

INSPECTION REPORT

MOORPARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Burslem

STOKE ON TRENT

LEA area: STOKE ON TRENT

Unique reference number: 123985

Headteacher: Mr R. Jackson

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. Tracey
20270

Dates of inspection: 15 – 19 October, 2001

Inspection number: 230516

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Road Burslem Stoke On Trent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N. Pender
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20270	Mrs J. Tracey	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11457	Mrs J. Beattie	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23081	Mrs C. Waive	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
7994	Mrs P. Weston	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	
23204	Mrs C. Wojtak	Team inspector	English Music Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Moorpark Junior School is a larger than average junior school with 243 pupils on roll in the age range 7-11 years. A significant number of pupils join the school at other than the normal time of entry. These pupils have often experienced a disrupted pattern of schooling. The school draws predominantly from the surrounding area where there are some elements of social deprivation and high unemployment. There is a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. None are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs (21%) is broadly average, as is the proportion with formal statements of need. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (19%) is above average. Attainment on entry is improving but is still well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Moorpark is an effective school that provides its pupils with a sound education in a supportive and caring environment. Teaching is good and is a significant factor in the progression of pupils' learning. Pupils achieve well taking into account their prior attainment. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. The school is well led and soundly managed. There is a good team spirit embracing all who are connected with the school. The school continues to provide sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well taking into account their standards on entry to the school.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school's aim to meet the individual needs of every pupil is clearly evident in all its practices.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing and mathematics.
- Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The organisation of the school day.
- Behaviour of pupils at lunchtime, especially in the playground.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection in January 1998.

- Performance in English, mathematics and science has improved although there is still more to be achieved
- Teaching has improved. It has been closely monitored and the best practices have been shared.
- Subject co-ordinators have been given more responsibility for the development of their subject areas. Curriculum planning has improved through the identification of assessment opportunities and clearer lesson objectives. This has enabled teachers to identify pupils' specific needs and has raised achievement.
- Schemes of work have been adopted which ensure progression year-on-year in all subjects. As a result, pupils build satisfactorily on previous learning.
- Pupils are encouraged by seeing their best work acknowledged and on display. Displays have improved but there is potential to use the entrance foyer to reflect the work in classrooms..

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	E	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	E	
Science	E	C	E	E	

During recent years, pupils' results in English, mathematics and science have been well below average. Since the previous inspection there has been an upward trend in results, although not as high as found nationally. Two factors have affected performance during this period. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills were poor when they started in Year 3. This initially slowed their learning because they did not have the basic skills on which to build and progress. In addition, a significant number of pupils joined the school after Year 3, often in Years 5 and 6. Many of these lacked consistency in their educational background. Good support enabled them to progress satisfactorily but they were not at the school long enough to make up the work needed to reach the expected standards for their age by the end of Year 6. Taking these factors into consideration pupils achieved satisfactorily from their starting points. The proportion of higher-attaining pupils is smaller than most schools but they achieve appropriately at levels exceeding those expected for their age. Results in 2001 were similar to those in 2000. National figures are not yet available for comparison. In 2000 and 2001 the school exceeded its realistic targets in English by 10 percent. It did not meet its targets in mathematics. They were unrealistic considering the cohorts' poor numerical skills on entry. Literacy and numeracy skills are progressively improving from Year 3 upwards with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the improving level of attainment on intake. It will take some time before the full impact of this works its way through to Year 6.

By the end of Year 6, standards of work are below average in English and mathematics. They are average in science. Pupils' reading and mathematical skills are improving faster than their writing skills. Writing is still well below average. Standards in music are good. They are average in history, physical education and religious education, and below average in art and design, design and technology, geography and ICT. Overall, pupils achieve well considering their prior levels of attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. Most are enthusiastic about their studies and work well together, sometimes without direct supervision.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class is almost always at least satisfactory, and often good. Behaviour in the playground at lunchtime is sometimes unsatisfactory and occasionally aggressive.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is sound. When given the opportunity, older pupils take responsibility and show initiative. The large majority of pupils have good relationships with adults.
Attendance	Attendance is similar to the national average. Unauthorised absence is above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Overall, teaching is good and the single most important factor in the pupils' good learning and the improving standards. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in which 'teachers can teach'. This is generated by firm but sympathetic control of pupils' behaviour. Teaching is good in mathematics and science, and satisfactory in English. The difference is due to some pupils' lack of engagement in English lessons because they find more difficulty in communicating their ideas in writing than in oral work. This is particularly true of pupils in the older year groups. The vast majority of pupils make good progress. They gain in confidence by building step-by-step on what they have already learned. The exception is the small minority of middle-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 who, although making satisfactory progress, could do better. Reading skills are taught well; the teaching of writing skills has been identified as a focus for improvement. Teachers are making good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to encourage pupils to think for themselves and learn from their own mistakes. Planning is more rigorous than at the time of the previous inspection and caters well for the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational need and those for whom English is a second language. Teaching is good in history, music and religious education. It is weakest in ICT because teachers are only just acquiring the expertise to teach the full range of skills. ICT is not yet being used effectively by pupils to enhance learning in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced but the limited number of computers restricts progress in ICT. The school does not make optimum use of time within the school day because of the manner in which the timetable is organised. Very few extra-curricular activities are offered by the school but some pupils attend those organised by other groups in the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils benefit from good teaching and effective support from classroom assistants. Emphasis is suitably placed on building up literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Four pupils fall into this category; none are at the early stages of learning English. They are fully integrated into all activities and make similar progress to other pupils of equal ability.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The school makes good provision for moral development and satisfactory provision for spiritual, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a satisfactory standard of care for its pupils. Good procedures are in place to help pupils overcome individual problems. The management of the lunchhour needs to be strengthened to foster better behaviour in the playground.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is soundly managed. The headteacher's leadership is effectively fulfilling the school's aims and bringing about improvement. He and the deputy headteacher seek to motivate others and have succeeded in building a good team of teaching and non-teaching staff who make individual pupil's development their priority. Staff morale is good.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are equally committed to the school and fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily except that the requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT are not fully met. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully analyses its performance against local and national standards. It uses the information gained to refine priorities in teaching and in the school development plan. This has led to improving standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use is made of resources, but these are limited in ICT and so restrict pupils' progress. Financial planning and control are good. The school satisfactorily puts the principles of best value into use in financial matters. It is beginning to extend them to other aspects of school life, such as consulting with local schools before decisions about policies are made.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects high standards of achievement • Children like school • The staff are approachable and have the pupils' well-being at heart • The school has a totally inclusive ethos for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for extra-curricular activities <p>A small minority of parents expressed concern about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quantity of homework • behaviour at lunchtime

Inspectors endorse the parents' positive views about the school. The use of homework was found to be inconsistent. In those classes where it is given on a regular basis it provides good opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and work independently. The number of extra-curricular activities is small and less than in most schools. Inspectors agree that there is a small amount of poor behaviour. This is mainly in the playground at lunchtime. It is a consequence of the confined space and lack of activities to keep pupils occupied.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' results in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in 2000 were well below average compared to all and similar schools. However, in relation to their starting point at the beginning of Year 3, pupils achieved satisfactorily. This takes into consideration the very low starting point of many of these pupils, most having come from a school where special measures were in place because of poor performance, and that a significant number joined the school after Year 3. Most of these had experienced disrupted schooling and had often attended a number of schools. Since the previous inspection in 1998 there has been an upward trend in pupils' results in national tests in English, mathematics and science taken at the end of Year 6. However, the overall trend in improvement during the period 1998-2000 is not as high as found nationally. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age is below the national average in the three subjects but represents satisfactory achievement for the relatively small proportion of higher-attaining pupils. Results in the tests in 2001 were similar to those in 2000 in English and mathematics. They increased slightly in science. The starting points and backgrounds of pupils were much the same as for the previous Year 6. National results are not yet available for comparison. When the results of those who completed the full four years in school are analysed the picture is one of satisfactory progress. It is reflected in the local education authority's statistics which show a faster rate of improvement in English and mathematics during 1998-2000 than in other schools in the authority. Boys and girls achieve similarly except in writing where girls achieve better. In 2000 and 2001, results in English exceeded the targets set by governors by 10 per cent. In mathematics the school did not meet its targets. They were too high and did not take into account the effect that poor numerical skills on entry were likely to have on cumulative learning in the subject.

2. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry to Year 3 is well below average. It is steadily improving now that the main feeder school has emerged from special measures and has raised the performance of its pupils in national tests at the end of Year 2. Up to 2001, the majority of pupils taking national tests at the end of Year 6 at Moorpark had joined the school with very low standards of literacy and numeracy. This slowed learning in their earlier years at Moorpark because they did not have the basic skills on which to build and progress. Apart from this, pupils frequently join the school later than Year 3, often in Years 5 and 6. Last year, for instance, there were 21 such pupils, many of whom lacked consistency in their educational background. Good support enables these pupils to progress satisfactorily but they are often not at the school long enough to make up the work needed to reach the expected standards for their age by the end of Year 6.

