

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LEONARD'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridgnorth

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 131903

Headteacher: Mr M Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Edwards
13205

Dates of inspection: 29th January – 1st February 2001

Inspection number: 230688

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	C of E (Controlled)
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Innage Lane Bridgnorth Shropshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Mike Kneen

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14083	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19387	Mrs M Powell	Team inspector	English Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27541	Mr J Collins	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Information and communication technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?
8339	Mr H Protherough	Team Inspector	Science Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Leonard's C of E Primary School is a new, larger than average, primary school located on a spacious and attractive site. It was formed in September 1999 as the result of a merger of St Leonard's C of E Junior School with the adjoining county infant school. The school is housed in two buildings and consists of a nursery, the main school and Learning Support Provision. The younger children are accommodated in the original infant school building and the older children are in the original junior school. Currently, there are 311 pupils in the main school and 38 part-time pupils in the nursery. The school serves the needs of mostly local children but almost a quarter of the pupils are from other areas. The local education authority also transports children to attend the Learning Support Provision, which has five places for children with statements. The school has 18 per cent of its pupils on the special educational needs register which is below the national average. Seven pupils (2.25 per cent) have statements of educational need and this is above the national average (1.7 per cent). Almost all pupils of compulsory school age come from a white ethnic background. Only 4.5 per cent of them are entitled to free school meals and this is well below the national average of 19.7 per cent. Standards on entry to the reception class show a wide spread of ability, but overall attainment is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school, which provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are now above the national average in both English and mathematics, and average in science, reflecting particular improvements in mathematics this year. The leadership has established a positive ethos that reflects its Christian foundation. However, the roles and responsibilities of key staff are not yet firmly established. The quality of the teaching is good. The Learning Support Provision meets the needs of all pupils with special educational needs very effectively. The school budget is used appropriately, but the detail of some financial planning lacks clarity. There is particular strength in the very good range of extracurricular activities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching is good overall
- By the time they leave the school, most children can read, write and calculate competently. The quality of their work in art and design, dance, design technology and investigative science is above average.
- The pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their relationships are good.
- The quality of provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school actively promotes the inclusion of these pupils.
- The parents are strongly supportive of their children's education and the work of the school.
- The school provides a very wide range of extracurricular activities, which enhance the curriculum provision and facilitate the achievement of sound standards.

What could be improved

- The effectiveness of the school management
- The balance and coherence of the curriculum
- The quality of information given to parents

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

St Leonard's C of E Primary School was created as a result of the merging of adjacent infant and junior schools. This is the first inspection of the newly created school.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well above average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science when compared to all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in English, and science was well above the national average and above average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools standards are broadly in line with the average in English and science, but well below average in mathematics.

The results of the national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds show that standards are above average in reading and writing, average in science but well below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in reading, was below the national average. It was average in writing, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in reading and writing, was above the national average and below average in mathematics. Comparisons with similar schools show that standards are below average in reading, average in writing and science and well below average in mathematics.

In 2000, the school reached the appropriate targets set for English and mathematics. It is not possible to identify trends in attainment as this is considered to be a new school and, therefore, no previous data is available. However, inspection findings show that above average standards in English have been maintained and improvements in the teaching of mathematics have raised standards so they are now also above average indicating that the school will also meet its targets for this year.

By the time they leave the school, most pupils can read write and calculate competently. Standards exceed national expectation in investigative science. They attain good standards for their age in art and design, dance and design and technology. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in these subjects. The quality of the pupils' work in the other areas of the curriculum is in line with that expected for their ages and they are making at least satisfactory and often good progress through the school.

By the age of five, most pupils are achieving standards in line with those expected for their age in language, literacy and mathematics. They make good progress in the nursery, but their progress is less secure in some aspects of their learning in the reception classes. This is because these teachers, as yet, lack a full understanding of how to implement some aspects of the new Foundation Stage curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils have good attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Both in and out of classrooms, the pupils' behaviour is mostly good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The school is committed to promoting high standards.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average. The registration procedures fully meet statutory requirements.

The school is an orderly, tolerant and hard-working community that reflects the values set out in its aims. There is a great spirit of tolerance and acceptance in the school, which means that all pupils feel included.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. They listen well to their teachers and apply themselves to their work. Relationships are good with most pupils showing respect for each other and their teachers. Older pupils show maturity in the way that they manage the responsibilities given to them. Although most of the pupils in Key Stage 1 behave well, on occasion, there is a small number of younger boys who play aggressively during breaks and at lunchtime. This behaviour is not always dealt with effectively.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory	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 the quality of the teaching is good. It was good in Key Stage 2. The teaching observed in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory although not typical, as one teacher was absent during most of the inspection. It was also consistently good in the nursery. However, there were inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the reception classes. This is because the teachers are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable about some aspects of the new Foundation Stage curriculum. The teaching observed was sound in 37 per cent of lessons, good in 43 per cent and either very good or excellent in 14 per cent of lessons seen. About six per cent of the lessons were either unsatisfactory or poor (3 lessons). However, most lessons are effectively organised to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good because the teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. The quality of the planning is good overall and the teachers are clear about what the pupils need to learn. The teaching of information and communication technology is sound and the direct teaching of skills is improving the pupils' attainment although the teachers are not creating enough opportunities for the pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum. The special educational needs teacher and learning support assistants give very good support to the pupils with special educational needs.

All teachers interact effectively to strengthen the pupils' understanding and knowledge. They make effective assessments of the pupils' work and use of these judgements to help the pupils to improve. However, there are inconsistencies in the approaches to marking the pupils' work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad. Although the proposed balance is appropriate, in practice the time allocations for some foundation subjects are not rigorously adhered to. Emphasis is rightly placed upon the teaching of literacy and numeracy and this is proving beneficial.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school ensures that all pupils are included. The Learning Support Provision is well managed and highly effective in the level of assistance it provides for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	The pupils' spiritual and moral development is good, and their social and cultural development is sound. The provision for the pupils' personal development, and for sex education and awareness of drugs is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. All members of staff show a strong commitment to the care and well being of all pupils. The school monitors the academic performance and personal development of the pupils well.

The school works well with the parents and the home/school relationships are good. The parents are strongly supportive of their children's education and consistently expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school.

The curriculum is broad but currently it lacks a degree of balance because, for example, in Key Stage 1 too little time is given to the teaching of physical education and religious education. In Key Stage 2, as a result of timetabling the teaching of history, geography and religious education is fragmented. There is particular strength in the very good range of extracurricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall. The headteacher gives appropriate direction to the educational development of the school. The school development plan sets out priorities for improvement but there is not always sufficient detail about how this will happen.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body gives the staff and pupils significant support and meets its statutory obligations in full.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors the pupils' performance, but the co-ordinators are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the performance data, the pupils' progress across the school or the quality of the work in the classroom.
The strategic use of resources	The range and use of the learning resources are satisfactory. The school gives sufficient attention to targeting its funds, but it should ensure that the spending of the budget is linked to the priorities established in the school development plan.

The process of creating a new school through the merger of the adjacent infant and junior schools has started well, but much remains to be achieved. There is an appropriate mission statement and supporting set of school aims that emphasise its Christian ethos and commitment to supporting the pupils' all round development.

The leadership and management are strongly committed to the personal development of the pupils based on a clear set of values. The school is making sound improvements to the standards the pupils achieve. However the subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in the management of their subjects. The school development plan sets out priorities for improvement, but there is not always sufficient detail about how this will happen. For instance though there is an agreed strategy with the local education authority there is no action plan included in the school development plan that explains how the school's grant for improving computer provision will be used. Similarly, there is no proposal to indicate how the replacement of furniture will be accomplished. The governors work closely with the staff and the budget is carefully monitored. However, the governing body needs to ensure that there is clearer identification of some aspects of financial planning. The school is increasingly applying the principles of best value to its decisions.

The teaching and non-teaching staff are of high quality, and are committed to the school. The major weakness is the lack of proper job descriptions that set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of each teacher.

The present accommodation is good, though the distance between the main buildings somewhat hampers the merging of the two previous schools into a new single unit. The learning resources are satisfactory.

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 children to work hard.• Their children like the school and make good progress in their learning.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school.• Behaviour is good in the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework provision• Communication with parents

The inspection team fully endorses the parents' views concerning the strengths of the school. Nevertheless, some improvements are needed in the strategic leadership and management related to forward planning. The inspectors agree that communication with parents needs to be strengthened. Currently, the parents are not given information about the school's homework policy. Some teachers do not take this policy into account when giving homework. Consequently, the amount and quality of homework given by the different teachers is inconsistent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds were well above the national average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels was well above the national average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds, that is to say, schools where up to eight per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, they are broadly in line in English and science but well below average in mathematics. The local education authority also matched the school's results to those of schools with a similar intake of pupils, and this comparison showed that standards lay in the upper quartile (top 25%).
2. The results of the national tests and assessments for seven year olds in 2000 show that in the national context the pupils' attainment was above average in reading and writing, average in science but below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in reading was below the national average. It was average in writing, mathematics and science. Comparisons with similar schools show that standards are below average in reading and science, average in writing and well below average in mathematics.
3. At present, it is not possible to identify trends in attainment as this is considered to be a new school and therefore no previous data is available. The school is monitoring the performance of boys and girls in great detail and the inspection findings show that the differences in their achievements are narrowing in all core subjects.
4. Baseline assessments show that the pupils have a broad spread of attainment on entry to the school. The pupils' experience of nursery placement for two terms has positively influenced attainment on entry to the main school. The pupils make good progress and by the age of five, the majority achieves standards in language, literacy and mathematics that meet the expectations for their age. In the reception classes their progress in developing language, literacy and mathematical skills is sound, but it is less secure in some other aspects of their learning. This is because in some instances the teachers lack as yet a full understanding of how to implement some aspects of the new Foundation Stage curriculum.
5. The school has undertaken an increasingly effective analysis of its results and has focused on implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in order to raise standards. Appropriate targets are set for the pupils' achievements in English and mathematics in 2001. The inspection findings indicate that the school will meet these targets.
6. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, speaking and listening and writing are broadly in line with the national average. The pupils make sound progress and by the age of seven, most are becoming confident, articulate speakers. They listen carefully to their teachers reading stories, follow simple instructions and listen to each other's views and ideas. The pupils are enthusiastic readers. They write for a reasonable range of purposes such as stories, letters and instructions.
7. By the age of eleven, most pupils respond well to opportunities for talking. They are competent readers who possess a sound range of skills that enable them to retrieve information from books and other sources and to justify their opinions about what they have learnt by direct reference to the text. A key target is now the improvement of attainment in writing and the pupils' writing skills are developing as a direct result of this initiative.

