across the school, all teaching is satisfactory or better, with 48 per cent good or better. This includes seven per cent of teaching which was very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The quality of teaching of English and mathematics was good throughout the school. The skills of literacy and numeracy are both well taught. Pupils are well motivated by the tasks teachers prepare. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach and plan well. They have high expectations of pupils' work and set them challenging tasks, ensuring that all abilities are set tasks which are well-matched to their age and ability. They manage pupils particularly well, and foster good relationships. Pupils acquire skills and knowledge at a good pace and talk with confidence about their learning. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. For pupils aged between five and seven, teachers plan well and use clear lesson structures that include sharing learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons. They sustain the pace of lessons and use challenging questions that extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They use a wide range of strategies to provide a stimulating range of activities such as sequencing, paired work on the computer and problem-solving in information and communication technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. Planning ensures that all pupils are provided with work suitable for their age and ability. There is room for improvement in the quality and range of work provided in some non-core subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Work is well planned to meet needs and help pupils to achieve their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a considerable strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care through a close-knit, secure and happy environment. Assessment in core subjects is sound and is beginning to be used to plan pupils' future learning. Child protection procedures are satisfactory.

The school's partnership with parents is good. The quality of information provided is good and parents effectively support pupils' learning both in school and at home. Parents' views are strongly supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and has an effective vision of the direction the school needs to follow. The staff are committed to this vision and effective in supporting its implementation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. The governors are individually supportive of the school, but do not work effectively as a body. Consequently, they do not fulfil all of their responsibilities effectively in working to shape the strategic direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is beginning to evaluate its performance effectively. Procedures to achieve this, and use the outcomes for school improvement, are at an early stage of their development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses the money it receives effectively and deploys its resources efficiently.

The quality of the school's accommodation is in need of improvement. The levels of appropriately qualified staff are satisfactory, but learning resources are insufficient and in need of improvement in several curriculum areas. The school applies the principles of best value effectively in purchasing equipment and resources.

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. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school works closely with parents and keeps them informed about their children's progress. • The school has high expectations of what children should do. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities offered to pupils outside the planned curriculum.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Inspection findings show that children do like school and they make good progress through a sound quality of teaching and learning. Teachers do have high expectations of pupils and give them good opportunities to mature and take responsibility. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. Inspectors judge that, for its size, the school offers an adequate number and range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to participate in outside of normal school hours.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Comparisons of the schools' performance in National tests at the age of eleven are difficult and not statistically reliable because of the small numbers in each year group cohort within the school. In the 2000 national tests, of a cohort of five pupils, all pupils gained Level 4 or better in mathematics and science, while four pupils achieved the expected Level, or better, in English. Three pupils gained a higher than expected level in English, two in science and one in mathematics. Trends over the past three years show a consistent rise in standards. This represents good progress. Test results over time show no significant differences between the attainment of boys and that of girls. Both consistently attain average points scores that are above the national average. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) and above, by the age of seven, was well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above it in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was above the national average in reading and mathematics, but below it in writing and well below it in science. Trends over time show an overall rise in standards in all three areas since 1998, although they have fluctuated from one year to the next. The rate of progress in writing has been slower than in reading and mathematics. Inspection findings show that high standards have been maintained throughout the school and that attainment is above average by the ages of seven and eleven in English, mathematics and science. The impact of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies is helping to raise standards, as is shown by the consistent rise in standards across the school.
2. The overall attainment levels of most of the children entering the Reception class are in line with those of most four-year-olds. This is reflected in the results of standardised tests taken at the beginning of the Reception year. Careful organisation of the curriculum by the headteacher and learning support assistants promotes and supports steady progress. Consequently the children achieve appropriately and reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development by the time they start in Year 1.
3. Standards of attainment in English are above the national average at the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve well in English and make good progress throughout the school. By the age of seven, pupils answer questions carefully and contribute well in class. By the time they are eleven, their listening skills are reinforced, and they talk with confidence about a range of issues. In reading, pupils' attainment is well above the national average at both seven and eleven. By the age of seven, many pupils are fluent and accurate readers. They show a good understanding of text, and talk with enthusiasm about their books. By the age of eleven, pupils have an impressive knowledge and understanding of books, expressing their preferences for different genres of literature. In writing, by the time they are seven, pupils draft rules using a numbered list and accurately use capital letters, full stops and apostrophes. By the age of eleven, pupils develop their stories, and write in a range of styles and for different purposes. They develop good use of key skills, such as the range of their vocabulary and the ability to extend their ideas.

4. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. Their attainment is above average at the age of both seven and eleven. All pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. By the time they are seven, almost all pupils count fluently in twos and fives to fifty and higher attainers recall facts from two-times and five-times tables to solve problems. They are adept at doubling numbers to thirty in their heads. All pupils are familiar with everyday non-standard and standard units of length. They are accurate when measuring objects in the room and know one metre is one hundred centimetres. By the age of eleven, pupils work accurately with large numbers and choose appropriate methods. They use rounding up and down processes to help their calculations. They are confident in measuring the perimeters of simple shapes and know how to find the areas by counting squares.
5. In science, pupils' attainment is above the nationally expected level at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils achieve well, and make good progress throughout the school. By the age of seven, pupils have good scientific knowledge and skills, and are developing a sound scientific approach in observing and communicating their findings. In Years 3 to 6, pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of scientific processes and further develop their investigative skills. By the age of eleven, most pupils apply their scientific knowledge and understanding to explaining the results of their investigations, and use scientific terms with good levels of accuracy.
6. In information and communication technology, pupils attain standards above those normally expected at the age of seven, and in line with what is normally expected by the age of eleven. Pupils in the infant class benefit from more regular access to computer facilities, as the computer network is in their classroom. They are given frequent opportunities to practise and develop their skills, which has a beneficial effect on their rate of progress. By the time they are seven, most pupils are confident in using a computer and understand the basic functions of the keyboard and the mouse. They use a range of software for different purposes, and work well both independently and in small groups. By the age of eleven, pupils have a sound capability in most aspects of the subject. They have appropriate word processing skills, save and retrieve their own work, and present their work well, taking the intended audience into account. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improved for pupils in the Infant class.
7. During the inspection, insufficient evidence was gained to form judgements about pupils' performance in history, art, design technology and physical education. This was mainly because it was not possible to observe a sufficient number of lessons being taught to make judgements about pupils' attainment at the ages of seven or eleven in those subjects. By the time they reach the ages of seven and eleven, the standard of pupils' work is at the level expected in music and geography. This represents satisfactory progress in all of these subjects since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well, and in lessons progress was always satisfactory or better. It was good or better in almost half of all lessons. Over time, pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and sound progress in information and communication technology, geography and music. It was not possible to make a judgement about history, art and design, design and technology or physical education because of the lack of opportunities to observe pupils at work in those subjects. No significant differences were observed in the progress made by boys and girls. The school has made satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets it has set itself, which are sufficiently challenging. Significant factors affecting the maintenance and improvement of standards of attainment in school have been the positive impact of the literacy and numeracy

strategies leadership of the headteacher, and the quality of teaching in the Infant class, where the most significant improvements have been made.