3. The standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. They are above average in music, average in history, physical education and religious education, and below average in art and design, design and technology, geography and ICT. Overall, pupils are achieving well from their starting points, the best achievement being in science.

Standards in English, mathematics and science

4. Throughout the school, pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well, and at faster rate than other literacy skills. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. Pupils use these skills well to express their understanding of topics in other lessons but are less successful when they have to translate it to the written word. Writing skills, rooted in spelling, punctuation and grammar are well below average in Year 6. It is the relatively poor writing skills that let pupils down and limit higher standards of attainment in all subjects. The school has made writing a focus for improvement. Reading skills are closer to average by the time pupils are eleven. Good progress is made from Year 3 because of the intense nature of the teaching and support. The lowest-

attaining pupils have difficulty with simple words and still lack understanding of the basic concepts of reading. This affects their ability to access information independently in other lessons and causes them frustration.

5. In mathematics, pupils' numerical skills are better in Years 3 and 4 where practice in mental agility has been the norm from the outset. Pupils of all abilities enjoy this approach and their willingness to 'have a go' at any challenge is an indication of their interest and enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 3 made a good attempt at fitting numbers into a jigsaw pattern given only one number to begin with. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are less adventurous. They have a reasonable understanding of place values but many do not know multiplication tables well enough to aid them in work on fractions and percentages. However, they have a fair understanding of the meaning of estimate and use this to judge whether the answer on a calculator is reasonable. Pupils handle data satisfactorily and can display it informatively. Mathematical skills are satisfactorily used across the curriculum but there is no whole school policy to ensure consistency in the use of units and in graphical presentation.

6. Pupils make good progress in science because teachers seek to develop pupils' numerical, literacy and oral skills as an integral part of the science teaching. Pupils are taught to think for themselves and encouraged to use accurate scientific vocabulary. Pupils gain satisfaction from teasing out conclusions to experiments. Their investigative skills are developing satisfactorily.

Progress of pupils with special educational needs

7. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from being taught in smaller classes for literacy. They make good progress in these groups and often achieve standards above those that might reasonably be expected. On occasion they do not make the same degree of progress in mixed ability classes because they do not remain focused on their work. The behaviour of a small minority sometimes hinders progress but this is not the norm. Usually pupils are well supported in class and given appropriate work. This is the reason why they progress well.

Progress of pupils with English as an additional language

8. There are currently four pupils who do not have English as their first language. None are at the early stages of learning English. These pupils make good progress and attain standards similar to pupils of equal ability. Monitoring of their work in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science shows good gains in knowledge with pupils reaching average and above standards by the time they are eleven.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils have good attitudes to school and the large majority take an enthusiastic part in the life of the school community. Pupils say that they enjoy school and a very high percentage of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire say that their children like school and make good progress in response to the school's expectations that all pupils will work hard and do their best. Relationships between pupils and adults are generally good. Pupils with special educational needs work confidently and well and they make good, sometimes very good, progress.

10. Pupils listen well in whole school assemblies where they learn about important aspects of school and community life, and where their own individual achievements are recognised and rewarded. Following an assembly which included a focus on ways to prevent bullying, pupils in Year 5 took a full and interested part in a lesson during which they discussed the causes of bullying. They considered ways in which they could individually and collectively respond to such incidents and prevent them from happening again. They gave the lesson their undivided attention, were keen to answer questions and offer ideas, learned well and took care with their written work.

11. Behaviour in the large majority of lessons is good. Pupils know that their teachers expect them to concentrate on their work, not distract others and work co-operatively when required. Occasionally, in spite of

the teacher's high expectations of good behaviour, some pupils behave in a way which disrupts their own learning and distracts the attention of others. Teachers do not tolerate such incidents and use the sanctions in the school's behaviour policy to make sure that pupils modify their behaviour. These procedures are effective and make sure that, in every year group, pupils can make good progress.

12. There were ten instances of temporary exclusion, involving four pupils, in the last academic year. All were connected with aggressive behaviour. The school does not exclude pupils permanently. Parents say that they are pleased with the school's efforts to help those pupils who have behavioural difficulties to learn to live as part of a harmonious community. No pupil has been excluded since the start of this term.

13. During the lunchhour a significant number of pupils, including the younger ones, demonstrate unacceptable behaviour. The activity of some pupils is too boisterous and uncontrolled and, in the playground, play-fighting sometimes develops into more serious incidents. During their play pupils do not always respect the school's codes of behaviour and do not change their behaviour or show sufficient respect to the adults who intervene to prevent boisterous and occasionally potentially dangerous behaviour. Some older pupils provide valuable help in the younger pupils' playground supporting individuals and small groups. Overall, however, a significant number of pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for their own behaviour at lunchtime. Pupils know that incidents of bullying, including racism or other name calling are not tolerated and must be reported. They are handled firmly but sensitively.

14. Overall, pupils' personal development is sound. The oldest pupils take responsibility for maintaining the order of the school library and the books in the reading scheme, help prepare for assemblies and take on other duties as monitors. Pupils have some opportunities to develop their own learning, for example when they researched the biography of a member of their own family, and when Year 4 recorded a "chat show" about books that they had read. Pupils help each other and older pupils co-operate well in team games such as football and netball, abiding by rules and enjoying their game without the need for direct adult supervision.

15. Attendance during the previous school year was similar to the national average. Unauthorised absence is above the national figure and the school has made a priority of establishing procedures to tackle this problem. It has introduced a system of daily monitoring to make sure that unexplained absence is followed up at an early stage.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. There has been a significant improvement in teaching since the previous inspection when 15 percent of lessons were unsatisfactory and none were better than good. This is due to tighter monitoring and a determination by staff to upgrade teaching strategies to meet the specific needs of the school's intake of pupils.

17. Teaching is good overall in mathematics and science. It is satisfactory in English. The difference is due to some pupils' lack of engagement in the English lessons, especially in Year 5. This is sometimes due to their frustration in not being able to communicate their ideas as well in writing as in oral work. The attainment on entry of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 was low. Teaching when they were in Years 3 and 4 was disrupted by staff absence and a succession of supply teachers. Despite this the highest-attaining pupils have coped well and learning for them has been progressive and at an appropriate pace. Pupils with special educational needs and other lower-attaining pupils are also making good progress in learning through the good support of teachers and classroom assistants. The pace of learning of middle-attaining pupils is satisfactory but could be better in Year 5. This is because the grouping arrangement for English and mathematics is not working as effectively for them as it is based on behavioural patterns rather than ability. All pupils learn well in Years 3 and 4. They are experiencing greater consistency in teaching than did the older year groups at the same stage which manifests itself in enthusiasm and good achievement. Teaching is good in music, history and religious education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except ICT where it is unsatisfactory. Teachers are only just

acquiring the expertise to teach the full range of information technology skills. These are not yet being used effectively by pupils to enhance learning in other subjects.

18. The quality of teaching in English varies from sound to good. At its best it is inspiring, such as in Year 6 when a teacher promoted risk taking by successfully challenging pupils in their thinking and logic. By teaching pupils how to use analytical skills to examine the chronological structure of Florence Nightingale's life she equipped them well to transfer these skills to other subjects. Mutual respect between teacher and pupils underpinned the good learning in this lesson. The follow up work in most lessons emanates from class discussion. This aspect of the teaching of literacy skills is good and enables pupils to express themselves satisfactorily in other lessons. Similarly, reading skills are well taught because all pupils receive an appropriate amount of individual attention. More attention now needs to be given to the writing skills of middle and lower-attaining pupils, particularly boys. The marking of pupils' work sometimes acknowledges effort rather than informing them how to do better. The presentation of pupils' work could be improved.

19. The improvement in the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection is largely due to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Its more structured approach has raised teachers' confidence and underlined the importance of the cumulative nature of learning in this subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 missed out on this approach in their earlier years and their insecurity with basic number work is still slowing down their learning. In contrast, pupils in Years 3 and 4 respond well, especially in mental mathematics, and are more ready to tackle a challenge even if they cannot see it through to conclusion.

20. Improvement in the teaching in science, and consequently in standards of work, is the result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and more effective use of scientific vocabulary. Recognition of the direct connection between pupils' reading age and their results in national tests has focused teachers' attention on the importance of ensuring that pupils can explain what they are doing in investigations, even if they find difficulty in recording the results in writing. Teaching promotes good interest in science. Occasionally the timing of lessons is inappropriate and the topic loses impetus because it has to be carried over to the next lesson.

21. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the teaching of ICT. Whilst the basic skills are taught adequately there is insufficient challenge for the higher-attaining pupils to make use of the skills, and for the least able to consolidate them. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise and extract information from CD-ROMs but the limited number of computers restricts this work.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught, as are those for whom English is not the first language. The smaller classes for teaching literacy skills are advantageous and, together with good planning, enable these pupils to take an active part in the lesson. They learn well and make good progress. Good relationships between teachers and pupils also contribute to pupils' achievement.