8. In mathematics, all pupils make good progress throughout the school and the majority in Years 2 and 6 are already attaining the expected levels for their ages in numeracy and space, shape and measures. It is clear from their work that a significant proportion of the pupils is working well within the higher level. In both key stages, this is a notable improvement since last year. It is due largely to two factors; the high quality of the teaching of mathematics across the school and the effect of the introduction of the numeracy strategy.
9. The inspection findings indicate that standards in science are secure. At the end of both key stages, attainment is broadly in line with the national average. There is a slightly larger proportion of lower attaining pupils this year and fewer pupils will reach the higher levels. A focus on the teaching of investigative skills is having a positive effect on attainment and the pupils are making good progress in this aspect of their work. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards exceed national expectation in investigative science.
10. In both key stages, standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This is because, the necessary skills are being taught in discrete information and communication technology lessons. The school now needs to enable the pupils to apply these skills to their learning in other subjects of the curriculum. This remains an area of development for the school.
11. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. At Key Stage 1, the pupils recognise some similarities and differences in the way various faiths celebrate harvest time. The concept of the world as a very special place is emphasised through opportunities to care for birds and plants in the school's conservation area. By the age of eleven, the pupils have opportunities to study the key events and celebrations not only of Christianity, but also of other important world faiths. However their learning lacks sufficient depth because there is too much emphasis on personal, health and sex education within religious education lessons eroding the time available for teaching the religious education curriculum.
12. The quality of the work in art and design, dance and design and technology is good and the pupils make good progress in these subjects. Standards in history, geography, music and other aspects of physical education are in line with those expected, and the pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
13. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is because the Learning Support Provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of pupils who need support for their physical, academic and social development through individual education programmes that are implemented both in the unit and in the school. In Key Stage 1, the teachers work hard to meet the needs of their pupils in large classes and the statemented children make good progress. However, due to financial constraints, on occasions the deployment of non-teaching staff leaves these classes with limited support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils' attitudes to the school, their behaviour and relationships within the school are good. Their personal development is satisfactory. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The majority of parents believe that the school generally maintains high standards of behaviour, but a few expressed concerns about the aggressive behaviour of a small group of younger boys in the Key Stage 1 playground. The inspection evidence supported these parents' concerns.

15. The pupils' enthusiasm and their attitudes to the school are good. The vast majority of pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. They are interested and fully involved in all activities, including the wide range of extracurricular activities that are offered. The pupils are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and suggestions. They quickly settle down diligently in class, are capable of maintaining sustained periods of concentration and stay on task.
16. The standards of behaviour of the vast majority of the pupils are good. The pupils behave well and generally act in a mature and responsible manner. Their behaviour in the classrooms, in registrations and in assemblies is consistently good and there is no disruption to learning. The children work in an environment that is completely free from oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism. The combination of high standards in pupils' personal discipline, and consistently good class management by the teachers, has a positive impact on the standards of attainment achieved. The pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner. During breaks and at lunchtime the behaviour of most children is good. However, a small number of boys continually indulge in inappropriately aggressive games in the Key Stage 1 playground. Although the school is aware of this, it does not always address the problem with sufficient rigour and current preventative measures are largely ineffective. ***This is an additional issue the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.*** There were no exclusions either in the academic year prior to the inspection or in the current year to date.
17. Relationships in the school are good. The pupils relate well to their teachers, to other adults with whom they come into contact, and also to one another. Children of all ages work well together. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, the pupils conduct themselves reverently, willingly joining in singing and bowing their heads during prayers. There is no deliberate damage to school property and a remarkable absence of litter around the school site.
18. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They are learning a good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. The pupils support local and national charities and are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. They take part in an appropriate range of visits, including residential experiences for the older children. The pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms, but there is little evidence of them acting on their own initiative. In some lessons, when not subject to direct teaching, the pupils were observed working independently and concentrating on their tasks. Where opportunities for taking on formal responsibilities around the school are offered, for example taking registers to the office after registration, the pupils respond in a mature and sensible manner.
19. Levels of attendance are above the national average. There is almost no unauthorised absence. The pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a very low level of recorded lateness. The high standards maintained in attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on learning in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The teaching is good overall, but ranges in quality from poor to excellent. Of the lessons observed, 37 per cent were satisfactory, 43 per cent were good, 11 per cent were very good and 3 per cent were excellent. Five per cent of the lessons were judged as unsatisfactory and one lesson was poor. The majority of literacy and numeracy lessons are well structured and purposeful; they result in good learning and steady progress. The teachers know their pupils well and set high expectations that are appropriate in providing challenge, building confidence and supporting progress.

21. Overall, the teaching was good in Key Stage 2, and particularly strong in the upper classes. The teaching of the youngest children is good. It was consistently strong in the nursery. However, there were inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the reception classes. This is because the teachers are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable about some aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and its implementation varies in quality between the nursery and reception classes. In Key Stage 1, the teaching was satisfactory overall; it was adversely affected by the absence of the deputy headteacher during the inspection.
22. The good quality of the teaching has a positive impact upon the standards that the pupils reach and upon their attitudes to their learning. The major strengths are evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy and in the manner in which investigative science has been developed. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach to the pupils in their classes, the exception being in the teaching of some aspects of the new foundation curriculum. They have gained competence in their teaching skills and techniques from the literacy and numeracy training. They are confident with the contents of the schemes for these subjects. Extended writing is used well across the curriculum, for example in history, to describe how the bombing of London in World War II affected the lives of the families still living there. Numeracy skills are taught competently, enabling the pupils to use data effectively. Some of the teachers are not totally confident in their use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, but nevertheless they prepare carefully to ensure they are able to support the pupils to an appropriate standard.
23. The quality of the planning is good across the school and the teachers include the teaching of skills, knowledge, and understanding very effectively in their lessons. In the teaching of science throughout the school, for example, the pupils have very good opportunities to investigate and to plan their own experiments. In some classes, the teachers write the objectives for the lesson on the board and this helps the pupils to understand the focus for their learning. This is an appropriate strategy and has beneficial effects upon their rate of learning.
24. The ethos in each classroom signals to the pupils that the teachers expect them to work hard to sustain their concentration and to do the best that they can. The pace of the lessons is brisk and in nearly all instances the amount of work completed by each pupil was sufficient. The teachers use a wide variety of teaching styles ranging from whole class sessions to group work and individual tasks. This is appropriate and effectively enhances the quality of learning. The teachers employ a variety of questioning techniques effectively and they often use whole-class sessions well to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, where the pupils were exploring the effects of light in dark places, the teacher used questioning to ensure that they focused on what she wanted them to see as they explored black boxes with mystery contents.
25. In the nursery and reception classes, very careful records of individual pupils' progress are kept. Most teachers interact effectively to strengthen the pupils' understanding and knowledge, and the on-going assessments that they make during the lessons are accurate. They make effective use of these judgements to help the pupils to improve their work. The teachers carry out this type of assessment well, but throughout the school there are inconsistencies in the marking of the pupils' work. Some teachers identify what pupils do well and where there is need for development while others simply tick the work. Moreover, in these classes the pupils are not regularly involved in assessing their own work. ***This is an additional issue the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.***
26. The some parents expressed concern about the quality and quantity of homework provided for their children. Though some teachers set the pupils a good range of homework tasks that extends the work they have been doing in the classroom, others do not. Some take either little or no account of

the homework policy. Consequently, there is inconsistency in the teachers' approaches to the giving of homework. **This is a key issue for action.**