8. Across the school, pupils' literacy skills are effectively developed through other subjects. There are sufficient opportunities to develop writing through other subjects. During the inspection, examples were observed in information and communication technology, geography and science. Pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively in a range of subjects across the curriculum, for example, to record measurement of temperature in science and in the junior classes where pupils use their numeracy skills to record the results of their scientific investigations using line graphs and tables.
9. Pupils with special educational needs progress well in all areas of the curriculum, and in relation to the targets they are set in their individual education plans. Those who receive extra support make particularly good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work. They attend school enthusiastically and enjoy participating in all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities. Most pupils respond extremely well in lessons and are attentive, confident and motivated learners. Tasks are completed with pride. Pupils respond well to their teachers, show enthusiasm, are keen to join in and follow instructions well. They listen well, concentrate and persevere with their work. This high level of motivation and eagerness to learn is in keeping with the findings of the previous inspection.
11. The behaviour of the pupils, in class and around the school, is very good at all times. Parents are very happy with the standard of behaviour achieved in the school. The very good behaviour of the pupils positively assists their learning and makes a positive contribution to the standards achieved. Junior-age pupils were observed giving guidance and assistance to the younger ones in different areas of the school. Meals are taken in an organised manner and respect is shown to the supervisors. During playtime, boys and girls are at ease with each other and although they are naturally boisterous at times, no evidence of oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection.
12. Relationships within the school are very good and are one of the outstanding strengths of this rural school. Pupils respect their teachers and learn from them to be kind, polite and courteous to each other. The school mission statement is valued by pupils and parents and is regularly referred to by staff in order to maintain the established standards that have been achieved. During lunchtime, conversations with Junior-age pupils result in lengthy and confident discussions about their knowledge on education and they are able to elaborate easily on topics raised. They are noticeably friendly and forthright to visitors and respect the feeling, values and beliefs of others.
13. The personal development of pupils is good. They quickly learn to distinguish right from wrong and to understand the importance of rules in a social environment. Pupils are keen to assume responsibility, and make good use of the opportunities offered to manage their own work in the classroom. Pupils are generally mature and have high regard for their teachers. In the daily routines of school life pupils, from Infant age onwards, are keen to help the teacher and support each other, happily sharing resources and patiently awaiting their turn. They anticipate the needs of visitors, are keen to open a door, provide a chair or help with directions. Older pupils carry out helpful tasks that ease the daily routines of school life helping to manage lunchtime

routines in the dining hall. In these and other ways pupils show that they grow in maturity and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

14. The level of pupil attendance in 1999-2000 was 94.6 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average. In the current academic year, 2000-20001, the level of attendance has been maintained at 94.8 per cent. Unauthorised absence in 1999-2000 was minimal, and therefore well below the average. There are no recorded exclusions in the current academic year. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and for individual lessons. This ensures maximum teaching time and this has a positive effect on the quality of teaching.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and good in Key Stage 1. Teachers successfully meet the needs of their pupils. Across the school, all teaching was satisfactory or better, with almost a half good or better, including just under a tenth very good teaching. These findings reflect the positive views of parents. All parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire think the quality of teaching in the school is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the school was last inspected in 1997. For children who are under five, the quality of teaching is sound with all lessons judged to be satisfactory. In the infant class standards of teaching have improved with almost four out of five lessons good or better, and between Years 3 and 6 nearly half of lessons were judged to be good or better. A number of factors have contributed to the judgements in the overall quality of teaching. The teaching of basic skills, the effectiveness of planning, the management of pupils and the use of day-to-day assessment to plan for next steps in pupils' learning are all consistently good throughout the school.
16. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently sound. The teamwork between the headteacher and support staff is of a high quality and has a considerably beneficial effect on progress. All staff work hard to create a purposeful, working environment, where children enjoy learning. Careful organisation of the curriculum by the headteacher and learning support assistants promotes and supports steady progress. Staff use question and answer techniques effectively to draw out the children's ideas, for instance, when responding to a story. Staff make good use of their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn to encourage children to use their senses to find out about the natural world. Discussions and practical activities are managed effectively. Adults form very good relationships with children and promote very good standards of behaviour. The good range of suitable practical activities enables the children to learn and consolidate mathematical ideas at first hand. The teacher is careful to provide appropriate opportunities for the Foundation Stage children to contribute in whole class mental mathematics introductions and in plenary sessions.
17. For pupils in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen teaching was always satisfactory or better, and is good or better in approximately 77 per cent of lessons. In 11 per cent of these lessons, teaching is very good. The good quality of teaching provides pupils with opportunities to apply their intellectual and creative effort in their work and to achieve well. Teachers plan well and use clear lesson structures that include what the pupils are going to learn with them. They sustain the pace of lessons and use challenging questions that extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They use a wide range of strategies to provide a stimulating range of activities such as sequencing, paired work on the computer and

problem-solving in Information and Communication Technology. An example of very good teaching was in a writing lesson when the text, *The Rainbow Fish*, was used to stimulate pupils' ideas. Teaching developed very good relationships with pupils, using praise and encouragement well to manage them. Very clear instructions were given to use 'describing' words to make up and tell sentences before writing them down. There were high expectations of pupils' achievement, and a very clear focus was given on creative writing with particular attention to the use of appropriate adjectives to create interest. Support staff are used well to support pupils' learning by targeting individual pupils according to their needs.

18. Between Years 3 and 6, teaching is sound. The teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons, and good or better in nearly a half of lessons, which includes nearly a tenth of very good teaching. In the best lessons, teachers sustain pupils' interest with lively approaches that include focused demonstrations to illustrate teaching points. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, which they use effectively to stimulate pupils' learning and increase their knowledge and understanding. They challenge pupils to think and develop their questioning skills through investigative approaches, such as in science. They use an appropriate range of methods to stimulate their pupils. These include writing for a range of different purposes, collaborative work in information and communication technology and mental activities in mathematics. An example of good teaching occurred in a literacy lesson. The lesson was well planned to meet the different ages and abilities within the class. To achieve this good use was made of on-going assessment to plan for different ability groups. For the oldest and most able, pupils in the class work was planned for pupils to achieve higher level skills at Level 5. A good discussion of rhyming patterns was used by the teacher to develop pupils' understanding of alliteration and onomatopoeia. The very good relationships fostered by the teacher gave pupils confidence to take responsibility for their own learning and work in small groups to develop and check together, their own ideas of alliteration and onomatopoeia.
19. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Particularly well taught subjects are English, mathematics, and information and communication technology. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to improve the teaching of English through the use of a wide range of teaching strategies which include whole class work, paired, individual and group work. Pupils are challenged to develop their ideas through clear questioning and a variety of activities. They are taught literacy skills well. Basic skills are taught well by all teachers. The teaching of basic numeracy skills is good throughout the school. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and are implementing it confidently and effectively. Lessons closely follow the recommended structure with appropriate amounts of time allocated to the different sections of each lesson. Every lesson commences with a brisk mental or oral mathematics session that, in the best lessons, fully involves all the pupils and gives them opportunities to explain and discuss the strategies they employed in finding the answer. In Information and Communication Technology, the specialist teacher has good subject knowledge, and gives clear instructions and demonstrations. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which build on pupils' prior learning, and task sheets give them a clear stimulus for their learning. The 'modelling' of activities is used well as a strategy to make clear to pupils what they have to do and what is expected of them.
20. Homework is used effectively to support the work in classrooms. It is effective in promoting the development of reading and mathematics, and also in developing pupils' ability to work and research independently. Most parents are happy with the

amount of homework given, although a small minority expressed some concern in the parents' questionnaire.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator designate, who supports small groups, provide them with the extra help they require in order to complete the task set. In lessons the work is usually well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities.

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

22. The school has made satisfactory progress overall in addressing the key issues in the last report. The curriculum generally meets the pupils' needs satisfactorily.
23. The curriculum provision for the youngest children in the foundation stage is now planned carefully to the six areas of learning appropriate for this age group. The curriculum prepares children soundly to achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Opportunities for physical development with large wheeled toys or climbing and balancing equipment are still limited due to the lack of space and resources. The school plans to rectify this in its current building project.
24. In Years 1 to 6, all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and statutory requirements are met. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy have been implemented thoroughly and specialist help has greatly enhanced the curriculum in information and communication technology. These initiatives are having a positive effect on standards. In both the infants and juniors, the daily mental mathematics sessions are particularly successful in improving the pupils' skills in manipulating numbers in their heads. Religious Education is also taught, and planned for.
25. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop and implement policies and schemes of work, which have improved the structure and coverage in some subjects and are helping pupils to build up skills progressively over time. Due to staff illness, subject leadership has not been well developed and this process has not been completed. Further work is needed, particularly in improving the breadth and depth of the curriculum in art and design, design and technology, history. The time allocation (two percent) to these subjects is lower than in most schools, and limits the quality and range of the curriculum offered.
26. The school makes good provision for its pupils with special educational needs. The statutory code of practice is fully implemented. All staff are alert to identify pupils with special educational needs, and a good level of support is provided in class. Work is carefully planned to meet the targets in their individual education plans and progress is regularly reviewed.
27. The school makes a good commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. The teachers' planning usually takes account of the full range of ages and ability in each class.
28. Sound provision is made for the pupils' personal, social and health education. Ethical and moral issues are regularly explored in the weekly personal, social and emotional development lessons and in assemblies. Awareness of drug use and misuse is

taught appropriately in science and the school's sex education policy deals sensitively with issues of growing up and relationships.