23. Other features of good teaching include good management of pupils through patient but firm insistence that they follow instructions and work to the school's rules and disciplinary code. This is effective and necessary because of the challenging behaviour of a small but not insignificant number of pupils. The best lessons get off to a brisk start and sustain interest throughout because of the varied activities. Questioning is skilful and well used to move the lesson on, often by building on the pupils' own contributions.

24. A few parents expressed concerns about the quantity of homework. Inspectors found homework to be useful and complementary to classwork. The content of the work is appropriate but there is some inconsistency in the amount set by different teachers.

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

25. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, except in ICT where the full programme of study is not yet being taught. The curriculum meets the needs of the school's pupils and provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences for all. An appropriate amount of time is allocated to the teaching of English and mathematics. There is good recognition of the need to focus on the teaching of literacy skills because of the well below average standards on entry. Due consideration is given to the vital importance of these skills as tools for learning across the whole curriculum. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the specific language needed in other subjects and this is helping to raise standards. Appropriate emphasis is placed on teaching numeracy skills and satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and develop these skills in other subjects, such as science. A programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is being introduced through 'circle time' during which pupils in each class come together with the classteacher for discussion about personal and related issues. Whilst sex education is taught on a regular basis, largely by the school nurse, the programme for education on the misuse of drugs is not a consistent feature of the provision. Good provision is made for pupils who wish to learn a musical instrument and many take up this opportunity.

26. All subjects now have policies and schemes of work, based on national schemes, to guide teachers' planning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. These provide for the progressive teaching of skills but several are only just being introduced and are not yet fully effective for the pupils in the older year groups. Planning is much improved since the previous inspection and now more closely matches the needs of the pupils. Good links are made with other subjects to provide meaningful experiences for pupils. However, the way in which the school timetable is organised does not maximise the use of time. For example, the first full lesson of the day is planned to begin at 9.45 a.m. and so there is no sense of urgency. To compound this, late finishes to some collective worship sessions, and the changeover arrangements for teaching groups, mean that the lesson often does not get under way until even later. At other times of the day, some lessons are allocated too long or too short a session. For example, during the inspection, it was very difficult for a teacher to fill a long session for personal and social education effectively, whilst two well thought out science lessons were not long enough for pupils to carry out an investigation and complete their recording. The cumulative effect of the above factors is that the teaching time available is not being used to optimum potential for the full benefit of pupils' learning.

27. Teachers have now had some of the necessary training in ICT but the lack of resources means that pupils cannot make enough progress in learning the full range of skills to support other areas of learning. For example, they do not use the internet for research.

28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is a clear policy setting out the arrangements for teaching and assessing progress at regular intervals. Termly audit of the provision, and its impact, is undertaken by the co-ordinator and headteacher and is reported to governors.

29. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. A good stance is taken on multi-cultural and anti-racist education. There are good guidelines for teaching across all subject areas and a log is kept to record incidents and responses. This is used as the basis for regular review of the teaching and overall provision.

30. The school organises a satisfactory range of educational visits and visits from experts to enrich its curriculum and enhance pupils' social and cultural development. For example, parents and grandparents come into school to talk about life in Burslem in the past. Parents expressed concern about the lack of extra-curricular activities in response to their questionnaire. Inspectors found this concern to be justified. There are no lunchtime activities and few opportunities after school for pupils to develop their individual interests or social skills. There are satisfactory links with the local community and other schools. For example, a local football club provides football coaching and a range of other activities. In Year 6, pupils are also encouraged to go to the club's educational evening sessions, linked to the local high school. Although there are no regular out of school sporting activities pupils do take part in competitive sports leagues and swimming galas. Pupils in Year 6 have a week's residential visit to Stanley Head where they undertake a sound

programme of outdoor pursuits and develop their social skills. Sound links with the local infant and high schools aid pupils' transition between schools and an understanding of how the curriculum can be built on progressively.

31. The school makes sound provision for pupils' personal development. Spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily. The school provides an environment where pupils are valued and included. Collective worship and religious education make good contributions to pupils' spiritual development. For example, pupils learn to consider what makes a true friend, when writing 'a recipe for a friend'. The school has a good link with the local church, whose vicar regularly leads worship. Worship provides appropriate moments for pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs and think about what they would like to achieve that day. This is also the case in some lessons, when pupils reflect on their successes and how they might improve. However, overall, this is not fully planned for across the whole curriculum.

32. The provision for moral development is good and pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Staff have good relationships with their pupils and provide positive role models for them. Pupils are proud to receive rewards for good or improved behaviour during the weekly celebration assembly. The newly introduced 'circle times' provide good opportunities for consideration of moral issues. An excellent lesson in Year 5 made pupils think about the personal feelings of a bully and the bullied, and the consequences for each.

33. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' social development. There are opportunities for pupils to develop an increasing sense of responsibility as they go through the school. For example, some help in the dining room and playground at lunchtimes. Pupils are encouraged to consider those who may not be as fortunate as themselves, as when they support local charities by holding a sponsored silence. They also collect and distribute harvest gifts to local pensioners. The provision of activities outside lessons is insufficient to support the further development of pupils' social skills except on the limited number of visits to nearby places of interest, such as Tatton Park. All pupils take part in annual performances, either for their parents or for senior citizens, and this promotes a good sense of citizenship.

34. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school holds a book week and invites an author into school to encourage pupils to write their own books and share them with others. Knowledge and understanding of pupils' own heritage are satisfactorily promoted through art, music, and local history studies and they make occasional visits into Burslem to support this work. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Teachers know their pupils well and have their well-being and personal and academic progress at heart. Classroom assistants provide very effective support.

36. Arrangements for child protection are in place and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns.

37. The health and safety policy satisfactorily incorporates procedures which provide for safety in school and the adjacent areas, and on trips and visits outside school. However, in the playground, some pupils behave in a way that is contrary to the school's code of conduct and which could put them at risk of harm, especially when they play in areas which are out of bounds or out of sight of their supervisors. Midday assistants meet with the head teacher every day after the lunchhour to discuss concerns and so that the school can take necessary action. The school is aware that more action is needed to raise the standards of behaviour during the lunchhour and has plans to provide for more structured play.

38. The school has made some risk assessments but these have not been extended to include physical education activities. Attention needs to be given to this as a matter of priority. Three particular points of concern were raised with the headteacher during the inspection. Occasionally registers are not called until after assembly. This could pose a risk as late registration might prevent all pupils being accounted for if classes needed to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

39. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) policy includes provision for sex education but the school does not have a specific policy for drugs awareness. Pupils are satisfactorily taught about safety and healthy living in topic work and as part of their science curriculum. The school has plans to appoint a co-ordinator of PSHE and to produce a scheme of work which will include aspects of citizenship. The present provision of 'circle time' is well used to develop pupils' awareness of their own needs and abilities, and of the way in which they can respond to the needs of others. The allocation of a full hour to some of these sessions is excessive as some pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration for this length of time given the nature of the activities involved.

40. The school effectively promotes the good attendance of the majority of pupils and works in close co-operation with parents. Where pupils' attendance records give cause for concern the school and the educational welfare service work well together to support the pupils and their families. The school regularly monitors lateness and seeks reasons for unexplained absence at an early stage.

41. Teachers and support staff constantly reward good behaviour and this procedure effectively promotes a good climate for learning in class. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are closely monitored and supported by class teachers, classroom assistants and by the headteacher who regularly informs parents and discusses ways in which they can support their children at home. Specialist help is sought if these difficulties persist.

42. Pupils know that all incidents of oppressive behaviour or bullying are recorded in the headteacher's 'Red Book'. They are aware that if they behave in such a way they will not be able to play freely at lunchtime until they can take responsibility for their own behaviour. Parents say that teachers always investigate incidents of alleged bullying and deal with them well.

43. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Records are well maintained; individual education plans clearly indicate targets to be achieved and are relevant and manageable. The co-ordinator tracks pupils' progress well, ensuring that they move up or down the register of special educational needs as appropriate. Some pupils eventually come off the register, others move to stages where they receive additional support. The provision for pupils for whom English is not the first language is equally good. Their progress is carefully monitored and records kept to ensure that learning is not impeded at any stage.

44. The school has satisfactorily improved its assessment procedures since the previous inspection when they were unsatisfactory. Test results and ongoing records are now used more regularly to monitor progress and provide teachers with information to assist their planning. Other assessment information is analysed to highlight gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers know at what national curriculum level pupils are working in English, mathematics and science and this helps them to modify the pace of work where necessary. Pupils themselves are less aware of these levels and do not fully appreciate the need to work with urgency towards meeting standards expected of them. More remains to be done in relation to assessment and its use in art and design, design and technology, geography and ICT.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Partnership with parents features strongly in the school's plans for promoting individual pupil's personal development and self-esteem. Parents say that they feel very comfortable about approaching the school with problems and concerns. They value having a daily opportunity to communicate with the head teacher in an informal way in the playground before and after school. They say that their children like school and are making good progress in response to the high expectations of the teachers.