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

27. As a consequence of the merger and of national initiatives, the school has undertaken a review of its curriculum. A broad framework has been agreed which ensures that all the statutory areas of the curriculum are represented. There is a clear policy, currently in draft form, which includes appropriate, proposed time allocations for the various subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2. However, there are weaknesses in current practice, which have an adverse impact on the opportunities the pupils have to learn in some subjects because the time allocations are not adhered to. For example, at Key Stage 1 too little time is allocated to physical and religious education. In Key Stage 2, history and geography lessons are often too brief to do full justice to these subjects. The afternoon break cuts across some lessons, and the resulting interruption hampers the pupils' learning. The curriculum planned for the Foundation Stage is appropriately based on recently published national guidance for this stage of education. However, there is some lack of consistency in the way it is interpreted in different classes. In order to achieve a fully broad and balanced curriculum, its organisation must be improved. **These are key issues for action.**
28. The present approach to planning ensures coherence across classes within the same year group. It reflects the fact that each stage of learning builds upon the previous one. In religious education, for example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have studied the link between art and design and the expression of faith. The planning for the spring term ensures that the intended learning about the Creation, draws upon skills and knowledge acquired during the autumn term study. The curriculum for art and design technology is carefully structured to ensure that the pupils acquire and improve skills as they move up the school. Increasingly effective use is being made of recent national guidance for planning work in the foundation subjects and in religious education. The school's literacy and numeracy strategies are effective and have a positive impact on the pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school.
29. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is well planned. Their needs are clearly identified in Individual Education Plans and the chosen activities are appropriate to their needs. The school makes a good effort to ensure access to activities for all pupils. Some regrouping for the teaching of numeracy at Key Stage 2, for example, ensures that the pupils receive a high level of individual help appropriate to their needs.
30. The provision for the pupils' personal and social development is good overall. The school ethos encourages the pupils' individual efforts and the boosting of their self-confidence in order that they achieve well. There is a strong programme for personal, health and social development including drugs' awareness, but at times its organisation and delivery cut across the religious education programme. A clearer distinction needs to be drawn between the two areas of learning so that both can be taught to the required depth. A good range of sports' and fitness clubs makes an important contribution to the pupils' overall well-being. School assemblies and lessons in religious education are effectively planned to raise the pupils' self-awareness and promote the responsible citizenship that is a feature of the school's declared ethos.
31. The provision to foster the pupils' spiritual development is good. The staff have undertaken a very effective training programme to enable them to recognise the many ways in which this aspect of the pupils' development may be enhanced. Opportunities to view the work of artists have raised the pupils' aesthetic awareness and, among older pupils, led to considerations of the link between art and design and religious belief. Artistic displays of artefacts and fabrics provide opportunities for reflection and the expression of awe and wonder. The conservation area is a cherished part of the school environment providing regular opportunities for the pupils to develop a sense of stewardship of the natural world.

32. Adults consistently promote appropriate moral values. They are effective in supporting the pupils to be trustworthy and to acquire a sense of fair play. This was well illustrated through a series of assemblies on the theme of 'temptation'. The pupils' social development is sound. They have opportunities to develop co-operative skills through activities in art and design, during role-play in language lessons and in playing team games. Older pupils are now ready to exercise greater independence and responsibility, for example, in researching material for topics and by having a greater voice in a variety of school matters. They interact well with younger pupils during sessions where they help with reading, but opportunities for social interaction between younger and older pupils are somewhat limited. Visits and visitors, including a link with an urban school, provide further useful opportunities for developing effective social skills.
33. The curriculum contains a sound cultural strand that the teachers are continuing to expand. The pupils acquire a clear sense of their own cultural identity and are increasingly gaining an appreciation of neighbouring cultures. For instance through studies in religious education they recognise that in nearby urban communities, faiths other than Christianity are strongly represented. Some older pupils were privileged to be received at a Gurdwara, and younger pupils have been introduced to the way Hindus celebrate weddings. The curricula for art and design, music and religious education contain strong multi-faith and multicultural strands.
34. The community makes an important contribution to the pupils' learning experiences. There are good links not only with St Mary's Church, but also with other Christian denominations. The school joins with other local schools for musical and sporting events and is actively seeking a link with a local band. Local people have provided sources of evidence for work in history, particularly World War II. The provision of extracurricular activities is a considerable strength of the school. Some activities are supported by local organisations. There is a good partnership with other local schools and colleges that either place students in the school or help with clubs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The procedures for child protection and promoting the pupils' well being, health and safety are good. The child protection arrangements are securely in place and designated staff have received recent training. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are sound. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good.
36. The pupils work in a caring and supportive environment where they feel secure. All members of staff know the children well and relationships across the school are good. Although the school does not yet have a senior lunchtime supervisor, the supervision of the pupils at playtimes and lunchtime is generally good and as a result the vast majority of pupils are able to play together harmoniously. Nevertheless, some parents have expressed concern over the inappropriate and aggressive behaviour of a small number of boys in Key Stage 1, which was witnessed by inspectors. Risk assessments are being carried out, but are not yet formally recorded. Two members of staff and governors have undertaken recent training in child protection procedures and all members of staff undertake relevant first-aid training. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are good. A healthy lifestyle is promoted in science lessons and effective use is made of visiting professionals.
37. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and the parents are aware of the school's policy. The teachers talk to their pupils about the importance of coming to school. Latecomers are recorded in the 'late books' and there are good procedures for contacting parents over absences. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are sound. The pupils are reminded about school and class rules appropriately, and they respond well when asked to identify a class rule that is being broken. The system of rewards and sanctions is well known to the

pupils and has a positive effect on the behaviour of the great majority across the school. For example, there is a 'house points' system to reward achievement, and 'good behaviour' certificates are also presented to the pupils. Notable achievements are celebrated in classes and assemblies, and the pupils take great pride in the recognition of their work.

38. The education and personal support and guidance for the pupils with special educational needs are good. The teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils well and are fully aware of their differing needs. The individual education plans for these pupils have well matched targets, which enable them to achieve success. The arrangements for monitoring and recording the progress that the pupils make towards their targets are good.
39. The procedures for supporting and monitoring the pupils' academic progress are good. By means of a variety of tests and assessments, the progress of individuals and groups of pupils is tracked as they move through the school. This monitoring helps to identify those pupils and groups of pupils in need of support, for example, in reading. In the nursery and reception classes, the children are encouraged to develop their social skills and become integrated into the school. Their records are regularly updated and detailed information is gained during classroom observations. The focus on individual targets in Years 5 and 6 is helping to raise standards in English and mathematics, for example. The teachers take every appropriate opportunity to remind the pupils of these targets and the use of whole-class sessions at the end of many lessons helps to reinforce their learning. The procedures for assessment in other areas of the curriculum are not yet so well developed, but the school has begun to address this issue. It is aware of the need to develop this aspect of its provision to meet the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000. Some collection of work has begun and is being used to define the pupils' achievements in relation to National Curriculum levels of attainment.
40. The use of assessment to guide future curriculum planning is good. Data is analysed to predict the future achievement of individuals and groups of pupils and to identify any 'gaps' in their learning. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator do much of this work and subject co-ordinators are not yet as fully involved as they should be in the process. This remains an area of development for the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Relationships between the school and parents are good. The school enjoys the active support of the majority of parents. Parents consistently expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. A number of committed parents regularly help in the classrooms, accompany children on out of school trips, and are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home. The parents support home reading and consistently enter appropriate comments in the home school reading records. They provide artefacts and information for use in topic work. At the start of each morning's session, the parents give excellent support to the shared reading programme in Key Stage 1. This has a positive impact on the standards of the pupils' reading. The parent governors are fully involved in the governing body and with the school. There is an active parents and friends association, The Friends of St Leonard's School, which organises social events and raises considerable funds for the school. The vast majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or complaints, but not all parents agree that the school works closely with them. Although the headteacher and the school staff are very approachable, and parents have the opportunity to talk to class teachers at the start and close of the school day, there are some communication problems between the school and parents.
42. Communication between the school and home is unsatisfactory. Although the school provides regular newsletters and communications about specific events and activities, these are often sent out at the last minute and do not always give parents enough notice to plan ahead and respond in an appropriate manner. For instance, the parents are not given information about the school's

homework policy. The parents are given an annual written report on their child's progress and offered the opportunity to attend a meeting to discuss matters with their teachers. Some parents indicated that annual reports focus too much on coverage and not enough on what the pupils understand, and can and cannot do. The inspection evidence confirmed this to be the case. Not all subjects are reported either separately or in sufficient depth and consequently do not meet requirements. There is little reporting of where the pupils are finding difficulties or what they should do to improve. Where targets for improvement are set, these tend to be of a social rather than an academic nature. **These are key issues for action.**

43. The school provides an informative prospectus, and annually the governors publish a report and hold a meeting with the parents. Parents are invited to attend assemblies weekly and can visit their child's classroom monthly to see their work and discuss problems with staff. There is currently a parents' consultation evening in the autumn term and again in the summer term. However, many some parents indicated that they would like another consultation evening in the spring term to keep them up to date with their child's progress. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed and fully involved in their child's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. Overall the leadership and management of the school are sound. The headteacher, staff and governing body have agreed an appropriate mission statement and supporting set of school aims that emphasise its Christian ethos and commitment to supporting the pupils' all round development. The process of creating a new primary school through the merger of the adjacent infant and junior schools has started well. However much remains to be achieved notably in defining management responsibilities, putting performance management into place and establishing clear and detailed job descriptions. **These are key issues for action.**
45. The school sets out its priorities for improvement in a school development plan. The documentation includes curricular and non-curricular targets and identifies a broad range of necessary actions. Each target has its own brief plan describing what needs to be achieved and the time scale for action. There are broad indications of how much money is to be spent, but in some areas there is an absence of sufficiently detailed supporting documentation. For instance, though there is an agreed strategy with the LEA, there is no action plan that explains how the school's grant for improving computer provision will be used nor the proposed schedule for re-decoration and replacing furniture. ***This is an additional issue the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.*** The format of the development plan also hinders its usefulness. The thick book of A4 sheets contains useful information, but it is difficult to work out what needs to happen and when.
46. The teaching staff comprises a sufficient number of appropriately trained and qualified teachers who possess a good range of subject expertise. The majority of the subject co-ordinators teach in Key Stage 2. The decision to attach 'buddy' co-ordinators from Key Stage 1 has helped build positive staff relationships, but these arrangements lack rigour. The major weakness is the lack of proper job descriptions that set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of each teacher.
47. Although the school has adopted an appropriate policy for managing the performance of the teachers, however due to difficulties in obtaining trainers it is not yet being implemented. The generic job descriptions in circulation are much too vague to be of use in guiding staff as to where to put their energies and strong commitment. For instance, there are neither specific links to the current school development plan nor agreed targets that are the subject of regular professional review.