29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Lunchtime and after clubs provide for pupils to extend their interests and abilities in sports like hockey and cross-country, in music in the recorder and percussion groups, in art and in information and communication technology. Booster classes in Year 6 prepare pupils for National Curriculum tests. The curriculum is enhanced for about ten children with peripatetic violin lessons and for all with conversational French. A residential visit for older pupils, to Chaswater, fosters independence and provides opportunities for pupils to relate to their peers from other schools.
30. The school has sound links with the community, which contribute effectively to the pupils' learning. Close association with the local church supports the pupils' spiritual development well. The school belongs to the Staffordshire Partnership, which extends school links with local industry, and is exploring the possibility of information technology sponsorship.
31. Links with other schools are good. Pupils regularly use sports facilities at a nearby school and join in tournaments, galas and local competitive sport. The school links with a cluster of primary schools to discuss education issues and develop its curriculum. Very close links with the receiving secondary school have enabled the school to improve its curricular provision particularly in information and communication technology. Supportive arrangements are made as pupils make the transition for primary to secondary education.
32. Very good overall provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a considerable strength of the school.
33. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good, and promotes the school's aim, *'to develop in each individual a personal relationship with God, which will lead to a living Faith'*. Close links with St Wilfrid's Church prepare pupils to consider religious matters as they get ready for their first communion in Year 3 and for confirmation in Year 6. Through religious education lessons, pupils learn about the Church's seasons and festivals. They consider, for instance, as they make their promise for Lent, the qualities such as patience, courage, confidence, they may need on their journey through this time. The local priest is a regular visitor and pupils grow spiritually in the Catholic ethos through Masses held in school and church. In daily acts of worship, pupils reflect on their own place at school, at home and in the wider world. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to consider the wonders of the natural world across the curriculum. For instance, in science when pupils gasp in amazement as avocado and passion fruits are cut open, and in art as pupils carefully observe the intricate silvery patterns on a mackerel.
34. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. All staff have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and encourage pupils at all times to care for each other and for the environment. There is a consistent behaviour policy and the school rules are well established. They are clear and simple and engender to pupils' respect. All pupils are made well aware of what is acceptable and what is not, and respond accordingly. Praise and encouragement are used well to reward self-control and discipline as well as good work. Through weekly achievement assemblies, merit badges and team points, pupils are encouraged to work hard and behave well. Pupils are taught to consider people less fortunate than themselves

through supporting national and local charities and practically by distributing harvest gifts to senior citizens of the parish.

35. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. All staff establish relationships of mutual trust. A family atmosphere is created where pupils are expected to get on well together and to help each other. Older pupils are asked to be responsible as senior members of the school community, as when helping younger pupils at lunchtime and in the playground, or reading prayers in assembly. There are frequent opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for minor administrative tasks around school and to lead as house captains. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school is helping their children to become more mature.
36. The school makes good provision for the pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn about their own heritage through art and literature. They are becoming aesthetically aware of artists like Van Gogh, Klee and Hockney. Through the study of parts of Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Macbeth*, and through traditional stories and legends like those of *King Arthur*, they gain a sense of the past. An appropriate range of visits like those to Manchester Museum or the James Brindley museum are successfully organised to support learning. Pupils are taught to be aware of local history through studying change in the locality and by finding out about amenities in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The pupils' knowledge and appreciation of non-western cultures is not so well developed. They are, however, aware of the nature of festivals like that of the Chinese New Year. A visit from a Caribbean drummer and storyteller widened the pupils' appreciation of the diversity of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The class and support teachers know the pupils and many of the families well. They are able to recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance.
38. The school provides a compact and happy environment in which pupils are well protected and their individual well-being is promoted. The school has a clear and detailed health and safety policy and the headteacher works in close liaison with the governors to ensure that risk assessment is reviewed regularly and any shortcomings result in immediate action.
39. The school fully complies with the statutory local child protection procedures and all staff have received training in identifying indicators of possible abuse and unexplained changes of behaviour. Liaison arrangements with support agencies are documented and known to all staff. Sound provision is made for the pupils' personal, social and health education through a weekly lesson.
40. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Class teachers monitor the personal development of the pupils. Teachers and other staff have a caring approach to the personal needs of the pupils and this makes an important contribution to the ethos of the school.
41. There are satisfactory procedures in place for monitoring pupils' attendance. The school complies with the statutory requirements for class registration but does not collate the information on a regular basis to monitor whole school attendance trends. Parents co-operate by advising the school at the earliest opportunity of the reason of any unauthorised absence and details are recorded by the clerical assistant.

42. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting very good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school's behaviour policy is well known to pupils and parents and has been successfully implemented throughout the school with effective results. The school policy makes clear the intolerance of bullying and racial and sexual harassment and any isolated incidents which have arisen have been dealt with firmly at source. Pupils are rewarded for good work and behaviour in the school and outside whilst on organised visits. During playtime in addition to the rota supervisor a governor was also present to organise and participate in games with the pupils and this was identified as a positive step in the school's promotion of good behaviour.
43. Overall arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Although systems of assessment and record keeping are satisfactory in core subjects there is no formal assessment system for non-core subjects at present although the school has recently reviewed the academic monitoring process. Information gained from existing assessments have been effectively used to plan the curriculum for Infant and Junior classes.
44. Teachers' assessment of personal development is satisfactory. Strengths and weaknesses including qualities such as persistence, application and self-confidence are readily identified and evaluated by the teachers. This information is used for the school's assessment procedures when identifying pupils with Special Educational Needs, and in deciding what further support help is required in accordance with the schools' Special Educational Needs policy and the guidance in the Code of Practice.
45. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a range of tests to assess the pupils' academic performance. Overall, procedures are now satisfactory although some, such as the termly *Assessment Week* are at an early stage of implementation and have yet to prove useful for future planning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Consequently, work in the non-core subjects is not always planned closely to meet individual needs, and opportunities particularly for the more able pupils to reach the higher levels are not consistently provided. Assessment of children's attainment on entry to the school is now established. Staff are using the information gained to identify pupils with special educational needs and to highlight particular areas of the curriculum (such as certain reading skills) for further development. In the junior department, annual tests in English and mathematics have been implemented to track individual progress and school performance over time. Again this is at an early stage of development and needs sharper focus to improve its usefulness. The school is just beginning to analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in Year 2 and Year 6 to identify areas of the curriculum for further development, and set targets for the future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents have a high regard for the school. They are very supportive of the school, particularly of the efforts of the headteacher. The school has a close link with parents and through the development plan the school is presently introducing a strategy to further strengthen communication and links with parents and the wider community. The quality of information provided for parents is good. There is a weekly newsletter and the contents include planned activities, progress reports and references to the curriculum. Information workshops for parents have been provided on literacy, numeracy, science, drugs education, and the school nurse. The parents'

questionnaire shows that almost all of those who responded think the school works closely with parents.