46. Parents are pleased with the regular newsletters and the information on the topics which are to be studied in school. They like the way the teachers respond to their concerns and include

them in procedures to help their child through difficulties. They are very glad of the opportunity to talk with their child's teacher at a parents' evening every term. Parents find that the end of year reports give a helpful and informative account of their child's attitudes, achievements and progress and identify any targets for the future. They are pleased to be invited to class assemblies. Parents say that they are happy with the way the school welcomes and includes every child and the way the staff work hard to enable every child, whether or not they have difficulties, to grow in self-esteem and respect.

47. The school involves parents at an early stage if their child has any special needs, difficulties or problems with behaviour. Parents and teachers work well together to provide encouragement and support.

48. The Parent Teacher Association makes a valuable contribution to school life. As well as raising money for school funds at fairs, the regular discos organised for pupils and staff are a highlight of the school calendar and make a valuable contribution to school relationships and pupils' social development. Substantial funds raised by the Parent Teacher Association made a very good contribution to building up a stock of reading resources and to improving resources for ICT.

49. Parent governors make sure that parents' views are well represented. They take an enthusiastic and well-informed part in discussions and decision-making.

50. Parents support their children's work at home and are able to communicate with teachers regularly via the homework diary. They contribute to their children's learning by listening to reading and helping with investigations for topic work. The 'homework menu' for each year group includes ideas for activities which parents and children can share at home. Parents are generous in their support of their children's fundraising for charity.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school is well led and soundly managed. It is successful in meeting its self-imposed targets for improvement. The headteacher and deputy form the senior management team (SMT) which provides effective leadership through clear direction focused on improving teaching and raising standards. The school's commitment to inclusion is clearly evident in all its work and this is promoted in every aspect of school life. The headteacher's role as a team builder has been effective in creating a united staff, teaching and non-teaching, which persists in supporting every pupil whatever the extent of the challenge. Morale is good because staff can see the effect of their efforts on pupils' personal, and subsequently academic, development. The atmosphere for learning is calm and orderly and generates confidence. Parents are well-satisfied with the school's provision.

52. The school operates well through a system of self-review processes. All staff are involved annually in the critical analysis of performance and underlying issues. These feed into the school's improvement plan. Year-on-year, the impact can be seen on rising standards, particularly for the lowest-attaining pupils. The headteacher's termly management reviews provide regular update on progress in the areas that have been targeted for improvement. Least progress has been made in respect of pupils' behaviour in the playground at lunchtime. The management of lunchtimes is unsatisfactory because there is little to occupy pupils when playing in the confined space on the hard playground. As a result, there is some aggressive behaviour.

53. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards. The headteacher observes lessons, discussing and recording points for improvement. Assessment data is used well to analyse the school's performance against local and national standards. Teachers' planning is checked against whole school plans to ensure progression within and across year groups. Subject co-ordinators sample pupils' work and generate opportunities for teachers to share practices by observing each other's lessons. In English, mathematics and science they use test data and teachers' assessments to

track pupils' progress and identify areas for improvement, for example, writing and mathematics. This is usefully shared with other staff at staff meetings. Co-ordinators now have more responsibility for performance in their subject but there is still some inconsistency in the extent to which each has developed their role.

54. The organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good and is fundamental to these pupils' good progress. This is because the co-ordinator has first hand knowledge of pupils' work and works closely with an effective team of well-trained support assistants. They are very well deployed, one to each year group. In addition, extra support is directing to specific pupils and groups based on needs identified in the school's termly review. This good practice is very effective in raising the achievement of lower-attaining pupils.

55. Overall, governors have a sound overview of the school. They carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily, except in that statutory requirements for ICT are not fully met. There is a committee structure and a regular programme of meetings that feed into planning for the annual budget process. Governors are heavily dependent on the headteacher's written reports. They satisfactorily note improvements and question the school's actions to ensure they understand the context and priorities. However, they could be more proactive in involving themselves in the monitoring and evaluation of policies, practices and the outcomes of their decisions. The school development plan is a clear document, focusing on the current year and spanning the next. It concentrates appropriately on raising standards, identifying the means of doing so, resources required and the time scale.

56. There is an adequate number of qualified and experienced teachers. The employment of additional part-time teachers is effective in facilitating grouping of pupils by ability in English and mathematics, and in providing time for co-ordinators to plan, monitor and support work in their subject. Less effective, however, is the deployment of teaching staff in the older year groups. For example, there are 38 pupils in a mathematics class in Year 6. The wide ability spread of pupils in the group is impeding the progress of a significant minority. Staffing is now stable but in recent years the school has suffered from long-term staff absence through illness. This has been detrimental to the progress of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6. Newly qualified teachers receive good support and time is allowed for them to broaden their expertise. Satisfactory provision is made for the professional development of all other staff based on their needs as discussed with the headteacher in regular one-to-one interviews. These are valued and productive. Staff training in ICT skills is ongoing – it is the one area where staff expertise is not as good as it needs to be.

57. The accommodation is clean and well maintained. The building is old but a rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment contributes to the pleasant environment. Good displays of work in many classrooms, and on the Year 3/ Year 4 corridor, celebrate pupils' achievement but there is potential to use the entrance foyer to reflect the ethos in classrooms. The overall quality of display has improved since the previous inspection but still more could be done. Learning resources are adequate except that there are too few computers for pupils to regularly practise information technology skills. Consequently, most pupils are not as proficient as they should be for their age.

58. Financial management and control are good. Funding is relatively low compared to most schools. Funds are spent prudently, based on a 'break even' budget each year. Special grants are used appropriately for their intended purpose, sometimes being supplemented from the school's own budget, for instance in support of pupils with special educational needs. Co-ordinators have control of their own budget which enables them to fund resources according to priorities for the subject. Governors and staff are aware of the need to consider best value practices, both in spending and in consulting with all those who have a stake in the school's provision. The development of these practices features as a priority in the current year's targets for improvement.

59. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. In taking action on the issues raised it has succeeded in raising standards through a more rigorous approach to monitoring, better planning and teaching, and not least, determination to provide the best for all

pupils whatever their background or difficulties. There is still much to be done but there is good capacity to succeed. The school continues to provide sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to improve the work of the school further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Improve standards in mathematics by
 - *considering whether the arrangements for grouping pupils in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 are the most appropriate
 - *providing more opportunities for pupils to practise problem solving techniques, especially in Years 5 and 6;
(*Paragraphs 17, 75*)

- (2) Improve standards in writing, particularly those of boys and pupils in the middle and lower ability ranges by
 - *monitoring teaching and learning more rigorously, and using the information gained to modify the planning of activities in lessons
 - *making more use of assessment records to provide work more closely matched to pupils' needs
 - *focusing more attention on the teaching of spelling and grammar;

(*Paragraphs 4, 18, 65, 67, 69*)

- (3) Improve standards in information and communication technology by
 - *providing more opportunities for pupils to practise operational skills in a wide range of subjects
 - *ensuring that all strands of the National Curriculum are fully covered
 - *developing a recording system to ensure that pupils move on at an appropriate pace based on their level of expertise;
(*Paragraphs 3, 17, 27, 44, 55, 105-109*)

- (4) Improve standards in art and design, design and technology and geography by using information gained through regular monitoring of pupils' work to inform planning for individual pupils and groups;
(*Paragraphs 3, 44, 89, 93, 98*)

- (5) Consider changing the organisation of the school day so that time is used to optimum potential;
(*Paragraphs 20, 26, 39, 84*)

- (6) Improve the management of pupils in the playground at lunchtime.
(*Paragraphs 13, 37, 52*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	14	17	0	0	0
Percentage	5	20	34	41	0	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll	243
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	48
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.3	School data	0.9
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	36	38	74

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	17	26
	Girls	25	22	28
	Total	46	39	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62(59)	53(57)	73(73)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	27	28
	Girls	22	23	28
	Total	42	50	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57(49)	68(59)	77(77)
	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	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	229
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	10	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22:1
Average class size	27

Education support staff: Y3– Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	484410
Total expenditure	485433
Expenditure per pupil	1791
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1500

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance carried forward to next year	-2523
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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	50	5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	51	15	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	63	15	2	3
The teaching is good.	29	54	3	0	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	56	11	1	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	48	8	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	13	64	11	1	11
The school is well led and managed.	23	55	1	3	18
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	61	1	0	14
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	31	30	9	22

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

ENGLISH

61. Pupils' results in national tests in English were well below average between 1998 and 2000 but there has been an upward trend in performance year-on-year. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age has risen steadily from 51% in 1998 to 62% in 2001. Currently, standards of work are below average in Year 6, largely because many pupils entered the school with very low standards of literacy. A significant minority joined after Year 3. Last year, over a quarter of pupils who finished in Year 6 joined the school at a late stage. Many of these had behavioural problems and difficulties with literacy. In spite of these challenging circumstances the school surpassed the realistic targets it set for itself in national tests in 2000 and 2001. The school's analysis of the performance of pupils who completed the full four years in the school shows clearly that the school is accelerating the progress of a significant proportion of pupils. For example, in Year 6 in 2001, 78% of these pupils reached the standard expected for their age in reading, which is 32% more than might reasonably have been expected from their performance in national tests taken at the end of Year 2. In writing, 18% more pupils reached the expected level for their age than might have been anticipated from prior attainment on entry. This represents a truer reflection of the school's achievement than judgements based solely on test results. Evidence from the inspection supports these findings but shows that there are still some pupils in the middle ability range whose reading and writing could be improved if expectations were raised in some of the classes. In general, girls achieve higher standards than boys because greater numbers of boys are entering the school with low levels of attainment. Overall, pupils achieve well considering their standards on entry. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The quality of teaching has improved, and some is very good.