48. Most subject co-ordinators make good use of the school development plan to guide their work, but important aspects of their role such as monitoring standards and the quality of education are not identified. As a result, the coherence of the school's curriculum is weakened because the agreements made about what is taught and when are not checked systematically. A good example of this is physical education where the school policy states that the pupils at Key Stage 1 should receive a minimum of one hour and fifteen minutes. In reality the children only get one lesson of around forty minutes. There have been staff meetings to examine the quality of the work in the pupils' literacy books and checks made on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The leadership is in the process of establishing a pattern of such monitoring for all the subjects of the National Curriculum.
49. The organisation of the school day lacks coherence because the timetables of the infant and junior schools have yet to be merged. This makes life difficult as the teachers seldom get the chance to meet at playtimes and over lunch. ***This is an additional issue the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.***
50. The governors show good commitment to the school and work hard to ensure its development. They are aware of the results of national tests and the performance of the pupils and have clear realistic expectations of the various cohorts. They are informed of the school's work through regular reports from the headteacher and through regular and frequent visits to the school. They are well organised. The sub committees meet regularly and minutes are taken. The governors make every effort to ensure that the statutory requirements are met, and are largely successful.
51. There is particular strength in the way that the school manages the provision for the education of the pupils with special educational need and the effective way with which these pupils are integrated and supported within mainstream classes. The Learning Support Provision is very well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator, who is very knowledgeable. The day-to-day organisation is very effective and there is clear leadership for special educational needs provision in the school. All the requirements of the Code of Practice are met. The quality of support provided by learning assistants is high and they make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning and the progress they make. The special educational needs co-ordinator is forging strong links with her 'buddy' in Key Stage 1. This is ensuring that younger pupils with special educational needs mostly receive good levels of support. However, due to financial constraints, the deployment of non-teaching staff leaves the larger classes in Key Stage 1, at times, with limited help from learning support assistants.
52. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Both the headteacher and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have observed lessons. This has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching in these subjects and the teachers have benefited positively from focused feedback.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to raise standards further and ensure the smooth and effective running of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
 - (1) Improve the effectiveness of school management by ensuring that:
 - a. all staff have clear job descriptions which are agreed and signed;
 - b. performance management is put into place;
 - c. the roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators and curriculum buddies are clearly defined and extended to include a monitoring role so that they can effectively develop and manage their subjects;

- d. the roles and responsibilities of senior management staff are clear and that they combine to ensure that management becomes more effective. (Paragraphs 40, 44, 88, 94, 110, 114, 119, 129, 134)
- (2) Improve the quality of information given to parents, by ensuring that:
- a. the pupils' annual reports meet legal requirements;
 - b. the parents are aware of the school's policy about homework, and the teachers in setting homework consistently in line with the policy. (Paragraphs 26, 42)

Improve curriculum by ensuring that:

- c. the new Foundation Stage Curriculum is provided equally effectively in both the nursery and reception classes;
- d. there is a more effective use of time in subjects such as religious education, history, geography and PSHE;
- e. there is an increase in allocation of time to physical education and religious education in Key Stage 1. (Paragraphs 4, 21, 27, 30, 63, 64, 65, 70, 109, 113, 124)

In addition to the key issues above, the following matters should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. The school should:

- work to rapidly modify the inappropriate playground behaviour of a small group of younger pupils;
 - ensure that the teachers become more consistent in their marking of the pupils' work;
 - ensure that there is a clearer identification of some aspects of financial planning;
 - ensure that the organisation of the school day becomes coherent and that the timetables of the infant and junior phases are merged.
- (Paragraphs 16, 25, 36, 45, 49)

LEARNING SUPPORT PROVISION

54. A Learning Support Provision has been attached to the junior school since 1990. It provides a highly effective support to the pupils with special educational needs in the school. Here pupils of all ages, and at all stages of the special educational needs Code of Practice, make good progress.
55. The role of the unit has changed in the last academic year: it was a ten-placement provision with a full time teacher until September 2000 when the resource was halved. The unit now has a half-time teacher with additional hours for support staff. It is a resource for seven statemented pupils and also supports pupils on the special educational needs register in the school. The local authority also uses the unit to assist with the identification of appropriate schooling for pupils with special educational needs. The teacher in the unit is the school special educational needs co-ordinator who takes an active role in identifying, teaching and planning for a large number of other pupils in the school. The special educational needs policy clearly defines the organisation of special educational needs support in the school and the roles and responsibilities of the staff concerned.
56. The unit provides good support to pupils and staff. It is in the special educational needs room in the Key Stage 2 building and is an adequately equipped small classroom used for withdrawal groups. It houses a wide range of support materials and equipment that is also used by other staff in the school. These resources are well matched to the needs of individual pupils with specific difficulties, such as dyslexia and autism; they are catalogued and arranged so that they are accessible and useful.
57. Through individual education programmes that are implemented both in the unit and in the school, the unit effectively meets the needs of pupils who need support for their physical, academic and

social development. The programmes are linked to areas in the pupils' statements of special educational need that are identified at review meetings. Outside agencies and specialists, such as occupational therapists and speech therapists, contribute to the programmes usually with advice, but sometimes through direct, specific intervention. The programmes are implemented by the teachers and support staff and have targets that may relate to the pupils' academic, physical or social progress. The pupils have group literacy sessions in the unit, and are given physiotherapy exercise programmes in the hall and library. The targets are manageable; achievable small steps are linked to the pupils' previous learning and ensure progress. They are specific to handwriting, language development, literacy, numeracy art and design and physical education. They are reviewed every six weeks for pupils who have statements in Key Stage 1 and termly for pupils in Key Stage 2. The pupils are assessed by the special educational needs co-ordinator in termly interviews to ensure that the targets are appropriate and that progress is being made. For example the reading ages of pupils supported by the unit show they are making at least sound and sometimes good progress.

58. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a significant impact on the quality of provision for the children with special educational needs, both as a teacher and an advisor to the teaching staff. The quality of support that the pupils receive is generally good; for instance a Year 4 pupil was helped to complete a letter writing task and she confidently requested that she be allowed to read it to the class. The pupils are also supported in dance with the assistant demonstrating the shapes and movements required. The teaching is focused, clear and relevant and shows a depth of understanding of the pupils' different needs. The teacher and the support staff alike have great sympathy for and knowledge of the pupil. The targets in the educational programmes are assimilated into the general classroom work and the pupils continue to make good progress. This is often achieved by setting in mixed age ability groups so that work is planned at the appropriate level. The completed work shows secure progress, particularly in the development of literacy skills where statemented pupils improve both the quality and presentation of their written work over time.
59. In Key Stage 1, the teachers are working hard to meet the needs of their pupils in large classes. The statemented children make good progress, but they would benefit further from a fuller timetable of support as finances permit.
60. The pupils are responsive, enthusiastic, mainly well behaved and work hard. They are proud of their achievements and talk about their work with interest. There is a remarkable spirit of tolerance and acceptance in the school, which allows all pupils to feel they are included. This means that all pupils are able to contribute to discussion, read out their written work and join in with practical activities such as dance. The pupils with challenging behaviour are sensitively and skilfully managed by the support staff and confrontations avoided by early intervention. However, the procedures for the management of pupils with behavioural difficulties are only communicated through informal discussion. This is effective for the people immediately involved, but the school would benefit if the strategies were documented so that these pupils have their own management plans.
61. The special educational needs co-ordinator plays an active role in allocating and managing the limited support time at her disposal. Through weekly meetings and regular, informal, discussion, she ensures that her colleagues have the necessary information and skills to teach the pupils' individual programmes. Consequently, the members of the support staff are able to describe what their pupils can do and what they need to learn next. At times, the co-ordinator works in classrooms alongside the teachers and so gets to know the children well. She makes regular contact with their parents and makes effective use of their contributions to the home-school books. Homework is set and completed; for example, the pupils were given individually prepared Christmas reading booklets.
62. The special educational needs co-ordinator has formal and informal links with the secondary schools. This enables the receiving school to be well prepared to meet the needs of the new entrants and consequently facilitates the transfer process effectively.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	11%	43%	37%	5%	1%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	311
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	56

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	4.3	School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	13	17	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	7	12
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	28	22	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (n/a)	73 (n/a)	93 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (n/a)	93 (n/a)	93 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	29	27	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	22	27
	Girls	22	21	24
	Total	47	43	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (n/a)	77 (n/a)	93 (n/a)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	22
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	37	40	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (n/a)	71 (n/a)	75 (n/a)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: Y R – Y 6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	38

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
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	£
Total income	628 467
Total expenditure	628 285
Expenditure per pupil	1 887
Balance brought forward from previous year	900
Balance carried forward to next year	1 082