47. The school staff are extremely approachable and are prepared to meet parents at any time to discuss their child's progress. Three progress evenings are held during the year when teachers discuss with parents their child's achievements, progress, attitude and behaviour. During the Summer meeting, teachers discuss the results of the National tests for seven and eleven year olds. Transfer arrangements to the high school for pupils aged eleven are also explained at this time.
48. The homework policy is satisfactory although some parents do not have a clear understanding of the amount, regularity and purpose of the work given. The introduction of the homework diary has had a positive impact in this area of the school's work. Reading books are taken home and suitable comments are recorded in the progress report books by the parents.
49. The school's links with parents are effective and their involvement has a good effect on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to their children's learning, at school and at home, is good. A number of parents help in school and time provided is being targeted to areas most requiring assistance and these include reading and information and communication technology. The school values parents as a rich resource for supporting and developing children's' learning and results have had a positive impact on education.
50. Overall, the support expressed for the school is a fitting reflection of the efforts made by the headteacher, her methods of inclusive management, whilst retaining the agreed aims and objectives within the school mission statement. Many parents have expressed concern regarding the support given to the school by a minority of the governing body. It is felt that they are not providing effective collective backing to the headteacher and the management policies currently being implemented.
51. In the questionnaire just over one-fifth of the parents who responded expressed the view that the school does not provide a sufficiently wide range of extra-curriculum activities for all pupils. The evidence from the inspection indicates that, given the present staffing situation at the school, there is a satisfactory range of activities available, and that these activities are well supported and attended by pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher is good, but considerable improvement is needed in the leadership provided by the governing body. This aspect of the school's work has deteriorated since the school was inspected in 1997. Since then, there has been a change of headteacher, and the particular difficulties experienced by the current headteacher when she took up her post proved a difficult time for the school and resulted in her being off school ill for a considerable length of time. During this time the governing body found it very difficult to do its work effectively.
53. The headteacher, since her return to her post, gives a clear direction for the development and improvement of the school, and has worked extremely hard to develop the ethos of the school to develop the all-round education of the pupils. The ethos is well reflected in the school's mission statement of "ensuring that the curriculum is placed within a Catholic setting in which children can grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values through a whole

school approach.” This ethos is shared by all and underpins the work of the school. The headteacher monitors teaching in literacy and numeracy, and also monitors teachers’ planning on a regular basis. These factors are beginning to have a positive effect on school development and the quality of teaching of learning.

54. The headteacher acts as a whole curriculum co-ordinator and is aware that subject leaders’ responsibilities need more clearly defining. The present staffing situation, in which the headteacher is currently the only permanent member of staff, makes the co-ordination of subject areas difficult. Where there are specialist co-ordinators in place, in information and communication technology and in music, these areas are effectively led and managed. There is also close liaison with the members of staff responsible for special education needs and the children in the Foundation Stage. A suitable system of appraisal is being developed through the school’s arrangements for Performance Management. All staff have well defined job descriptions and relevant courses are made available to staff to develop their expertise. The school has made improvements in this area of its work since the previous inspection, which is beginning to have a positive impact on the school’s development. By monitoring and evaluating the school’s performance on a day-to-day basis, the headteacher has a clear view of the effectiveness of the school and the impact of new initiatives. Effective induction procedures have been established for new staff, with a staff handbook developed in draft form.
55. The school development plan focuses too heavily on the immediate priorities for the school. Many of the issues on the current plan relate to the key issues for action identified at the time of the previous inspection. The plan is not yet devised as a result of a thorough analysis of the school’s needs, although plans are in place to use this process and to involve governors more pro-actively. Links between the school’s budget and proposed school development priorities are now clear. The plan itself would be much more useful if it covered a longer period of time.
56. Governors are individually supportive of the school, but do not work effectively as a body. Consequently, they do not fulfil all of their responsibilities effectively or yet act as a critical-friend of the school in helping it to move forward. Although individual governors have a clear view of their role within the school, there is, as yet, no collective view among the governors as to how they should be working in partnership with the headteacher to help the school develop and move forward in realising its Catholic Christian mission and aims. The chair of the governing body does have a clear vision of the direction the school should be moving in, which matches that of the headteacher. He is aware of the need to develop the role of governors as a collective body working together for the common good of the pupils, and of the need to develop the role of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school.
57. Governors are beginning to become more involved in the life and work of the school. In some areas of its work, such as financial planning, they are now able to make decisions based on a satisfactory number of options. This provides the governing body with an opportunity for input into strategic planning. However, the committee system of the governing body is only recently established and does not yet function effectively in monitoring the work of the school. Although many governors individually come into the school, they are not yet sufficiently informed about the day-to-day work of the school in order to be able to think more critically about the decisions they need to make. Developing this role is an important element of successfully fulfilling their role as governors of the school.

58. The school has an appropriate range of aims and policies, which are implemented well. Policies in some curriculum areas are still in the process of being developed. The schools' policies do provide suitable guidance on most aspects of school life and underpin the very good ethos of the school, which values each individual child. The aims are prominently stated in the school prospectus. Almost all of the parents who returned a questionnaire to the inspectors consider that the school's values have a positive effect on their children.
59. The headteacher acts as the co-ordinator for special educational needs and, together with class teachers, make a good contribution to ensuring that the provision for special educational needs is good. There is a link governor for special educational needs and the governors' monitoring of this area of work is now satisfactory. The school is working in accordance with The Code of Practice and meets requirements. The statutory requirements are met.
60. The school's accommodation is limited and presents difficulties in the effective delivery of the curriculum. Space is cramped in both the Infant and Junior classes, but staff and pupils respond positively to the difficulties presented in utilising the space available as much as is possible and in keeping classrooms clean and tidy. Since the previous inspection, the school has seen the addition of a small computer suite at the back of the Infant classroom. The limitations of the building do, however, present practical problems in undertaking practical activities in science, art and design, design and technology. The lack of a hall for regular gymnastics and dance lessons presents problems in physical education. The school does have an effective plan in process to improve the accommodation for learning by extending classroom accommodation and improving facilities for both staff and pupils. This plan has been approved by the local education authority and is due to be acted upon within the foreseeable future.
61. Learning resources are unsatisfactory overall, but have improved markedly within the last year, especially for the Foundation Stage and in Literacy and Numeracy. There are a number of curriculum areas where resources are below acceptable levels in both quantity and quality, and which adversely affect pupils' quality of learning. There is a lack of play equipment for children within the Foundation Stage. In science, there is a lack of practical equipment for investigative work, and of information books for enhancing pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific topics. There are also deficiencies in the resources for teaching design and technology, art and design, and for history in the Infant class. These weaknesses in learning resources affect the quality, depth and range of the curriculum provided for pupils in those areas of the curriculum.
62. The financial planning is now good overall and is linked to the school's educational priorities through the school development plan. Monitoring of budget plans has recently been introduced. There is a need now to extend the school development plan over a longer period than a year, to assist longer-term financial planning. Specific grants for the Standards Fund and for information and communication technology are used effectively for the designated purposes. Effective use is made of new technology in the financial management of the school.
63. Financial control is sound. A substantial reserve has been built-up, which is to be used to resource the planned building extension programme. The day-to-day running of the school's finances is good. Obtaining competitive quotes ensures value for money for substantial purchases. Financial advisors visit regularly to monitor the budget and report to the governors. The governors' finance committee is beginning to

monitor the budget and make adjustments as necessary as the year proceeds to ensure the budget is met.

64. The school is successful in meeting its stated aims. The headteacher, governors and staff share a common purpose in providing the best education for the pupils and have this aim foremost in all considerations. Taking account of the level of pupils' attainment on entry; their good progress as they grow older; the standards of attainment achieved, the very good standards of behaviour and relationships found, and the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to continue the rate of improvement achieved over the last four years, and raise standards of attainment further, the governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:
1. Develop the role of the governing body in ensuring a clear strategic direction and the capacity for the school to improve by:
 - developing the role of the governing body as a 'critical friend of the school';
 - becoming more involved in drawing up and monitoring the school development plan;
 - become more informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses through its' monitoring of the school's performance;
 - ensuring that governors work together as a body in the best interests of the school;
 - ensuring that the governing body fulfils all of its responsibilities.
Discussed in paragraphs 52 and 55 - 57
 2. Further improving the quality, range and depth of the curriculum in non-core subjects, especially art, design technology and history for infant pupils by:
 - developing clearer procedures for monitoring standards of pupils' work and managing the curriculum;
Discussed in paragraphs 54, 105, 109, 111, 124
 - ensuring that there is sufficient depth to pupils' learning through schemes of work;
Discussed in paragraphs 25, 45, 105, 109, 110
 - further developing assessment procedures to enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress in non-core subjects;
Discussed in paragraphs 43, 105, 109, 111, 121, 124
 - improving learning resources in non-core subjects.
Discussed in paragraphs 61, 111
 3. Develop the use of assessment information to set pupils clear targets for improvement in the core subjects by:
 - analysing the results of National tests;
 - using the outcomes of interim assessments to monitor pupils' progress towards set targets;
Discussed in paragraph 45

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

In addition the governors should consider including the following minor issues in the action plan:

1. Improving the effectiveness of the accommodation for learning through the agreed building programme.
Discussed in paragraph 60