62. By the end of Year 6, speaking and listening skills have risen from well below average to average. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. It is an aspect of English not reflected in national test results. When pupils enter the school there is a sizeable group whose attention wanders when they need to listen with sustained concentration. This barrier to learning is partially removed by some effective teaching. Some teachers are more successful than others in engaging pupils' interest. High expectations allied to patient determination are particularly successful in the lower year groups. As pupils move into Year 5 there is less enthusiasm for English and some teachers are finding it difficult to retain interest throughout the lesson. Although no unsatisfactory lessons were seen, teaching did not always inspire pupils to get excited about learning. As a result, self-discipline was often lacking, with pupils becoming demotivated and 'switching off' at different points in the lesson. Some teachers provide interesting reading material but are not making lessons come to life. They allow too much passivity from pupils, provide insufficient creative challenge, and spend too much time on routine tasks. More positive encouragement would be beneficial here. The arrangements for grouping pupils by ability is not working as well in Year 5 as in the other year groups.

63. Learning is good in most of the higher-attaining groups, for instance when pupils in Year 6 research information to write family biographies. Initially, pupils were encouraged to explore the topic for themselves but they benefited from the teacher's reassurance and guidance when uncertainties arose about how to tackle the project. The enthusiasm of the teachers is communicated to the pupils who are motivated to learn. Very good relationships also underpin very good learning in Year 3 where pupils are praised and constantly given positive feedback, which raises their confidence and produces an 'I can do' learning ethos. In these classes, speaking and listening opportunities are exploited well and pupils' achievement is good.

64. Evidence from the inspection shows that by the end of Year 6, approximately 75% of pupils reach the level expected for their age in reading. This is below that found nationally but standards are steadily improving because the standard on entry to Year 3 has been rising in the last three years. The reading skills of those with special educational needs are weak and this

causes difficulties when learning in other subjects is dependent on reading. Most pupils make good progress. Those in the present Year 3, however, are making particularly good progress and are captivated by the 'Talking stories' CD-ROM. When reading 'The Village in the Snow', the pupils reacted angrily to a bullying incident with one of them shouting, "they're evil!". Some pupils in Year 5 do not yet have a good grasp of letter sounds, which prevents them from tackling new words. In Year 6, some do not take note of punctuation and muddle similar looking words. Average readers make sound progress but are not adept at finding the information they need from different sources; their library skills are under-developed. Above-average pupils enjoy reading and they make good progress. They read with improving fluency and accuracy and are competent readers and writers of fiction and poetry. Several Year 6 pupils shared poetry they had written and had published. On another occasion they were so absorbed in the origins of such words as 'xylophone' and 'palaeontology' that many were reluctant to move onto another activity. The atmosphere in the room buzzed with excited interaction between teacher and pupils as they built upon each other's ideas. The formal lesson plan based on prefixes and suffixes came alive.

65. Less than half the pupils attain satisfactory standards in writing by the end of Year 6 which is well below average. The vast majority enter school with writing skills that are well below average. Spelling and punctuation are particularly weak and many pupils have not developed sufficient pencil control to enable them to write fluently and at speed. This is particularly noticeable in the older pupils whose confidence in writing is low. Girls' attainment exceeds that of the boys. They use a wider range of vocabulary and their sentence structure is generally more sophisticated than that of the boys. The most able pupils in Year 6 write very well. Their rewriting of Florence Nightingale's autobiography showed an ease and fluency with language as they reworked sentences to achieve the best effect. By the end of Year 6, most pupils do not have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and punctuation but they can write stories with good attention to characterisation and plot. They use different forms of writing appropriately, but are not sure about the difference between formal and informal styles.

66. Standards of handwriting are sound in the younger pupils' handwriting books and there is plenty of evidence to show that letter formation is regularly practised. However, teachers do not expect the same good standards in pupils' other books. Some of the older pupils are still using pencil and are not being treated like writers. Drafting, altering, and excellence in presentation are not sufficiently emphasised. More use could be made of information technology skills here. Spelling is weak throughout the school and punctuation is particularly poor in Year 6. Some pupils cannot explain the purpose of paragraphs in written work. Pupils' knowledge of letter sounds is secure but they have not been taught about spelling patterns such as double letters and this is detrimental to the work of average and below average pupils.

67. Teaching is satisfactory across the school although it varies from sound to very good. The quality of teaching overall is better in Years 3 and 4 than in other years, with the exception of the higher ability group in Year 6 where it is very good. The strengths of teaching include planning and the sharing of objectives with pupils. Areas for development include more rigorous attention to marking which is often cursory and misses opportunities for consolidating learning points, greater use of time deadlines, and a sharper focus on pupils' self-assessment. In the best lessons, teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to express their ideas accurately. They use interesting and varied approaches to writing and promote the pupils' interest in new words. They help pupils to organise their thoughts and support them at an early stage of planning, setting aside time for pupils to think through and clarify ideas before they begin to write. The end of the literacy sessions is not always used effectively to encourage pupils to identify what they have learned, or to anticipate what they need to learn next.

68. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans and are helped by the smaller group sizes in which they work. They also benefit from the effective support of learning assistants. Although learning is a constant struggle, these pupils make good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. They achieve as well as other pupils of equal ability.

69. The management of the subject is satisfactory but lacks a rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning. The literacy co-ordinator has only recently taken over this role although

the head teacher has carried out some monitoring which has led to effective targeting of additional support for pupils of greatest need. The good strategies in use in some classes for managing and motivating pupils, and the best practices in marking and feedback, are not used consistently throughout the school. Some resources for reading are of poor quality and are badly in need of replacement. The library as a provision for non-fiction is under-used and opportunities are being missed to incorporate information technology skills into everyday work.

Literacy across the curriculum

70. Literacy skills are being consolidated across the curriculum, especially in geography, history and science. Good examples include the recording of investigative work undertaken in science and the emphasis placed on enriching the learning environment with helpful signs and displays of words.

MATHEMATICS

71. Standards of work are below average by the end of Year 6. Taking into account pupils' attainment on entry, they achieve well because of the good teaching that is firmly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. This structured approach to the teaching of mathematics is a significant factor in the steady improvement in pupils' performance since 1998.

72. In 2000, pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were well below average when compared to all schools and those of similar background. This represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils whose attainment was very low on entry. Boys and girls achieved similarly. In 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for their age was similar to that in 2000. Considering that 18% of pupils who joined this year group in Year 3 left before Year 6, and that 27% joined the school after Year 3, many having experienced a disrupted pattern of schooling, they achieved satisfactorily. The numeracy skills of other pupils in the cohort were very low on entry to the school in Year 3. Their performance in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 indicated that only 24% of them were likely to achieve the level expected for their age by the end of Year 6. In the event, 55% achieved this level (level 4). This indicates the value added to pupils' progress during their time at Moorpark. The school did not meet the targets set by the governors in 2000 and 2001. These were unrealistic taking into account the pupils' background in mathematics. Overall, pupils' performance in mathematics falls below that in English because the school initially gave greater priority to the improvement of literacy skills. This is having a positive effect in mathematics because pupils' improved reading skills are making them better able to understand what is required of them in both oral and written work.

73. Pupils' attainment on entry, although still well below average, is improving year-on-year. All pupils benefit from the consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. However, because pupils in Years 5 and 6 did not experience such well-structured provision in their earlier years, many still lack confidence in applying basic numerical skills in other contexts.

74. In Year 3, teaching focuses on strengthening pupils' understanding and application of operational skills in number work, simultaneous with extending knowledge in data handling, shape and measure. Some of the lowest-attaining pupils still have poor concepts of number bonds to 20 at this stage. The grouping of pupils by ability enables the highest attainers to move on more quickly whilst providing extra support where it is most urgently needed for others. By Year 4, the most able pupils are working at an appropriate level for their age in all aspects of mathematics. Less able pupils work more routinely, and at a simpler level. They find difficulty in recalling what they have learned; progress is slower because teachers repeatedly have to go over earlier work before extending topics. Nevertheless, all pupils achieve well from their starting point.

75. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' weaker background in numerical skills is clearly evident. Pupils of all abilities lack confidence when applying number work to other situations. For example, a significant number of them do not know multiplication tables well enough to facilitate work on fractions and percentages. This also affects their ability to solve problems; translation of word

problems to their equivalence in number is below average. Other aspects of mathematics are closer to average, for instance, data handling and measurement. However, even here, pupils find it harder to put their understanding into effective practice when writing up answers. This was exemplified in a Year 6 lesson when a substantial number of pupils found difficulty in drawing and measuring angles despite having appeared to understand the intricacies of angular measure in the initial discussion. The most and least able pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 because the grouping arrangements meet their needs. Middle-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily but some could do better. This is because arrangements in these two year groups do not work to their advantage. In Year 5, they are divided in equal numbers between two parallel groups of lower-attaining pupils. In Year 6, they are in the lower half of a large group of 38 pupils. The size of the group and pace of work are detrimental to their progress. These pupils are often on the borderline of reaching the level expected for their age. They are not receiving sufficient support to reach this standard.

76. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed. They work closely with classteachers in planning for the needs of individual pupils and groups. This enables these pupils, and others of lower ability, to exceed the levels that might have been expected based on their prior attainment. The good provision for lower-attaining pupils is accelerating their progress and has contributed to the overall improvement in performance at the end of Year 6 in recent years.

77. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and, for the most part, behave well in lessons.. The majority say they enjoy mathematics, particularly the mental arithmetic sessions. Pupils are more confident in oral work than in written work, as is evident when pupils attempt to reason through their answers. On the whole, pupils achieve a greater degree of success when working on structured tasks. Confidence in independent work is higher in the younger year groups because this aspect of learning now has a higher profile from the outset.

78. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is an improvement on provision at the time of the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. The main reasons for improvement are the better pace of lessons, better match of work to pupils' ability, increased use of assessment to underpin planning, and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. All of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, 50 percent were good and a further 10 percent were very good. The best lessons caused pupils to think for themselves and to learn from their own mistakes. Activities were varied and sustained interest whilst skilful questioning enabled teachers to extend learning by building on pupils answers, whether or not correct. For example, in Year 4, pupils were successfully taught how to word tackle problems and record answers so that the working showed the reasoning behind them. This was particularly helpful to the teacher, such as when determining whether pupils understood that ' how much taller than ----?' required calculation of the difference between two three-digit numbers. The lesson was rounded off in a challenging manner when pupils estimated, and then tested out, how many of them could stand in a metre square. To their surprise almost half the class fitted in and pupils were left to consider how many could fit into the whole room. The satisfactory teaching could be improved to match that of the best through more extensive sharing of the good practices. In particular, where there is a wide ability range within a class, teachers need to ensure that the work is neither too challenging nor too easy for the least and most able pupils respectively. Teachers make very little use of information technology in mathematics lessons. Opportunities are being missed to reinforce pupils' mathematical skills and to utilise ICT in simple graphical work and data handing. Homework is satisfactorily used to deepen pupils' understanding but some pupils lose out because they do not return it regularly.

79. Leadership and management of the subject are good and have been effective in securing improvement in performance and standards of work since the previous inspection. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is making a significant contribution to the improvement. There is still more to be achieved through the strategic use of the monitoring and assessment systems; also by consideration of the appropriateness of present arrangements for the grouping of pupils in mathematics in Years 5 and 6.

Numeracy across the curriculum

80. Pupils' numerical skills are below average but are improving through the focus on mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons. The highest-attaining pupils' computational skills are satisfactory but other pupils lack confidence in multiplication and division. Pupils use calculators satisfactorily; the school rightly discourages their use when calculations are simple enough to be calculated mentally. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily to complement work in other subjects, such as science, geography and history. However, there is no overall policy to ensure the consistency of terminology, use of units or methods of graphical representation.

SCIENCE

81. Pupils achieve well and standards are average by the end of Year 6, with most pupils working at the levels expected for their age, but a below average proportion exceeding them. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below average. It is also an improvement on the results of national tests, at age 11, in both 2000 and 2001. The difference between previous and current standards is because the school has made better provision for pupils to investigate independently and has discovered the reason why boys were not achieving as well as girls. The co-ordinator identified that the large group of boys who did not achieve the expected level all had difficulties with reading and writing. By focusing on specific vocabulary and literacy skills, the school is now successfully promoting higher standards for lower-attaining pupils. Pupils are achieving well in view of their well below average standards on entry to the school. Some of those with special educational needs are achieving very well and attaining the nationally expected levels for their age.

82. The school's results in the national tests, in 2000, were well below the national average and that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the next higher level was below average. Girls achieved better results than boys, whereas nationally, boys achieve a little better than girls. In 2001, results were better in that there was a slight increase in the proportion attaining a higher level. Whilst more girls than boys reached the expected level, there was considerable improvement in the performance of boys. In the current Year 6, there is a high proportion of boys who have special educational needs or who are lower attainers. Again, the focus on supporting specific vocabulary and literacy skills is helping them to make good progress in scientific knowledge and skills.

83. Year 6 pupils understand the concept of fair testing and record the results of their experiments using simple tables. Average and higher attainers draw their own tables, whilst lower attainers complete one produced by the teacher so that poorer literacy skills do not impede the development of scientific skills or knowledge. Higher attainers plot line graphs and extract information from them. They know that only one condition can be changed for an experiment to be fair. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the major organs of the human body and flowering plants and what their importance is to life. They have sound knowledge of materials and understand the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Higher attainers satisfactorily explain how molecules vary in the different states and how changes occur when materials are mixed or heated. They know that some solids dissolve in water and that if solids are of different sizes, this affects the rate at which they dissolve. Pupils use correct scientific vocabulary, such as solids and solution. They develop sound observational skills and learn how to record their experiments in a scientific form. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of forces such as gravity. Higher attainers know that if opposing forces are balanced an object is stationary or moving at a constant speed.

84. Teaching is good and on one occasion during the inspection it was excellent. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching and progress were judged to be satisfactory. Pupils now make good gains in their learning overall, although, as at the previous inspection, progress varies between classes, dependent on the quality of teaching. Good procedures are in place to check the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons and examining pupils' work. However, this has not been fully effective in spreading the best practice in teaching because findings are not followed up rigorously. The good progress

made is because of teachers' good subject knowledge and careful use of scientific vocabulary. Lessons provide a good balance of instruction and investigation by pupils who are encouraged to record their findings for themselves. Teachers plan interesting lessons but the timing of some means that there is not always enough time for pupils to complete their experiments and recording in the same session. They have to finish off a later time when the initial enthusiasm has gone. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations and question pupils skilfully to check their understanding and progress. They set challenging tasks which engage pupils' interest and motivate them to work hard, independently. When lessons are satisfactory rather than good, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to investigate but do not allow them enough independence in deciding on their own methods or resources. Introductions to lessons are clear and pupils know what is expected of them and settle to work quickly. A good pace is maintained so that pupils waste no time and produce an appropriate amount of work. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not the first language is good because work is well matched to their needs. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is not consistent. Some teachers mark in detail and provide good feedback. Others confine themselves mostly to ticks. Teachers seek to develop communication skills through discussion sessions that encourage pupils to listen and express themselves with clarity. Writing and numeracy skills are developed whilst measuring and recording the results of experiments but pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT in this work. For example, they do not enter data and print it out in graphical form. Pupils develop good attitudes towards their work and co-operate well with each other in practical work. It is a pity that, in many classrooms, success in science is not celebrated in displays of work.

85. Leadership and management are good but more rigour is needed in using the information gained through the good monitoring procedures. Planning is checked to ensure that skills and knowledge are taught progressively. Pupils' work is regularly assessed against the national scheme of work and progress is recorded on individual records. The school has made good improvement in its provision since the previous inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

86. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are supported by evidence of pupils' work and teachers' planning. At the end of Year 6, standards are below average, as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, overall, but pupils in the younger year groups are now making good progress. A new curriculum has been introduced and is providing for good development of pupils' skills and knowledge. This has not yet had an effect on the standards of older pupils. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

87. Pupils use a suitable range of media, such as pencil, paint pastels and clay, to express their ideas and sometimes develop an idea in different media. For example, they produce pencil drawings of shapes, shading them to give a three-dimension effect. They then expand this work into still life pastels of fruit or paintings, such as of the school bell tower. Pupils use sketchbooks to try out ideas but there are notable differences in the effectiveness of their use. Some pupils do not develop their ideas beyond their original sketch, whilst others develop their ideas before attempting their finished product. A particularly good example of this is the work done on drawing portraits and figures in Year 3, which resulted in good figure paintings. Pupils study the work of other artists to a satisfactory degree, noting how they portray figures and landscapes before producing their own pictures. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils did not evaluate their own or others' work, or mount their work themselves. The school has made satisfactory improvements in this area.

88. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Teachers now plan appropriately to the new scheme of work and make good links to other subjects, particularly history. As at the time of the previous inspection, good use is made of artefacts and posters to stimulate pupils' thoughts about the many different ways a subject can be portrayed. In better lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give clear explanations so that pupils understand what it is they are expected to do and to learn. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard to achieve the effect they want. Consequently, learning is good. In less effective lessons, expectations are not always high enough and pupils do not have enough opportunities for independence in making decisions about the resources they could use to create an effect. Although learning is satisfactory in these lessons, pupils lack the enthusiasm gained through

individual creativity. Teachers do not make use of ICT to produce or enhance pupils' work and this is unsatisfactory.

89. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The recent changes in the curriculum are particularly beneficial in promoting the progressive development of technical skills. However, there is no assessment procedure to help teachers plan work to build on the achievement of individuals. At the time of the previous inspection, the display of work was criticised. Displays are now of a satisfactory standard but those in the vicinity of the Year 3 and 4 classrooms are more attractively presented than elsewhere.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection and judgements are based on evidence from talking to pupils, examining teachers' plans and pupils' designs and finished products. Standards are below average at the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. There has been minimal improvement in the subject since that time, although a new curriculum has now been introduced. Previously the subject was taught through a cross-curricular approach which meant that skills were not developed systematically. This resulted in underachievement by most pupils, particularly the higher attainers.

91. Pupils design and make simple products, selecting appropriate resources and using a sound range of tools and means of fastening materials together. By Year 6, their designs are below average, with insufficient detail to allow them to work precisely on their products. Making skills are sound and pupils make products to an average standard. For example, Year 6 pupils make a chassis, with axles and wheels and propel it by means of a motor. They cut materials to size with reasonable accuracy and fix them appropriately. They discuss their products and write a simple evaluation but do not amend their designs or products satisfactorily.

92. There is not enough evidence to make a fully balanced judgement on teaching but evidence shows that teachers now teach skills and knowledge progressively. They have not had training on the new curriculum but make good use of the scheme of work to support their own knowledge when planning to develop pupils' skills. Pupils report that they enjoy the lessons. They are now beginning to make satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding of the designing and making processes. Teachers make good links to other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils made a Victorian toy when studying that era in history. Year 3 pupils enjoyed testing a range of sandwiches before designing their own whilst studying healthy eating in science. Pupils do not have any opportunities to use computers in the design process.

93. Whilst the subject has not been a high priority for some time, the recent developments in the curriculum are starting to promote improvement, particularly in the younger year groups. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is being checked at the end of each unit of study but the information gained is not being used to promote higher standards. Overall, pupils are not yet achieving as well as they could.

GEOGRAPHY

94. No lessons were planned for geography during the period of the inspection because the subject is taught in blocks.

95. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and the work is now suitably planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities. Standards are still below average but the pupils are making satisfactory progress.

96. Teachers are careful to make sure that pupils develop geographical skills and knowledge in a progressive way as they move through the school. By Year 6, they have a good understanding of the solar system and higher-attaining pupils can write confidently giving good explanations for changes in for example, the seasons. Lower-attaining pupils know that the sun is a star and not a planet. In discussion, Year 6 pupils satisfactorily explained how shadows are formed and how

they lengthen. The pupils study the physical and human features of a range of places and satisfactorily show how the mix of these features helps to explain their character. For example, they looked at the Chammonix Valley and considered the reasons for the growth of the tourist industry in this area and compared it with the traditional lifestyle of Vallorcine Village in the Alps. Teachers' planning includes sound links with other subjects where relevant. An example of this was when pupils completed a traffic survey to investigate whether the road outside of school should be closed to traffic. This presented suitable opportunities for the use of graphs and computer-aided presentation. However, the use of ICT generally to aid research is neglected.

97. Teachers are making satisfactory use of a nationally recommended programme of work. They plan carefully to develop geographical enquiry and to develop skills. The planning includes some fieldwork but this is underdeveloped. Year 6 pupils take part in a week's residential visit which supports the development of the subject but there is still a need for more first hand experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils attempting to give directions to their own homes were very unsure of left and right and the names of the various roads around school. Teachers identify assessment opportunities within each project and use these to report to parents at the end of each term. Although this is a good start, records are not yet combined to form a systematic programme of assessment for geography throughout the school.

98. The subject is satisfactorily managed. To raise standards further the school needs to monitor pupils' progress in the subject and use the information to inform planning for individual pupils and groups.

HISTORY

99. Three lessons were observed during the inspection. Discussions with staff and pupils and analysis of work in books and on display indicate that by the end of Year 6 standards of work are average compared to those in other schools. These standards represent good achievement for the great majority of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is their second language receive effective help and make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

100. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of different periods of British History. They develop a sense of chronology, periods and events, using a wide variety of ways of representing and interpreting them. A particularly impressive display is the 'Time Tunnel' which all classes contribute to as they complete a period in History. In a Year 4 lesson, because the teacher took the 'hot seat', the pupils were able to extend their knowledge further as they sought answers to questions that they had posed in a brainstorming exercise and had been unable to answer through their own research. Pupils listened intently to the teacher because she replied in a very dramatic manner, holding their attention and enabling good learning to take place. Pupils in Year 5 study European history and decide that a navy would be most important to Greece for defence. They show considerable interest and empathy with the life of the men and the type of work that they would have to do. The teacher sets good questions which encourage the pupils to use their research skills. The use of well-designed worksheets ensures that all pupils can make a sound contribution. However, higher-attaining pupils work at too slow a pace with little urgency to complete their writing, consequently they do not reach the extension work available.

101. Inspection of books and and teachers' planning indicate that teaching overall is good. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to record for themselves what they have learned, as they did when compiling their own report for the 'Tudor Times'. Teachers plan interesting lessons and make very good use of the limited number of visits, for example to Tatton Park.

102. There are good links with other subjects. This enhances the subject by making it more meaningful and reinforcing pupils' learning. For example, Year 4 pupils researching the Tudors heard the story of Christopher Columbus who 'sailed the ocean blue in 1492'. They successfully composed their own poems empathising with the sailors of those times, such as,
'Crashing splashing

Sailor sighing
People crying '

Pupils will shortly be presenting 'The Tudor Festival' to which parents are to be invited. Interesting posters have been designed by the pupils using the computer. The performance includes the 'clog dance' depicting the dance of the poorer people of that period in contrast to the elegance of the dancing of the richer members of society. Pupils are enjoying practising for this event.

103. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. An example of this was when Year 4 pupils thoughtfully considered how Henry V111 might have felt at the birth of his son and the subsequent death of Jane Seymour.

104. Central to the success of this subject is the enthusiasm shown by the subject co-ordinator. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Good planning, including reference to local historical events and people, enables pupils to gain a greater understanding of their own locality and historical background. The school has recently introduced a national programme of work which is being merged with the school's present successful scheme. Teachers identify assessment opportunities within each unit of work but there is no whole school record to show individual pupils' progress year-on-year. The lack of use of ICT was criticised at the previous inspection. More use is now being made of it, but there is still a need to develop skills and improve the software available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards of work are below average overall. There has not been sufficient improvement since the previous inspection because development has not kept pace with that of most other schools. This is because the school gave higher priority to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In the last two years resources have improved and all classes now have access to at least one multi-media computer. Teachers' expertise in the subject is improving through training and support from the subject co-ordinator. It will take some time for this to have a satisfactory effect on standards. At present, pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

106. Pupils are taught the specific ICT skills in discrete teaching sessions. They are subsequently provided with opportunities to practise skills at various times during the week, but, with only one computer in most classrooms, this takes time. Practice is not frequent enough to build up pupils' confidence. Consequently learning is not sufficiently progressive and too few pupils are capable of using the computer independently to further other studies. Where they are, it is often a result of experience they are gaining on computers at home. Pupils have better knowledge and understanding of word processing skills than of other important aspects of the work. These include using the internet to exchange and gather information, using electronic devices to make things happen, and monitoring and recording events such as changes in temperature. Insufficient use is made of ICT in other areas of the curriculum.

107. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because it is not yet leading to satisfactory standards of work. Teachers plan lessons carefully but many are still insecure in teaching some parts of the programme of study because of lack of training. Whilst they teach basic skills adequately, they are not providing sufficient challenge which limits progress and results in underachievement. Teaching in the one lesson seen was good. Although only a few pupils actually worked on the computers, others were provided with a thoughtfully prepared written exercise which tested their understanding of changes in font, font sizes, underlining and the introduction of colour to illuminate text.