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	331
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	53	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	52	3	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	51	18	4	5
The teaching is good.	43	48	2	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	43	15	6	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	44	3	3	4
The school works closely with parents.	34	43	11	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	45	41	6	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	46	8	4	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. The nursery and two reception classes make sound provision overall for the youngest children in the school. The nursery has increased its intake from part time to full time and there is an additional reception class. The planning for the curriculum of the Foundation Stage covers all the areas of learning and places an emphasis on the development of the children's linguistic, mathematical and social learning. There is a good balance between children choosing what to do and being told what to do, so that they learn how to make decisions. As yet, however, the planning does not give sufficient detail about how this will be carried out. The teachers are still working to find a way of enabling the children to be independent across the age group.
64. The initial assessments carried out by the teachers show a broadly average spread of attainment in language, mathematical and personal development when the children enter the nursery at four years of age. Very few children reach levels of attainment that are beyond those expected for the age group. The inspection findings confirm these assessments. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, most children have achieved the early learning goals in all aspects of the new Foundation curriculum. The teaching of the youngest children is good overall. The teaching in the nursery is strong, being frequently good and on occasions very good indeed. The various members of staff have complementary skills and expertise with the age group and confidently employ well established methods and routines. The teaching observed in the reception classes varied in quality from very good to, in one instance, poor. This is because the teachers are not yet fully secure in their understanding of how to implement some aspects of the new Foundation Stage curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. The children soon feel happy and secure in the well-organised nursery and readily involve themselves in well-established routines. The adults encourage them to tidy up after activities and the children willingly take responsibility for sweeping up the sand and hanging up the dressing up clothes. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children are encouraged to decide what they are going to do, select the resources and give reasons for their choices. The children in the nursery choose from a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. There is a good ratio of adults to children and the teaching is good. The adults effectively judge when to give positive guidance to help children learn. As a result, the children are confident to do things for themselves. However, on occasions when the younger reception children are given opportunities to choose activities, expectations of behaviour are neither clearly drawn nor reinforced. Consequently, a small group of boys lack self-control, arguing over resources such as toy cars and construction equipment. Some children do not know what to do and the teaching provides too little guidance or support. The relationships between the teachers and children are good. They have successfully established trust to enable children to talk about their feelings.

Communication, language and literacy

66. There are good opportunities for the children to express themselves through speaking, writing and creative activities in all aspects of the curriculum in both the nursery and reception classes. Most of the children listen attentively to clear instructions and well-chosen stories. The adults promote this well by giving children time to respond, listening to and valuing their contributions. Although some children in the afternoon group are impatient to tell their news, they are beginning to learn to take turns to speak during group time. One reluctant talker in the nursery whispered his secrets to a model of Tom, the friendly giant, which then gave him confidence to talk to the group. The children

make good progress and by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, most are confident and articulate when talking to adults and one another.

67. The children enjoy listening to stories and sharing their favourite books with their parents and adults in school. Books are well chosen for their appeal to the youngest children and a small group takes delight in looking under cut outs to find a final rhyming word. In reception, the children begin to recognise initial sounds through a well-structured programme based on elements of the literacy strategy. The introductions to sessions are effective in maintaining interest and attention. By the time the children reach the end of the Foundation Stage, their enjoyment of reading has been fostered successfully and they have made satisfactory progress. The most able children read familiar words in simple books and recognise an increasing number of frequently used words out of context. They are confident in their knowledge of letters and sounds. The majority of children reach the learning goals expected. The reading records could do more to help children to improve their skills, by giving suggestions for improvement as well as praise and encouragement.
68. Pens and pencils of various types and colours encourage the children to experiment with writing in the nursery. The children frequently colour pictures and patterns and so develop good pencil control. In reception, the children systematically develop their knowledge of spelling and handwriting through a variety of structured writing tasks. Almost all of the children write their names clearly with well formed letters and accurate use of capital and small letters. The most able exceed expectations, using their knowledge of sounds to write recognisable sentences without adult help. With the help of the support assistants, the teachers ensure that children with special educational needs are fully included, and skilfully encourage them to respond to questions.
69. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good overall.

Mathematical development

70. From the earliest years, the children have an interest in numbers and make good progress towards achieving the expected learning goals. In the nursery, they enjoy number rhymes and games where they are introduced to basic principles of subtraction. The teaching is good because the adults have high expectations and seize suitable opportunities to develop the children's learning. They emphasise number language such as bigger and smaller and more and less. They encourage the children to count peanuts as they thread them on string to feed the birds and some children count accurately beyond ten. The children have a secure knowledge of basic shapes and readily recognise and create simple patterns with colour and shape. The teachers introduce them to comparative language such as heavier and lighter, and reinforce the vocabulary when they weigh ingredients for making dough. This area of learning is very well planned and equipped in the nursery, with a variety of interesting sorting and matching activities. There are fewer resources and opportunities for practical application of the children's learning in the reception classes. Nevertheless, the introduction of the numeracy strategy is having a positive effect in reception in spite of more limited provision of resources. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children record simple addition and subtraction facts to ten, with accuracy and understanding. Many can count back confidently from a given number and can readily say that two more than five is seven. In a very good lesson in a reception class, the teacher used regular assessments of children's attainment to direct her skilful questioning and planned the activities to match the children's understanding, particularly those with special educational needs. There are high expectations of the children's behaviour. However, in the other reception class the strategies for supporting children during times when they work without an adult are not yet effectively established.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children talk about themselves, their birthdays, their families and where they live. Visits to nearby places and the conservation area help to develop their understanding of their environment. They learn about living things, for instance, by planting hyacinth bulbs and watching them grow. They know the parts of plants, such as roots on a carrot, and know what they need for growth. During a project about food they learn the names of unfamiliar vegetables. They are developing their scientific and technological awareness by investigating changing materials such as sand, water and dough and by making models from a range of different materials. The children begin to know about this country's culture through the celebration of major Christian festivals. In the nursery, children also develop a growing awareness of other cultures, during for example the Chinese New Year. They shop in their Chinese 'Take Away' and the staff and parents have assembled an impressive display of Chinese artefacts and objects. They have also experimented with Chinese writing. In information and communication technology, the children direct a programmable toy to move along a chosen pathway. However, they have limited opportunities to use a computer to extend these skills, and this aspect of their learning could be developed when new machines are available. The teaching of this aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory in both the nursery and reception classes.

Physical development

72. The school has recently improved its provision for the children's physical development by providing a secure, fenced area for the nursery and by adding to its resources for outdoor play. Suitable equipment is stored and organised securely and conveniently. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children achieve the learning goals for physical development. In the nursery, they run, jump, stop and start with good levels of control and co-ordination. They pedal sturdy tricycles forwards and backwards showing an awareness of the safety of themselves and others. In the hall, they make confident use of the space and show high levels of participation and enjoyment. During the spring and summer months, when they use large equipment, they have adequate opportunities to balance, climb, jump and explore under and over large climbing apparatus. The children throw and catch balls and beanbags with competence. They handle scissors and other tools safely and effectively during every day activities. Most children manipulate small plastic bricks, straws, cogs and wheels to make imaginative constructions, though some still depend on adult support. They generally show good levels of control. In the nursery, the teaching is good. Learning is confidently led and well planned, and has a positive impact on the children's progress. It makes good use of demonstration to improve the children's performance. The reception children learn to abide by rules and join in games with great gusto. There are examples of good teaching in both nursery and reception. However, in one lesson, the teaching lacked sufficient challenge to develop children's awareness of space and co-ordination.

Creative development

73. The children reach the expected early learning goals by the time they reach the end of reception. They have suitable opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape using a wide range of media and materials. Using pastels, for instance, they take good account of shape and pattern when they create their observational drawings of vegetables. In the past, they have experimented with different techniques, for example, dripping and blowing paint to create various effects. The teachers have provided a bright and attractive range of well-organised and readily accessible collage materials for the children in the nursery to create imaginative pictures. When children help to create orange coloured dough they begin to experience colour mixing. Three-dimensional wasps constructed from a variety of materials 'fly' around the nursery. The children have worked together with adults to produce the 'friendly giant' called Tom who is the focus for a variety of valuable learning activities. In a good example of group co-operation, three girls all choose to paint one picture together. They worked happily as a group, absorbed in their own painting but showing awareness of one another's space and efforts. In the reception classes, groups of girls become

absorbed in watercolour paintings of their families. They enjoy talking about their paintings and spend a long time adding details. At the end of the Foundation Stage a girl took the initiative to use a combination of drawing and making techniques to produce a paper handbag that was much admired by her friends.

74. Opportunities for role-play in the home corner and shop are available in all classes and are popular with boys and girls alike. The children often dress up and become engrossed in their roles as they use their imaginations to act out familiar situations from either home or nursery rhymes and stories. They involve others, including adults in their play and express their ideas, thoughts and feelings to a good extent in all classes. The children enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes and by the end of reception have built up a suitable repertoire. The teaching is particularly effective where the adults make purposeful and sensitive interventions to develop, challenge and support the children's language and thinking, particularly in the nursery. The resources and equipment are of better quality in the nursery than in the reception classes, but all are well organised and accessible to children.