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	41	52	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	42
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	6

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	4	2	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	6	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	6	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (820)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	N/A	N/A	N/A

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/A (100)	N/A (100)	N/A (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	4	4	4
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (100)	80 (100)	80 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
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)	2.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Average class size	0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	109,833
Total expenditure	93,286
Expenditure per pupil	1,864
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,750
Balance carried forward to next year	34,397

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

35

Number of questionnaires returned

23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	26	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	35	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	30	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	13	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	26	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	26	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	22	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	30	13	9	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. The quality of education for the children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is now securely based in the six areas of learning appropriate for this age group. With the exception of the provision of large toys and climbing equipment for outdoor play, and taking into consideration the constraints of the building, the range and quality of resources are now adequate to meet the children's needs.
67. Children start school in the term after they are four years old and move in to Year 1 in the September after they five. Standards on entry are broadly in line with those of most four-year-olds. This is reflected in the results of standardised tests taken at the beginning of the reception year.
68. There are currently six children in the Foundation Stage. They are usually taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is clearly planned specifically to meet the needs of each age group. The younger children are frequently taught together as a group within the class, or withdrawn when appropriate by the learning support assistants, to work in another area. Careful organisation of the curriculum by the headteacher and learning support assistants promotes and supports steady progress. Consequently the children achieve appropriately and reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development by the time they start in Year 1. The learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the children's learning.
69. The quality of teaching is consistently sound. The teamwork between the headteacher and support staff is of a high quality and has a considerably beneficial effect on progress. All staff work hard to create a purposeful, working environment, where children enjoy learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. The children quickly respond to the caring and supportive attitudes of staff. They are interested and enthusiastic to learn. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time, and persevere to complete their individual tasks. In whole class and small group situations, they are learning to share and take turns. Staff set high expectations of children's behaviour and use praise and encouragement sincerely. As a result, children are eager to please. They conform to clearly established class and school procedures with a good knowledge of what is acceptable and what is not. They are becoming adept at caring for themselves, for instance, in dressing for playtime or artwork, but enjoy the family atmosphere and support from older pupils especially in lunchtime routines. While the children are good at following instructions, few are confident in selecting and managing an activity for themselves. Opportunities to develop independence and initiative are not well developed.

Communication, language and literacy

71. The teaching of communication skills is rightly given high priority. Staff take every opportunity to use spoken language carefully in focused activities and in incidental ways to promote the children's speaking and listening skills. Staff use question and answer techniques effectively to draw out the children's ideas, for instance, when responding to a story. Most children are confident and clear. They talk eagerly about the book and ask many questions, which reveal a good level of listening and understanding. The children are learning to respect and care for books. Higher attainers are beginning to read independently from the first readers and through the systematic teaching of letters and their sounds are becoming confident in decoding simple words for themselves. Most children write their name with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters. Higher attainers write their own sentence with letters formed correctly and regular words spelt accurately. Some children, however, are still copying below their teacher's writing. Not enough opportunities are provided for children to work independently and use the letter sounds they know to attempt their own writing and express their own ideas. For example, role-play is not well organised to extend communication skills and vocabulary informally, or to encourage children to express themselves in writing, for instance, in writing their own messages to the teacher or to each other.

Mathematical development

72. The good range of suitable practical activities enables the children to learn and consolidate mathematical concepts at first hand. Consequently, most pupils are confident in counting, matching and ordering numerals to ten, some beyond this. They are beginning to understand the idea of five, as when arranging cubes in patterns of one and four, two and three. They join in a range of number rhymes adding and subtracting practically as they go. Most children use appropriate mathematical language accurately when ordering fellow pupils by height, and with help can identify objects longer or shorter than their pencil. They reinforce the ideas of 'full' and 'empty' when playing with sand. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated successfully into whole class infant lessons, and support the children's learning effectively. The teacher is careful to provide appropriate opportunities for the Foundation Stage children to contribute in whole class mental mathematics introductions and in plenary sessions. Occasionally the pace of learning slows when recording on work sheets is uninteresting.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. This area of the curriculum is generally taught through a two-year rolling programme of topics, which builds up skills over time. Staff make good use of their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn to encourage children to use their senses to find out about the natural world. Discussions and practical activities are managed effectively. The children observe the black clouds that bring rain when studying the weather, and carefully record, in pictures, the snails they were excited to find in the playground. They wonder at the way plants grow when watching the hyacinth bulbs eventually blossom into flowers. They know that plants have roots and that they need water and light. When looking closely at daffodils they learn to use subject specific language to describe the flower's petals, trumpet and stem. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning and most children are competent at using the mouse to move objects on screen. Through learning about festivals, such as the Chinese New Year, the children are becoming aware of cultures other than their own. More opportunities are needed to

develop children's confidence in finding out how things work, in selecting tools and techniques to complete their own purpose.

Physical development

74. Without a hall, and without large wheeled toys or suitable outdoor equipment for climbing or balancing, the school has difficulty in providing fully for this area. Nevertheless, good use is made of the playground and structured opportunities are frequently created for children to improve their physical skills. The children respond to the staff's clear, calm management strategies to join enthusiastically in games like *'Follow My Leader'*. They move with increasing control to run, jump, skip and hop. They negotiate space with an awareness of others. They engage in imaginative role-play, control their bodies to mime actions appropriate to different weather conditions. When joining in weekly physical education lessons at a neighbouring school, they learn to handle small apparatus like bats and balls. In class the children persevere and take care in using tools as when cutting and sticking to make their own card daffodils, and adeptly manipulate construction toys. They are aware of the importance of keeping healthy and know that some foods are *'good for you'*.

Creative development

75. The children explore colour, texture and shape through a range of media, which include pastels, paint, clay and collage. They are thoughtful and imaginative in assembling materials to make kites for a windy day, or to make decorations to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Whilst there are sufficient opportunities for children to use their imagination and record their own ideas, activities are sometimes over directed and do not always leave enough room for children to develop as creatively as they could. For instance, when making a picture of the Five Little Ducks, to illustrate a rhyme they have learnt, the children follow instructions to cut round templates on yellow card. They do not have the chance to choose their own materials or style, and the activity becomes one of practising physical skills rather than developing creative abilities. Children are co-operative when acting out rhymes and are enthusiastic when miming actions for others. While the learning support assistant is skilful in intervening in the home corner, to extend the children's ideas, and improve the quality of their play, provision for informal role-play is hampered by the lack of space.
76. Good relationships are fostered with parents. Pre-school visits are organised to build up confidence and parents are kept well informed about the curriculum in termly information sheets.

ENGLISH

77. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they met national expectations at the age of seven and exceeded national expectations at the age of eleven. Due to the small number (five) of eleven-year-olds who took the National tests in 2000 comparison with national figures or similar schools is statistically unreliable. However, four pupils reached at least the expected level (including one who reached the higher level). In statutory tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, the school's performance was above average compared to the national expectation and above that of similar schools. In reading attainment was well above average, while in writing it was above average. All of the pupils reached the expected level in reading and writing, and one-third (two pupils) reached a level higher than that normally expected. In writing, no pupils attained the higher level in the 2000 tests. Standards have been

maintained at a high level since 1998. Evidence gathered during the inspection reflects the high standards reached in last year's National Curriculum tests.