108. Pupils in Year 3 join the school with a better background in ICT than pupils in other years. The school needs to capitalise on their enthusiasm and interest. In Year 6, groups of pupils have the opportunity to join an out of school class at Port Vale. Under expert guidance they select to work on programmes that reinforce other skills, such as literacy and numeracy. This is of great benefit and assists pupils' learning across the whole curriculum. Throughout the school pupils

enjoy working on the computers. They collaborate well and those with computers at home are keen to share their skills with others. Currently there are no clear procedures for pupils to save their work and, as little is assessed and recorded, pupils are not sure how they can improve. Teachers cannot give detailed guidance because they do not have a clear picture of individual pupil's progress.

109. The management of the subject is helping individual teachers to gain confidence in the teaching of information technology skills. The school is not yet teaching all the programmes of study in the National Curriculum and so is not meeting statutory requirements. Higher priority now needs to be given to improving pupils' skills and developing a recording system that helps individual pupils move on at an appropriate pace based on their present level of expertise.

MUSIC

110. Pupils enter the school with limited experience of musical instruments. By the end of Year 6, standards of work are above average. This is largely due to the inspiring and imaginative approaches shown by some of the teachers and the appointment of a pianist. This enables the school to ensure that all pupils play the recorder and read music to a good level. Pupils enjoy all music-making activities and behaviour is good during lessons. The skilled tuition provided by visiting specialists for the violin, viola, cello, double bass and woodwind instruments further enhances the provision for many pupils. Pupils achieve well. They perform confidently in front of an audience. The standards achieved by the older pupils in music lessons are particularly high.

111. Younger pupils sing expressively and are developing good breathing and phrasing. They explore the use of dynamics within songs and can explain terms such as timbre, scale and tempo. They explore a range of instruments in musical question and answer games and learn to create percussion parts to melodies. In a Year 4 dance lesson, all the pupils learnt and performed three different movement patterns from the Tudor period when they moved rhythmically to music. Pupils confidently discuss music by favourite pop artistes such as Celine Dion and Robbie Williams, giving reasons for their choice and comparing it to other music they have heard from the 1960s and 1970s. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils showed a good in-depth knowledge of Schubert and could describe his music and his life. Overall, however, pupils' knowledge of music from other cultures is limited to one or two composers. Pupils who find some of the activities difficult are either given additional support from teachers and classroom support assistants or helped to compose and play in a way that suits their ability. Expectations are always high. Pupils with challenging behaviour are included and helped to become part of the group.

112. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. The standard of music is high in Years 5 and 6, where the teachers' secure subject knowledge, allied to an experienced understanding of how pupils learn, challenges and extends pupils' creative abilities. Lessons are imaginative, pacy and focus sharply on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. This was evident in a very good percussion lesson in Year 5 where the pupils were working as a team to create rhythms of eight. Not only was every single pupil completely absorbed in the creative activity but every group critically evaluated their own and others' performance. The lesson was carefully crafted to cater equally for all abilities, with the teacher clapping along to help some groups and extending others in his response to their questions. Nothing significant was missed and every point was taken seriously and discussed, to extend learning to a higher level. This lesson was particularly remarkable because the basic plan was improved upon by the teacher's response to pupils' own ideas. This was also notable in a Year 6 lesson in which the whole class played a piece together by reading the music. Most of the class played the recorder proficiently, accompanied by two cellos, a flute and a small number of percussion instruments. This was the first time that the pupils had attempted such a feat and they rose to the occasion magnificently. The music co-ordinator's experience was clearly evident in the number of strategies used for engaging pupils and for accelerating learning. Revision of staff notation and the pentatonic scale was taught in a very simple but highly effective

way using the fingers of both hands for the lines. Teachers use correct musical terms and the pupils quickly adopt these.

113. Good improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. There are now more opportunities for singing and a more structured approach to teaching music. The units of work for the delivery of Curriculum 2000 are currently being trialled by teachers and will need to be reviewed and evaluated in order to link planning and assessment. At present, teachers assess pupils at the end of each unit of work and the best teachers build in opportunities for self-assessment by pupils. The system for assessing or recording pupils' progress in music from one year to the next needs to be refined to avoid duplication of work. Resources are of good quality and there are sufficient percussion instruments and a good supply of glockenspiels for good learning to take place. The fact that there is a recorder for every pupil highlights the importance the school attaches to the subject, as does the establishment of the 'Annual School Musical Festival' and the performances structured through the year for parents, pensioners and the local community. Overall, the subject is well led.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Standards in physical education are average throughout the school and teaching is satisfactory. By Year 6, however, standards are better than average in games. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is due to the focus given to the development of the full range of skills in all classes, the commitment of staff and the extra-curricular opportunities provided by the co-ordinator and the Port Vale Football Club. Good attention is given to the full ability range and the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' understanding of healthy living. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls, which is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities.

115. Pupils in Year 3 enter the school with a sound basic knowledge of games, gymnastics, dance, athletics and outdoor activities. They can follow a marked route to find clues, run at different speeds, hold their weight on different body parts and move to music, creating their own movements. In Year 4, pupils' ability to work together develops well and every pupil is able to follow each other's performance and share ideas. A good illustration was seen in an impressive lesson, focusing on Tudor Dancing, in which 52 pupils participated. Their learning was good because they negotiated steps using very precise movements of their feet whilst remembering to move in the right direction. The majority improved their mastery of this difficult skill in response to clear directions from the teacher. When the pupils split up into groups of six to perform another dance they showed good ability to anticipate each other's actions as they skipped diagonally across a square. Pupils in Year 5 master a range of passes such as chest passes, bounce passes and overhead passes but several do not show a strong team spirit. In contrast, pupils in Year 6 have developed a good level of team spirit and the ability to organise their own games without supervision or altercation. This is more typical of the good attitudes displayed in lessons.

116. Pupils achieve well in games in Year 6 but could achieve better in Year 5 if lessons were brisker and more sharply focused on the development of skills. For example, too much time is wasted when netball bibs are given out or equipment is set up. Too many pupils are sitting and watching for parts of the lesson. In contrast, pupils in Year 6 are actively involved in all parts of the lesson and are taught skills and techniques systematically. A good example was the reminder to the girls to use visual cunning rather than shout out names in netball. By the time they leave the school most pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres and many do much more, gaining both distance awards and personal survival certificates. They respond well to effective instruction that enables them to be confident and safe in the water. Overall, teachers are familiar with the skills to be taught and give clear direction and helpful coaching points. Demonstrations of technique are particularly effective in helping pupils to improve their skills.

117. Overall, management of the subject is satisfactory. It has led to sound improvement since the previous inspection. Good links have been forged with outside agencies to increase

opportunities for pupils to engage in sport. Three incidents of risk were noted during the inspection and these were reported to the headteacher. The sloping playground does not provide an ideal surface for games, particularly when pupils are developing ball control skills, because the ball rolls away at speed, frustrating the learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. By the end of Year 6, standards of work broadly meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are similar to those identified at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those for whom English is not their first language, achieve well from their starting point.

119. By the end of Year 6, pupils build on their previous knowledge to strengthen their understanding of Christianity and other religions. They know the main events in the life of Christ and can describe the events surrounding the crucifixion. They recollect some stories from the bible, for example the story of John the Baptist, although their knowledge is not always secure in naming places of worship or in distinguishing between the Old and the New Testaments. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of the purpose of religious ceremonies and write well about the symbolic nature of water, the value of water to life itself and the use of it for special religious occasions such as the baptism ceremony. Throughout the school, wider issues are discussed sensitively and with respect and this makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils in Year 3 listen to the story of 'The Good Samaritan' and show good understanding of the story when writing their recipe for a good friend. In Year 5, pupils satisfactorily extend their understanding of world religions when they discuss 'The Creation' and the different opinions people hold as to how the world was created.

120. The quality of teaching in the few lessons seen was variable but never less than satisfactory. Overall, when consideration is given to teachers' planning and pupils' work, teaching is good. This is the significant factor in the good learning which enables pupils to achieve the required standard. In the best lesson seen the teacher set the scene of an alien coming to Moorpark. This immediately engaged interest. The lesson moved at a good pace and pupils enjoyed the good role play. There is very good team work when support staff are available in lessons. The very good relationships between staff and pupils enhance the lessons considerably. During one social education lesson, pupils passed each other a smile and a hand-squeeze of friendship. The pause at the end of this time was a spiritual moment for all concerned. It was a pleasure to see the pupils leave school at the end of the day with happy contented smiles on their faces.

121. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Planning is good, as is the coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. The subject is taught by two part-time teachers, the subject co-ordinator not normally teaching the subject. This arrangement makes the management somewhat disjointed. The co-ordinator relies on discussions with the two teachers to obtain an overview of the progress of the pupils and the suitability of the planning and delivery of the subject. No meeting has taken place this term. There are acceptable reasons for this historical situation and arrangements are in place to review the management of the subject in view of the changed circumstances. Currently there is no agreed method of ongoing assessment of pupils' attainment. The subject is enriched by weekly visits from the local clergy and visits to the local church, mosque and synagogue.