ENGLISH

75. In the national tests in 2000, the proportion of seven-year-olds achieving the expected levels in reading and writing was above the national average. The proportion achieving the higher level in reading was below the national average. It was average in writing. In comparison with schools of similar type, the overall performance was below average in reading and average in writing.
76. The results of national tests for 11-year-old in 2000 show that attainment was well above the national average and on a par with schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds. However, proportion of the pupils reaching the higher level 5 was well above average. This was true also when compared with the results of similar schools.
77. The inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well in line with expected national levels, and by the end of Key Stage 2 more pupils are consistently improving their writing skills. A smaller proportion of the pupils in Year 6 when compared to last year, are writing at the higher levels, but this is a feature of cohort variation and is not a reflection of the progress the present pupils are making. In comparison with their earlier attainment, the pupils with special educational needs also are making good progress. This is the result of the skilful identification of their literacy needs, and work that is carefully tailored to ensure that their confidence in speaking, reading and writing improves term by term.
78. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have speaking skills that are in line with those expected of seven-year-olds. They are eager to speak, but few either speak at length or have the necessary level of vocabulary to express their opinions about books. They readily listen to the teachers' questioning which is usually clear, but does not always sufficiently extend their thinking. Where the questioning is well focused and flexible, the pupils' responses are more interesting. The pupils in Key Stage 2 respond very well to opportunities for talking. The oldest, for example, are acquiring a good range of vocabulary for discussing features of text. Opportunities to dramatise excerpts of 'Carrie's War' in Year 6 revealed that the pupils had sensitively absorbed the vocabulary that created the tone of scenes, for instance when two evacuees were leaving home. The majority of pupils listen very well, an indication of the respect they have for their teachers and the good relationships that have been developed.
79. By the age of seven most pupils attain reading levels that are in line with expectations. A few are developing a slightly higher level of fluency and confidence, but do not consistently use their phonic knowledge to decipher unfamiliar words. The younger pupils enjoy sharing the 'big books' and show satisfactory comprehension skills when questioned about what they have understood. The pupils with special educational needs receive skilled support and confidently develop their basic

reading skills. This was very evident when a group of very young pupils worked with a teacher and a learning support assistant to read a 'big book'. On this occasion, a range of very effective strategies, such as linking words in the text to other rhyming words, had a positive effect on developing the pupils' confidence in reading. A few of the oldest pupils are very fluent readers. Many others are competent readers, but have not yet developed higher order reading skills. This is not by neglect, because the teachers make regular, careful assessments of the pupils' reading development. Very few pupils are below average readers because they receive additional help and reading is a regular daily activity. Many of the older pupils read 'Carrie's War' with considerable expression and could draw upon the text when questioned. The pupils in Year 5 have developed good skills that they employed well to tackle names in Greek myths and legends. The pupils are successful readers because their attitudes to reading are positive and there are regular opportunities for reading. The majority of pupils are also well supported in developing their reading skills at home.

80. The school has identified the raising of attainment in writing as a key target. Agreements have been reached about the range of writing to be covered at each stage and the provision of sufficient time for writing. The pupils' writing skills are improving as a direct result of this initiative. During Key Stage 1, the writing tasks are planned in line with suggestions in the national literacy guidance document. At the early stages, the pupils understand that their writing has to convey a message. The majority of pupils are sufficiently confident to make marks on paper to represent what they are trying to say. They make satisfactory progress as they move on through Key Stage 1. Their writing becomes more sequential and the spelling of basic, monosyllabic words improves. However, too many pupils are erratic in their use of full stops and capital letters. This is especially the case as they encounter other forms of punctuation such as commas and speech marks. By the age of seven, the pupils generally space their words well and individual letters are clearly written. However, common agreements to join letters at an early stage are not consistently adhered to. Moreover, the adults do not always provide the necessary good models in their own handwriting.
81. By the time they reach the age of eleven, a high proportion of pupils attain the average expected standards and show features of higher standards. The pupils become increasingly skilful at adapting their writing for different purposes. For example, they can write in narrative form, effectively using flashbacks to represent the passage of time. They have learned to reproduce the significant features of autobiographical writing and recognise that poetry is written in a very concise, dense form. The pupils' writing is improving because the school has recognised that they need more time to write at length and plan, draft and re-draft their work. This was clearly seen when a class in Year 5 was engaged in editing and developing a piece of writing over several days. Many pupils are now developing a good understanding of how to structure longer pieces of writing and are developing their paragraphing skills. Standards of handwriting and the general presentation of work are still inconsistent across Key Stage 2, but are showing recent signs of improvement as the policy agreements are more rigorously implemented. There have been some valuable opportunities for the pupils to use their word processing skills to record stories and poems.
82. As a result of well organised, shared planning which provides good experiences of reading and writing, standards of teaching are rising. The teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and at Key Stage 2, it is usually good, and often very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. The teaching was particularly good in Year 6 where a variety of well focused activities, conducted at a very good pace, maintained the pupils' interest and generated very good attitudes to work. The success of the teaching can be seen as pupils increasingly become aware of how to craft their writing by planning its structure and being critical of the quality of their language. The pupils in Year 5 successfully adapted their writing to imitate the language of myths and legends they had studied. A group of pupils in Year 4 responded appropriately to descriptions of life in London during the blitz by producing dramatic, autobiographical accounts of an air raid. Short, dramatic sentences vividly conveyed the fear 'felt' by the writer. Writing skills are generally satisfactorily developed in Key Stage 1 but the time for more extended writing, especially for higher attaining

pupils, is not always adequate. There is sound evidence that the pupils are being encouraged to be selective about the vocabulary they use and also to organise their thoughts logically. There is still scope for writing as a whole class activity in order for the pupils to share their knowledge of words and phrases, which will further raise attainment. The younger pupils are being taught a range of appropriate punctuation for their age, but the marking of work needs to give clear guidance about the errors that are being made. The pupils are encouraged to try spelling for themselves and good use is made of a range of dictionaries and, amongst older pupils, of a thesaurus. Some classrooms display helpful word banks linked to the weekly topics. When the pupils in Key Stage 1 are engaged in their own writing as opposed to practising letters, the implementation of the agreed approach to handwriting is not consistent. Furthermore, when adults write on the board, they do not always model the agreed early stages of joined writing. The homework tasks linked to English also require review, to ensure, for example, that it is appropriate for each year group and that it is recorded for pupil and parent reference. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is well focused. It results from the well-written individual educational plans and the priority the school gives to ensuring that all pupils enjoy the whole curriculum.

83. The literacy co-ordinator, currently on extended sick leave, has identified priorities for development in order to raise attainment in literacy. She has observed lessons in all classes and also undertaken a thorough review of book resources, resulting in better provision of non-fiction texts and group readers. She has very effectively harnessed the commitment of all the teachers and learning support assistants to make the raising of attainment in literacy a key focus in the school's development plan. This has resulted in many high quality lessons that have had the effect of engaging the interest of both boys and girls in reading and writing.

MATHEMATICS

84. Standards are above average, the teaching is good and the majority of pupils are making good progress. The attitudes of the pupils are good. The pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards achieving the numeracy targets set in their individual education plans. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped to effectively focus the teaching and learning in the subject. The quality of the teaching in mathematics is making a significant contribution to the progress and achievement of all groups of pupils since the two schools merged.
85. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below average, but at Key Stage 2 it was in line with the national average. When compared with similar schools, attainment at the end of both key stages was well below average. However, scrutiny of the pupils' work and the inspection evidence show that attainment at the end of both key stages is likely to be above average this year if the present rate of progress is continued. The majority of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are already attaining the expected levels for their ages in numeracy, space, shapes and measures. Groups of higher attaining pupils in both year groups are beginning to work above the expected levels. The differences in performance between girls and boys have narrowed and no evidence was seen during the inspection to indicate any significant difference in their attainment.
86. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils are able to demonstrate a secure knowledge of number. They can accurately work out addition and subtraction sums with numbers up to 20 in their heads and explain how they have done so. The more able pupils can do this when it involves more than one operation of addition or subtraction. They can identify simple fractions such as halves and quarters and demonstrate them on simple shapes. All groups of pupils can identify and name correctly simple shapes such as circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. They can measure accurately in centimetres and find information from simple graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' mental calculation skills have improved significantly. They demonstrate a much more secure

knowledge of place value in numbers up to five figures, relate fractions to decimal equivalents and show quick recall of multiplication and division facts for calculation. Throughout the school, the pupils' skills in calculation and number work are well related to everyday practical requirements. For example, the Key Stage 1 classes invariably make use of the registration period to practice simple addition and subtraction facts. There is some use of numeracy skills in science and history lessons in Key Stage 2, and in an information and communication technology lesson Year 5 pupils presented information from a database in the form of a scatter graph.

87. The overall quality of the teaching and learning across the school is good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching of mathematics seen during the inspection. Half of all lessons seen were good and there was one very good lesson. All the good and very good lessons observed at Key Stage 1 and 2 were in Key Stage 2. The setting of pupils in ability groups is enabling effective and well-targeted teaching of all groups and is having a positive influence on the pupils' attainment. All teachers show secure subject knowledge; their lessons are well planned and present a range of learning activities that interest and excite the pupils. The overall attitudes of the majority of pupils across the school are positive. They are eager to be part of the lesson and contribute willingly to class discussions. They co-operate well when working in small groups and pairs. They share resources fairly and take turns when required to do so. The better lessons are well organised and have well-controlled experiences that facilitate effective learning for all groups of pupils. They are characterised by good, clear planning and precise learning objectives, which are well conveyed to the pupils so that they know what is expected of them. This enables them to settle quickly to their tasks and maintains their interest and concentration. Good use is made of whole-class sessions to review learning and revise the lesson objectives. The best lessons have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and they are continually challenged through well-targeted questions and activities that make them work hard. The great majority of pupils respond with enthusiasm and the very good lesson seen was particularly notable for the enthusiasm of both teacher and pupils.
88. The co-ordinator effectively leads the subject. She and her 'buddy' co-ordinator have completed recent training and provide good support to their colleagues. The co-ordinator has not yet undertaken any detailed data analysis and is unaware of the full implications of issues arising from the current levels of attainment. The co-ordinator does not have an up-to-date and relevant job descriptions, which would give clear role definitions and responsibilities. The mathematics resources are good overall and have benefited from the recent central funding, which has been spent wisely by the co-ordinator. The new equipment is providing good value for money and being used well to support the teaching and learning of mathematics for all groups of pupils across the school.