78. Inspection findings show that Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are attaining above national averages. At the time of the last inspection pupils at the age of seven were judged to be attaining broadly in line with the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been an overall improvement. No discernible differences were found between the attainment of boys and girls. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils make good progress in their learning. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. They make good progress in relation to the targets they are set.
79. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. This represents satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. By the age of seven pupils answer questions sensibly and contribute well in class. For example, pupils in a Year 2 class engage in a discussion about tropical places, making increasing use of vocabulary. In a lesson about rhyming poems, Year 6 pupils question each others' ideas and opinions constructively. Higher attaining pupils are particularly fluent and have developed a strong and mature vocabulary. Average and lower attaining pupils speak clearly in conversation. In a Personal, Health and Social Education lesson with a scenario where a boy doesn't feel he is loved by his family, pupils listen to each other with good levels of concentration and interest, and develop their ideas thoughtfully.
80. Attainment in reading is well above average at both key stages and all pupils make good progress. Year 1 pupils approach their reading confidently. They show good understanding of text and use their phonic knowledge well to decode unfamiliar words. By the age of seven most pupils are fluent and accurate readers. They show a good understanding of text, and talk with enthusiasm about their books. Higher attaining pupils handle non-fiction with confidence, using the contents page in a book to locate information. Pupils continue to make good progress between Years 3 and 6. The range and challenge of texts increases appropriately so that by the end of the juniors, pupils' knowledge and understanding of books are impressive. They read with expression and meaning in a variety of situations. They express their preferences for different genres of literature and are articulate when discussing the different aspects of books they have read such as *Goosebumps*. Reference skills are very appropriately developed, and pupils are familiar with the use of the contents and index pages in books.
81. Pupils' attainment in writing is above the national average at the ages of both seven and eleven. Pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Pupils in Year 1 write sentences independently. They spell words accurately and develop their own lists of 'er' words. They also use a dictionary independently. Year 2 pupils draft rules using a numbered list and accurately use capital letters, full stops and apostrophes. Pupils of all abilities make good progress over time in Year 2. Their range of writing increases and they extend their ideas, especially higher and average attaining pupils, with creative and expressive ideas, for example in re-telling *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Pupils in Year 5 use colons and semi-colons accurately in re-writing an interview into direct speech. By the time they are eleven, Year 6 pupils use alliteration and onomatopoeia to develop their own writing, including short poems. They write in a range of different contexts, and for different audiences, using punctuation accurately and organising their writing into paragraphs. Higher attaining pupils extend their ideas using an increasingly wide

range of vocabulary, for example, in stories such as *The Magical Present* and *Thomas and the Giant Apple*.

82. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy throughout the school is good. Pupils work hard during the literacy hour to improve their vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. Writing skills are used effectively in other subjects, such as geography and science. Pupils in Year 2 learn how to present scientific facts using bullet points. In geography, Year 6 pupils use their information and communication technology skills to show an awareness of audience in producing an information board about the Staffordshire Moorlands.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory or better in all lessons. In Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6, it is good or better in 57 % of lessons and very good in 14 % of lessons. The good quality of teaching makes an important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave extremely well in their English lessons. They are always ready to begin lessons on time and are very enthusiastic. When writing, pupils generally concentrate well and sustain this until the end of the lesson. Pupils' enthusiasm and good behaviour are significant factors in promoting the good progress in many lessons. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of English. They have embraced the structure of the literacy strategy very well. In their planning, learning aims are clear and shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. A particular strength of planning is the development of learning objectives and activities to match the different ages and abilities of pupils in the mixed-age classes. As a result pupils are well aware of what is expected of them. For example, in a lesson in the junior class, Year 3 pupils were set a target to use commas with greater accuracy, while in the same lesson Year 5 pupils had to meet the objective of using speech marks correctly. They enjoy the challenge of new language and work hard to apply their learning to written tasks. They easily recall what they have learned previously. Lessons are well paced with very good use made of all available time. This is true of plenary sessions at the end of lessons, during which all teachers use questioning skills effectively to consolidate and assess pupils' learning. There is a very pleasant caring attitude in all classes, and teachers manage their pupils well. Work is marked frequently, comments are helpful as well as encouraging.
84. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator has worked hard to implement the literacy strategy. There are well chosen resources in most aspects of literacy, and a lot of resources have been developed recently to improve the quantity and quality of resources for literacy, especially phonics and spelling resources, reading books and poems. There is now a need to develop the schools' non-fiction book resources. The headteacher has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in the Junior class. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, focused within the 'assessment weeks'. The school is beginning to use information from assessments for future planning. This process of using assessment information to set pupils' individual targets for improvement, is an early stage of development.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards have improved since the last inspection when the school met national expectations at the age of seven and exceeded them at the age of eleven. The small number (five) of eleven-year-olds in 2000 makes comparison with national figures or similar schools statistically unreliable. However, four pupils reached at least the expected level (including one who reached the higher level). In statutory tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, the school's performance was well above the national average and above that of similar schools. All of the pupils reached the expected levels with one-third achieving the higher level. Standards have been maintained at a high level since 1998. Evidence gathered during the inspection reflects the high standards reached in last year's National Curriculum tests. Standards of attainment are above the level expected nationally at the ages of both seven and eleven.
86. Pupils enter school, at the age of five, with broadly average mathematical skills. They achieve well in all areas of mathematics as they move through the infant and junior classes. This is due to the consistently good quality of teaching of basic skills, the pupils' enthusiastic attitude to learning and to the thorough implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, the pupils' ability to manipulate numbers in their heads has been improved by the brisk daily mental mathematics sessions where pupils in both classes concentrate hard and learn well. The teachers' good questioning skills, together with appropriate attention to developing problem solving techniques across the mathematics curriculum, encourages pupils to think for themselves and explore their own methods to find solutions.
87. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported with appropriate programmes of work and make good progress. The high adult to pupil ratio provided by the well-organised contributions of the learning support assistants and volunteer helpers makes a significant contribution to the pupils' good rate of learning.
88. By the age of seven, almost all pupils count fluently in twos and fives to fifty and higher attainers recall facts from two-times and five-times tables to solve problems. They are adept at doubling numbers to thirty in their heads. The teacher uses her good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the mathematics curriculum, to plan interesting practical activities, which enable the pupils to clearly understand the mathematical processes involved. When shopping with a variety of coins, the pupils show good knowledge of relative values and use mental recall of addition and subtraction to twenty supported by practical use of coins to buy articles from the shop and give change. All pupils are familiar with everyday non-standard and standard units of length. They are accurate when measuring objects in the room and know one metre is one hundred centimetres. They use this practically gained knowledge to convert centimetres to metres and centimetres with good understanding. Good use is made of information and communication technology to assist pupils in handling data. Almost all are confident in organising information, such as relating to the range of transport used for the journey to school, and communicating their findings in block graphs and pie charts. In discussion they extract and interpolate information from class and individual graphs.
89. Even the youngest pupils in the juniors (Year 3) are learning to make reasonable estimates of total costs before working out their problems so that they can check whether their answer is likely to be right. They consider the quickest or most accurate method to cost their shopping bills and use a calculator competently to check their answers. By the end of the juniors, pupils work accurately with large numbers and choose appropriate methods. For instance, they use the results of local

elections to calculate overall and relative majorities. They use rounding up and down processes to help their calculations. They gather information, for instance, about attendance at Premiership football matches, using their own scale to display the facts in graph form. They interpret their graphs to ask and answer their own questions. Evidence of work in books and discussions with pupils indicate that their knowledge of shape and measures is sound. They are confident in measuring the perimeters of simple shapes and know how to find the areas by counting squares.

90. The quality of teaching was good in all lessons seen. Teachers plan their work very carefully in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. Group work is well organised and clearly focused to provide appropriate tasks for the wide range of ability and age in each class. Each teacher establishes a calm working atmosphere where all pupils concentrate hard and are eager and enthusiastic to get on. Teachers build good relationships and use praise and encouragement effectively. As a result, pupils grow in self-esteem, are confident to think for themselves and contribute fully to class discussions. What pupils are to learn is not always communicated clearly to them at the beginning of lessons and pupils are sometimes not aware of what they must do to succeed. Plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate learning and assess what pupils know.
91. Good use is made of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. For instance, in geography, pupils use two-figure grid references to locate features on an Ordnance Survey map of the locality. In information and communication technology, mathematical knowledge was used well in developing a program for a floor robot to draw a square shape. In science, recording the results of their investigations in graph form further enhances pupils' skills in data handling. Assessment systems are satisfactory. They are only fairly recently implemented. The school is just beginning to monitor its overall performance and to track the progress of individual pupils, for instance, through annual standardised tests. In the junior department, assessment data is beginning to be used to set targets for further improvement, but this is in need of further refinement.

SCIENCE

92. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection when they were judged to exceed national expectations for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. In the National tests for eleven year-olds in 2000, The small number (five) of pupils at the school makes comparison with national figures or similar schools statistically unreliable. All five pupils reached at least the expected level (including two who reached the higher level). Standards have been maintained at a high level since 1998. Evidence gathered during the inspection reflects the standards reached in last years' National tests and show that they continue to be above the national average.
93. Teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment in 2000 were very high compared to the national average for pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above. The number reaching the higher Level 3 was well below the national average with no pupils achieving the higher level. Attainment overall in science was well above average when compared to that of pupils in other schools, although statistical comparisons are difficult because of the small number of pupils in the year group (six). Pupils' attainment was similar in all aspects of science. Evidence gathered in the inspection shows that the attainment for Year 2 pupils is above average, and reflects the trends shown by the teacher assessment results from 2000.

94. By the age of seven pupils have good scientific knowledge and skills. Year 2 pupils know, and understand from their investigations the similarities and differences between different types of material. In other work most pupils predict what fruits will look inside when they are cut open in a simple experiment. In developing their scientific knowledge pupils understand the conditions that plants need to grow successfully, and that living things grow and reproduce. They use scientific terms, such as germinate and dispersal, correctly to describe the processes they observe at first hand.
95. Between Years 3 and 6, this sound rate of progress continues. In a lesson in the junior class, Year 4 pupils work out that the strength of vibrations in water is greater in water-filled balloons than in air-filled balloons. They also understand that vibrations are greater on a solid object such as wood. By the age of eleven, most pupils attain at levels above those normally expected at this age. In the same lesson in the junior class, Year 6 pupils additionally work out that vibrations are dissipated in air. Higher attaining pupils use their scientific knowledge to explain why different materials restrict sound and understand that stationary objects experience a balance of forces. Most pupils record the results of their experiments using graphs and tables. They classify animals into groups using flow charts and keys. In making progress over time, pupils develop their ability to interpret graphs and data and they begin to base their scientific conclusions on scientific knowledge, using this knowledge to make comparisons. In other work, Year 6 pupils apply their scientific knowledge well to explain why the eyes' pupils enlarge or reduce and use scientific terms correctly, such as 'opaque' and 'translucent', to describe materials. In investigative work, pupils apply fair test principles in an experiment to test the clarity of sound and record their results using tables, and drawing conclusions based on their scientific knowledge.
96. The quality of teaching in science is sound overall, although instances of good teaching were observed during the inspection in the infant class. In all lessons there is a direct link between the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets they are set. The strengths of teaching are that lessons have clear learning objectives that are shared effectively with pupils through practical demonstrations. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set them challenging tasks that build on their prior learning and develop new knowledge. In both the infant and junior classes, planning ensures that tasks match well the abilities of the different age-groups within the classes. Planning, in particular, ensures that investigative work is appropriately linked to work on developing pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. However, in the infant class, there is a need to provide more opportunities for higher attaining pupils to do more challenging (Level 3) work. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good throughout the school, as is behaviour. Pupils show a real sense of interest in what they are doing and are keen to learn. They respond positively to their teachers and sustain their interest and concentration well. Pupils in both the infant and junior classes organise themselves well and show initiative and independence when working in pairs and groups. Pupils in the junior class brainstorm their ideas in their work on sound, and discuss and

record their ideas. They then decide collaboratively, the best way to approach the task of testing sound vibrations. Relationships between pupils are very good and this results in productive co-operative work.

97. Teachers make good use of question and answer to develop pupils' ideas and challenge their thinking. This was the case in Year 6 where pupils investigated how materials affect sound. However, the pupils' ability to undertake the experiment with accuracy was adversely affected by a lack of appropriate practical equipment, resulting in guess-work by some groups of pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and is used well to enable pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a lesson in the Infant class on living things, the teacher used a practical sequencing activity to reinforce pupils' understanding of the life cycle of plants. This enabled pupils to further develop their understanding, and also engaged them fully in the lesson.
98. The teaching of science makes an effective contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. At both key stages pupils are encouraged to talk about their ideas and what they see and do. There was good use and application of scientific vocabulary in all classes observed. Year 2 pupils learn how to present scientific facts using bullet points. Mathematical skills are developed as pupils take measurements and record data, for example, in recording temperature. By Year 6, pupils make effective use of line graphs and tables to record their findings.
99. The leadership and management of the subject is sound and has identified appropriate priorities for improvement. In the current school development plan, the scheme of work is under review and resource development has been prioritised. Investigative work is fully integrated into teachers' planning and forms a strong base for teaching the knowledge and understanding required within the science curriculum. Pupils' attainment is assessed at the end of each topic through the 'assessment week' activities. The targeting and tracking of pupils to raise attainment, based on analysis of end of key stage test results and unit tests, has not yet been fully developed. Addressing this issue and enabling the co-ordinator to take a more active role in monitoring the quality of teaching and standards of attainment throughout the school would help to raise standards in the subject still further.

ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. As at the time of the last inspection, standards reached by seven-year-olds in art and design and in design and technology are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in the infants. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the performance of eleven-year-olds in art and design or design and technology. No lessons were observed in either subject in the junior class. The small percentage of curriculum time (two per cent) allocated to these subjects results in a low volume of recorded work, which provides little evidence of the development of skills over time in the junior department.
101. In art activities in Year 2, the pupils are confident to explore a range of media to develop their ideas in two and three dimensions. They are imaginative in their use of colour to make decorations to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They make close observations of a dead mackerel when preparing to draw a '*still life*' picture, discussing shape and pattern carefully and relating their ideas to their knowledge of Paul Klee before beginning to put down their ideas on paper. They use pastels effectively to produce their own drawing. When evaluating their own work, they are

perceptive in identifying areas for improvement. Whilst pupils are articulate in planning their work verbally, no evidence was seen of pupils committing a preliminary design to paper.

102. In design and technology, photographic evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 design different types of houses, for example, a sweet house from the story of *Hansel and Gretel*. They produce labelled drawings and lists of components needed. They use cardboard boxes to make their houses with some reference to the original design. No evidence was seen of pupils evaluating their own designs. When considering 'designer' mugs, they select an appropriate picture to decorate a mug for a teenager or for an adult.
103. In art and design, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make close observations of the school building before drawing pencil sketches. Higher attainers use shading to create a particular effect.
104. In design and technology, they carry out an investigation on packaging. Having evaluated the suitability of a particular package of their choice, they disassemble it to check the design. The teacher's planning indicates that pupils are to design their own package to hold six chocolates as an Easter present.
105. Overall, judgements on teaching are not made due to lack of evidence. In the one art lesson seen in Key Stage 1, teaching was good. The teacher used her good knowledge and understanding of the subject to focus on skills of observation. She provided a good range of resources to interest the pupils. This enabled them to compare their ideas with the work of famous artists, as well as to observe at first-hand. She used questions skilfully to enable the pupils to improve their own work. Effective management and good relationships gave pupils the confidence to explore media without fear of failure. The pupils applied themselves well to the task, and concentrated hard.
106. As a result of the school's priority to develop the curriculum in mathematics and English, and to the absence last year of the headteacher due to illness, curriculum leadership in the areas of art and design, and design and technology is not well developed. There is a sound policy for art which gives clear guidance on aims and general advice on skill development, but this is not always consistently implemented. The school does not yet have a policy for design and technology. In neither subject is there a detailed scheme of work. As a result, the curriculum lacks breadth and depth and opportunities to build skills progressively over time are not well planned.
107. Assessment procedures are not fully in place so do not provide information for future plans to closely meet the needs of individual pupils and enable good progress to be made.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Two geography lessons were seen during the inspection in the junior class, and none in the infant class. Evidence from pupils' work, documentation and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that pupils have a balanced programme of geography during the key stages. It is clear from the evidence available that most pupils attain the standards expected, and make satisfactory progress, by the ages of seven and eleven. Satisfactory progress has been maintained since the previous inspection.

109. By the age of seven most pupils draw a sketch map of the local area around the school from an Ordnance Survey map. They use symbols and a key to detail the information on the map. They produce plan drawings of the classroom and accurately use two-figure grid references to locate map features. In a topic on weather, they record the weather over a period of a week, accurately using weather symbols to show their findings. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to use their knowledge of the local area to plan and design a tourist leaflet of the Staffordshire Moorlands. They show knowledge and understanding of different types of land-use and identify and plan the different tourist activities and features that should be in the leaflet.
110. The scheme of work and subject policy show adequate planning to meet statutory requirements and build in a clear progression and continuity of pupils' learning. Learning resources to meet the needs of the curriculum are satisfactory in terms of maps, atlases and globes. There is a need to further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of contrasting localities with the appropriate resources in place. Pupils' progress in geography is not yet regularly assessed and standards of attainment are not yet regularly monitored. Both of these areas are in need of attention if standards in the subject are to be raised further.