SCIENCE

89. In last year's national tests, the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved results that were above the national average, and in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Virtually all of the pupils reached the level expected of eleven-year-olds and almost a half exceeded them. There was little difference in the performance of girls and boys. At the end of Key Stage 1 the teachers' assessments for 2000 show that the standards achieved by seven-year-olds are in line with national average, but lower than those of pupils in similar schools.
90. The inspection findings confirm that standards in science are secure. There is a slightly larger proportion of lower attaining pupils this year and fewer children will reach the higher levels. Nevertheless, standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with national average.
91. The teaching of science is a current focus for school improvement. The co-ordinator has correctly identified a need to increase the opportunities for the pupils to develop further their knowledge, skills and understanding of scientific enquiry. This additional training and staff discussion is having a

positive effect on the quality of the teaching around the school. The analysis of the work in the pupils' books and observation of the teaching show that most pupils are responding with enthusiasm to the increased opportunities for investigative science and are making good progress in this aspect of their work. For example, in Year 4 the children show strong commitment to their work as they draw, predict and test whether or not a range of circuits will light up a bulb. The strength of this lesson was the way the teacher made sure that the level of challenge was appropriate to the abilities of the children. Thus the higher attainers had to interpret circuit cards with two bulbs and switches whilst the lower attainers dealt with simpler circuits. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had a secure knowledge of the symbols for bulbs, switches, wires and batteries, but more importantly knew that there needs to be a complete circuit from the power source to the bulb. Each group comprised girls and boys and neither gender dominated in the use of equipment.

92. The teaching of science is good throughout Key Stage 2 so that by the age of eleven the pupils have an increasingly secure grasp of the need to devise fair tests against which to measure their hypotheses. Consequently, in Year 6, once the pupils have learnt a little about the heart, the circulatory system and how to locate their pulse, they begin to consider why some people have a faster pulse than others. These lessons are effective because the teachers have planned thoroughly, know what they want the pupils to learn and have included a good range of interesting material. A good example of this was a well-chosen five-minute video clip that presented a black, female athlete talking about training, competition and relaxation. The subsequent discussions moved the learning on swiftly because the teachers asked sharply focussed questions and a well-prepared sheet provided a useful guide for the subsequent group discussion. As a result, by the end of the lesson each group had devised an appropriate experiment to determine answers to questions such as, 'Does pulse rate rise differently for different types of exercise,' and 'What happens to pulse rate after exercise?'
93. In Key Stage 1, the pupils' books show that they are covering a good range of appropriate learning and that their work in relation to the properties of materials reflects the school's recent focus on experimental and investigative science. For example, the Year 2 pupils have recorded carefully what happened when they squashed, stretched, squeezed and twisted a range of substances such as dough, clay and sponge. In one very successful lesson, the pupils were helped to understand how light is necessary for sight as a result of the teacher's skilful use of a 'blacked out' box, the contents of which were gradually illuminated by increasingly powerful light sources. However, taken overall, the teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. This is because the lack of additional ancillary help sometimes slows the pace of lessons at key points. For instance, in one mixed age class it took the teacher a long time to get the children started on her well-organised group work activities. She had arranged each task to be matched carefully to the children's abilities, but in order to set this in motion she needed time to explain what to do. As a result, a minority of those waiting became restless, and one or two boys began to behave poorly.
94. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable, well qualified and an extremely effective teacher. However, the extent of her influence within the school is limited by the lack of a proper job description that sets out what the headteacher expects her to do. The co-ordinator has taken a strong lead in devising a coherent framework for the school's curriculum and she has supported the teachers in their planning. However, her role in monitoring standards and checking the quality of the pupils' work is undefined. She understands she needs to do this, but is unclear about how and when to set about it. This means that she lacks a sufficiently broad view of standards around the school. For instance, although there is good learning going on across both the Year 6 classes, the written recording of science work is much better in one class than the other. This needs to be addressed.

ART AND DESIGN

95. By the time the pupils leave the school, their achievements in art and design are above those expected for their age. From the Foundation Stage onwards, the pupils experience a rich and varied range of materials and media through which they explore and develop technical skills, creativity and imagination to a good extent. The high quality of the teaching at the end of the Key Stage 2 and the good levels of resources available have a positive effect on standards.
96. There is an emphasis on drawing and the pupils reach a particularly high level of skill in this area. By the end of Key Stage 1, they illustrate their work with imaginative drawings. Their detailed sketches and diagrams, in science for example, show good observational skills and an understanding of colour and form. The pupils begin to use sketchbooks in Year 3. They collect visual ideas and information to help enrich their compositions, and there is individual work of very high quality. The pupils experiment with colour and create colour wash effects to create light and shade to good effect. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils enjoyed good opportunities to experiment with different grades of pencils and to practise techniques in line, shape and form as they made sketches of their shoes, hands and sleeves. In Years 5 and 6, they used pastels to further develop techniques of blending, smudging and layering to very good effect. In addition, the pupils learn about proportions and shadows and apply this knowledge to produce well balanced, striking portraits, full of feeling and expression.
97. In three-dimensional work, excellent drawings of moving figures form the basis for the pupils' sculptures in Years 5 and 6 on the chosen theme. The pupils work collaboratively in pairs on the final stages of their models, refining and improving their original ideas as they work. Good questioning and discussion involves the pupils well and encourages them to think carefully about shape, form, proportion and texture whilst providing ample opportunity for independence and creativity. The pupils solve problems and gain significantly in confidence and skill. Continuing the theme, they learn a variety of techniques for creating an impression of a flow of movement. The work is of a high standard and the pupils communicate their ideas with feeling and imagination.
98. The teachers develop their pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. The pupils describe paintings they have seen and express their preferences for a particular artist's style. They know how artists differ from one another, although most find difficulty in recalling their names. Artists' work forms an integral part of the school's programme of study and is incorporated into attractive displays. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils know artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso and Monet and compare their styles with good levels of understanding. Before attempting their own pictures, the Year 6 pupils are encouraged to consider how various artists use light and shade in their work. The pupils in one lesson were effectively challenged by the teacher to find out the name of the artist who was the inspiration behind their sculptures.
99. Throughout the school, art alternates with design and technology in a two-yearly cycle of topics and themes. Skills and knowledge are successfully developed within each topic, such as the one on movement. As yet, however, there is no cohesive scheme of work to ensure that the pupils build on their learning progressively from one year to the next.
100. The teaching is good overall. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, but evidence is drawn from examining displayed work and portfolios and from discussions with the teachers and pupils. The lessons in Key Stage 2 are well structured and organised effectively. They provide a variety of methods and approaches to enable the pupils to produce a high standard of finished work. The teachers give very clear instructions so that the pupils know exactly what is expected of them. They give detailed and expert support during practical work. As a result, the pupils are confident and gain in knowledge. There are good opportunities at the end of lessons for the pupils to evaluate their work and they benefit from one another and are helped to improve. The pupils of all abilities are successfully included in art and design activities, including those with special educational needs.

The teaching is very good in a Year 6 class, where the provision of high quality resources and challenging tasks fires the pupils' interest and imagination.

101. The pupils approach their art and design lessons with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are keen to talk about work they have done and show great enjoyment and full participation in lessons. The resources for artwork are well organised and the artwork is displayed to good advantage in the school's reception area and in some classrooms, showing how much the school values pupils' efforts. When the pupils write about their work at the end of the project it makes a contribution to their literacy skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Although little work was seen in Key Stage 1, evidence is taken from an examination of documents and books and discussions with pupils and teachers. The pupils carry out a wide range of interesting, well organised practical tasks, including work on textiles, food, mechanical and electrical control, over a two year cycle. They investigate the properties of a variety of different materials that effectively develop their skills and knowledge in designing and making. They produce design ideas with clearly labelled diagrams that show a good understanding of the constraints involved in the making of the finished product. By the time the pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are above those usually seen for the age group.
103. There is a clear progression of skills in the work planned. After learning what constitutes a healthy sandwich in Key Stage 1, for example, the pupils build on their learning in Key Stage 2. During a topic on healthy eating, they learn how the different properties of vegetables such as carrots, leeks and potatoes will affect the quality of soup. Through very good demonstrations by the teachers on the preparation of vegetables, the pupils learn how to use a variety of tools and equipment safely. There is very good attention to health and hygiene, and the pupils learn basic and important rules of food management. The teachers' good planning and preparation ensure that the quality of their teaching is also good.
104. Although the pupils rarely generate their own ideas, they are given a suitable element of choice and independence to make the designs their own. For example, during discussions about past work, the pupils spoke proudly and with great interest of making a variety of electronic toys, with ringing bells and flashing lights. Following an examination of how animals move, they created toys with moving parts. Their original designs include a dolphin with a moving tail and a frog with a lashing tongue. The pupils work very well individually, in pairs and in small groups, collaborating effectively to use their developing knowledge to improve their making skills. For example, in Years 5 and 6, during a workshop to create a secure structure, the pupils co-operated in small groups using their imaginations well. They discovered ways of strengthening and reinforcing frameworks using rolled paper and techniques such as triangulation to make a shelter. The pupils share problems they find in fastening and joining and discuss ways of solving them, both as they work and at the end of each project. One pupil, for example, made good use of string to make stronger corners, when he found that sticky tape was not sufficient for the purpose. The procedures for evaluation are good and as a result, the pupils' finished models are of a high quality.
105. There are good links with literacy when the teachers emphasise and encourage the use of technical language. In a Year 5 lesson on food preparation, for example, pupils used words such as 'absorbed' and 'appetising'. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils use graphs to illustrate their findings about nutritious sandwiches. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.
106. The co-ordination of the subject is good. There is detailed guidance for the teachers based on national schemes, including useful assessment procedures.