HISTORY

111. No history lessons were observed in either the infant or the junior classes during the inspection. History is not taught this term as it is not the topic focus this term. Evidence from documentation and discussions with staff indicate that pupils have a balanced programme of history during the key stages, although weaknesses in resource provision affect the range and depth of work pupils can attempt, especially in the infant class. There was insufficient evidence available to form a firm judgement on standards of pupils' work or of the quality of teaching.
112. In Year 2, pupils produce a personal time line and learn about the story of the Mayflower. Their work indicates that most pupils understand the difference between the past and present, and that they understand why the Pilgrims made the journey to the New World. By the age of eleven, pupils show factual knowledge of the Factory System in their study of The Victorians. They compare life for the rich with the life of the poor and show understanding of why children worked in factories in the nineteenth century. A balanced programme of work for history has been developed, but learning resources have not yet been developed sufficiently to enable pupils to learn all aspects of the subjects to the depth required, especially in the infant class. There are few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning or to monitor pupils' standards of attainment in the subject as yet.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving provision for information and communication technology. The curriculum for information and communication technology is secure and levels of hardware and software have improved. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved and a scheme of work

provides a secure outline of continuity and progression of pupils' learning. These initiatives have had a positive impact on pupils' standards of attainment, particularly for pupils at the age of seven.

114. It was only possible to observe one lesson. In Years 1 and 2 during the inspection, but it is clear from analysing pupils work and talking to teachers and pupils that by the age of seven the attainment of most pupils is above that normally expected for pupils at that age. They know how to save and print their work and use word processing facilities appropriately to change the colour, size and style of text. They add text to their own pictures to combine text with graphics. Pupils log on and off independently and use the computer for a range of activities in different lessons without the need for any intervention by the teacher. For example, in science, they use the computer to draw their own pictures of fruits, using the program independently and using its functions such as the colour fill without any teacher intervention. In English, they use the bullet point facility to independently produce a list of rules for saving food in the jungle. They programme a floor robot independently to follow a simple route moving, forwards, backwards and turning at ninety degrees. They program the computer independently to complete a square shape.
115. By the age of eleven, the attainment of most pupils matches the level expected. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the subject. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 word process their work independently for a number of different purposes and search and sort prepared databases. They handle computers with appropriate confidence, log on/off and save work for future reference. In years 5 and 6, pupils begin to produce work for more specific purposes, for example, using the computer to produce work for a tourist leaflet in geography. They also use spreadsheets with increasing accuracy, and higher attaining pupils are able to use both simple and complex formulae to make calculations. They begin to show a sense of audience in producing topical stories as a part of their English lessons.
116. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and benefits from the input of a subject specialist who visits the school one day a week to work with both the infant and junior classes. In the most effective lessons teaching challenges pupils to develop their skills and matches work effectively to the ages and abilities of pupils in mixed-age classes. The teacher works with age-related groups, within the classes, on a rotation basis. Planning ensures that lessons build on pupils' prior learning experiences through the systematic use of the national scheme of work. Teaching sets closely focused tasks, use time targets well and encourage pupils to work collaboratively on the set tasks. Pupils respond well to their teachers and have positive attitudes towards information and communication technology. They are stimulated and motivated by the tasks. They focus well on the tasks they are set, concentrating well and sustaining their interest and enthusiasm. They are keen to volunteer to demonstrate their skills and show good levels of respect for the contributions of others. There are very good relationships in evidence in lessons, between pupils and with the teacher. This creates a positive learning environment which all pupils benefit from. The specialist teacher has good subject knowledge, and gives clear instructions and demonstrations. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which build on pupils' prior learning, and task sheets give them a clear stimulus for their learning. The modelling of activities is used well as a strategy to make clear to pupils what they have to do and what is expected of them. They are encouraged to solve problems, as when Year 2 pupils were asked to work out how the Roamer could move in a specifically-shaped route. This approach develops pupils' learning in stages and challenges them to make progress. There is good monitoring of pupils' work and progress, both with small groups and whole classes, with questioning being

used well to check pupils' levels of understanding. Other teachers make good use of computers, especially in the Infant class, giving pupils frequent opportunities to apply their skills in subject areas.

117. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision of how information and communication technology can contribute to pupils' learning and focuses her input on developing pupils' capability in information and communication technology skills. Since the previous inspection both hardware and software resources have improved and are adequate to meet the increased demands of the curriculum. A small network of computers has been installed, using funding from the National Grid for Learning, which enhances pupils' learning and makes it possible for year groups to receive more focused teaching from the subject specialist. However, the staff have not yet taken up their entitlement to training in information and communication technology under the New Opportunities Fund scheme. A whole school scheme of work ensures that statutory requirements are met and that there is continuity and progression of pupils' learning. Assessment procedures have also been established, and there is a recording system in place which monitors pupils' progress within the levels of attainment and also their access to different programs and activities. Information and communication technology is being used effectively to support pupils' work in other subjects of the curriculum, especially in the Infant class. Work was seen during the inspection to show that information and communication technology is being used to support learning in a number of other subject areas – English, science, geography.

MUSIC

118. As at the time of the last inspection, standards at ages seven and eleven are similar to those found in most schools.
119. The pupils benefit from the good subject knowledge and expertise of a visiting music teacher. The weekly lessons in each class are organised in line with the whole school scheme of work, which clearly promotes the development of skills over time. Consequently, the vast majority of the pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress in developing their musical knowledge and ability. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress alongside their peers.
120. In the infants class, the teacher uses his good subject knowledge to extend the pupils' understanding of musical instruments and their sounds. Sometimes demonstrations are aimed at too high a level for younger pupils to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, the teacher is skilled at involving all pupils actively in the lesson. As a result, they sustain their interest to explore at first hand, and find out how sounds can be organised. They represent sounds with different instruments and understand that musical elements create different moods and effects like *'gravel paths'*, *'creaking doors'* and *'ghost noises'*. In the junior class, the teacher's suitable choice of music enables the pupils to appreciate the way in which music reflects different intentions such as spring growth. They understand that different instruments portray different aspects such as birdcalls or sunrise. The teacher's high expectations challenge the pupils to compose their own response using structured sounds on a range of

percussion. All take part in the performance and collaborate effectively. The pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work. They are keen to be involved and offer their ideas enthusiastically.

121. The quality of teaching was sound in both lessons seen and is successful in promoting the children's appreciation of music and their performance skills. Pupils are invariably well managed and kept on task so that no time is wasted.
122. The music curriculum is enhanced by violin lessons for some pupils. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder in the school club. The school does not have a choir, but groups of pupils perform on occasions in church and for the residents of a local home for the elderly. Assessment systems are not yet in place to monitor progress in detail or to evaluate success in meeting the needs of the full range of age and ability in each class.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. No lessons in physical education were seen in either the infant or the junior classes during the inspection. A swimming lesson for juniors was observed, taken by specialist instructors. Evidence from documentation and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that pupils have a balanced programme of physical education in both the infant and junior classes, taking into account the practical difficulties of teaching and learning in physical education presented by the accommodation at the school. There is insufficient evidence to form a firm judgement on standards of pupils' work or of the quality of teaching.
124. In the swimming lesson observed, the standard of instruction was very good. Pupils were divided into groups based upon their prior learning and given instruction which challenged them to improve their technique in front crawl and breast stroke. Pupils responded very well to the activities and worked with enthusiasm with partners and in a group. Most pupils were able to swim twenty-five metres at least, and many can clearly swim further.
125. The curriculum for physical education has been planned into a programme that meets statutory requirements and progressively develops pupils' skills in gym, dance and games. There are, as yet, few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning or pupils' standards of attainment in the subject. The accommodation for physical education presents the school with problems as there is no hall available for gym or dance. Despite these difficulties, the staff do their utmost to provide pupils with their entitlement to a physical education.