GEOGRAPHY

107. The attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with national expectations at the age of eleven and seven. The subject now benefits from a scheme of work that teaches all the requirements of the National Curriculum over a two-year cycle of topics. This is enabling the teachers to plan a progressive development of skills, for example in mapping, and ensures progress and continuity of learning across the school. There has been no monitoring of teaching of the subject and there is limited evidence of the assessment of the pupils' achievement.
108. Classes in Key Stage 1 make good use of the local environment to expand their ideas of their locality. A Year 1 class was seen identifying pictures of the town and then trying to locate them on a large-scale map. They have mapped their journeys to school and located where they live. Year 2 pupils have moved on to record large-scale plans of their classroom and can accurately identify the countries of the British Isles. Good use is made of a 'Lennie the Lion' toy, who is taken on holidays and trips all over the world by both staff and children. His journeys are recorded on a large world map, and have been used as the basis for topic work on a number of different countries around the world. Older pupils in Year 3 have studied the weather and made daily records. Contrasting localities such as India and the Lake District are studied in Years 5 and 6. The school makes good use of visits to such places as The Merry Hill Shopping Centre and Church Stretton. Other visits to Llangollen and Borth, respectively provide opportunities for town and seaside studies. The oldest pupils have a residential visit to the Lake District where geographical studies form a large part of their activities. The school also makes good use of its extensive grounds for map work and orienteering and has plans to develop these further.
109. The overall teaching and learning of the subject are sound. The lessons are well planned and the teachers provide a good range of activities that interest most pupils. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher made good use of topical news stories from around the world to develop the pupils' mapping skills. The pupils are eager to take part in lessons and contribute to class discussions. From a scrutiny of their previous work and the teachers' planning, it is apparent that all the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000 are being addressed. However, the planning of the timetable for the subject is not satisfactory. It is too fragmented for a number of classes, particularly in Key Stage 2. A significant amount of time is lost when other lessons and activities overrun, and the short sessions do not allow the pupils sufficient time to develop a full knowledge and understanding of some topic areas. This is an area of improvement for the school.
110. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has done much to maintain the profile of the subject since the merger of the two schools. She has attended recent training and supports her colleagues well. However, she has no clear role definitions of her responsibilities for the future development and monitoring of the teaching and learning in the subject. The resources are satisfactory and are being used well to support the teaching and learning across the school. There is limited use of information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning.

HISTORY

111. Due to the way the subject is timetabled only two lessons in Key Stage 2 were seen during the inspection. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and it is therefore not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is satisfactory. The following judgements are based on the lessons seen, a scrutiny of the pupils' previous work and the teachers' planning, and discussions with the co-ordinator and other staff.
112. Throughout the school, standards are in line with those expected nationally. The use of an approved scheme of work and the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000 are having a positive impact on

standards across the school. In the two lessons observed, the teaching and learning were satisfactory and the pupils showed a good awareness of how the past can be represented through secondary sources such as books and photographs. Good use is made of artefacts to bring the subject 'alive' for pupils. For example, in the Key Stage 1 corridor there is a changing display of historical artefacts to which groups of pupils from the Key Stage 1 classes are taken on a regular basis. They are able to talk about the past and how it is represented and relate it to their own experiences. The display is changed on a regular basis and gives all pupils opportunities to explore aspects of the past. A scrutiny of their previous work shows they can distinguish from times present and times past, for example, through a display of 'Teddy Bears'. Many displays in the Key Stage 2 classrooms contain relevant artefacts, which help to support the pupils' learning. For example, current work in Year 3 and Year 4 classes on the Second World War is enhanced by some very effective displays of materials supplied by parents and grandparents. Similar displays on the 'Victorians' outside Year 5 and 6 classes show how well the parents support their children's learning. Good use is made of visits to places such as Blists Hill 1900 Street Museum, and the school has plans to develop further this aspect of the subject.

113. From scrutiny of previous work it is apparent that the great majority of pupils enjoy the range of topics and activities that are planned. The planning of the subject has been improved by the use of the new scheme of work and it shows a more systematic development of skills across the school. The evidence shows that higher attaining pupils are able to extend their personal development through extended writing and research, but little use is made of computer programs to support teaching and learning in the subject. However, evidence from the inspection also shows that the timetabling of the subject is fragmented in Key Stage 2 and does not always allow the pupils sufficient time to develop a full knowledge and understanding of some topic areas.
114. The co-ordinator is positive in her views on the future development of the subject, and has a willingness to take the subject forward in the light of the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000. However, she has no clear role definitions of her responsibilities for the future development and monitoring of the teaching and learning in the subject. The use of resources to support teaching and learning is good and is helping to raise standards across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Scrutiny of previous work and evidence seen during the inspection shows that the attainment of the majority of pupils in both key stages is in line with that expected nationally. This is mainly due to the direct teaching of skills in the two computer suites, which is now beginning to improve the pupils' attainment. The school now needs to consider how to transfer these skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. Although all classrooms have their computer corner, there was little evidence during the inspection of their use in other areas of the curriculum.
116. The satisfactory standards in both key stages are mainly the result of sound teaching and learning. No unsatisfactory teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) was seen during the inspection. This development has been brought about by recent training that has helped to improve the skills and confidence of the staff, and by the use of a nationally approved scheme of work for planning purposes. The teachers are secure in their knowledge of the programs they use and this enables them to be effective in their instructions. They are able to guide pupils effectively when they have made mistakes and give them confidence in what they are doing. For example, in a Year 2 lesson most pupils used a graphics program to design a poster very successfully. Year 1 pupils were observed making sentences using a combination of pictures and text and the class teacher was careful to relate this work to their reading and writing skills. Older pupils in Year 5 used search techniques to interrogate a database, and subsequently took great pride in producing their first scatter graph. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 have written control instructions for a robot and computer turtle and are able to explain the similarities and differences between the two sets of

instructions. Scrutiny of their previous work and the teachers' planning shows that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are being addressed.

117. More lessons were seen in the junior classes and the teaching here was good overall. The lessons are well organised and controlled enabling all groups of pupils to take a full part. Many pupils in these classes have ICT skills developed by the use of computers in the home, and the teachers are often able to start from a more secure base of knowledge than is possible with the younger pupils. The use of the ICT suites has given more pupils direct experience of computers and this has helped to develop their confidence and capability. The pupils respond well to being able to work with computers either individually or in pairs. They work well together, share resources fairly and support each other's learning effectively. This is enabling the majority of pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. This progression in learning is further helped by the new scheme of work adopted by the school.
118. The school development plan includes proposals for the further development of ICT with the assistance of funds through the National Grid for Learning. There are also plans to extend the skills of the teachers through further training that will start later this term.
119. However, the ICT co-ordinator has no clear role responsibilities and there is no long-term strategic plan of how the new funding will be used to improve standards and how its effects will be monitored. Moreover, there are no firm plans for the deployment of these extra resources in the classrooms and how they will be used to extend the use of ICT skills in other subject areas, for example, to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. There is some assessment of the pupils' achievements, but the school is aware of the need to develop further this aspect of its provision.

MUSIC

120. The music curriculum is designed to provide an appropriate range of activities including performing, composing and appraising music. This ensures that overall standards are in line with the average expected. The pupils at both Key Stages sing tunelessly and with a degree of enthusiasm, especially during school worship. The range of their singing repertoire develops, as they grow older. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils can sing a range of songs including hymns and patriotic songs associated with World War II.
121. The pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to distinguish different moods in music. They recognise wintry, stormy music, and sad and happy melodies. They become aware of the various qualities of music from different cultures, such as Indian and Aboriginal music. They can also create their own simple rhythms and perform them on a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. By the time they reach the age of 11, the pupils can recognise and reproduce more complex rhythms. A class in Year 4 successfully worked in pairs to compose a simple tune based on three notes to accompany a lyric about evacuees. They are also developing an understanding of how ostinato (a repeated phrase or rhythm) is used in music. The oldest pupils are also beginning to appreciate how rhythms can express the intended mood of lyrics. Many pupils extend their performance skills through recorder and guitar groups and by participation in class choirs.
122. Music is taught not only by a specialist teacher but also by a number of class teachers. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall, but a small proportion was unsatisfactory because weaknesses in classroom management led to some pupils becoming restless and unfocused. The planning of the lessons is appropriate; it incorporates recent national guidance and makes good use of a published scheme. The half class groupings that are organised for some lessons are potentially advantageous as they facilitate a high level of individual support. The pupils are given appropriate

guidance in the correct use of instruments but the evaluation of class unaccompanied singing is not always sufficient to bring about improvements.

123. The two-year rolling programme of musically based assembly themes is well designed and makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' performance skills. However, the instrumental groups do not sufficiently feature when the whole school comes together, for example, for school worship. There are plans for various instrumental groups to combine as a whole school instrumental group, but these are still in prospect rather than practice. This is currently a gap in the school's musical provision that, if addressed, would add interest and variety to the instrumental experiences of the pupils. The individual extracurricular music groups are well attended and enjoyed by the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. The school's provision for physical education lacks coherence. Although the pupils in Key Stage 2 generally receive two lessons a week equivalent to the minimum time allocation agreed by the school, this is not the case in Key Stage 1. At the moment the five to seven year old children have only one lesson of physical education a week. This is not enough. Although the school's framework for teaching the subject outlines a satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum requirements, there is only limited evidence to suggest that the teachers' subsequent planning at Key Stage 1 ensures sufficient depth for their work in this subject. The constraints of the timetable and teacher absence meant that it was not possible to observe any teaching of physical education at Key Stage 1 during the inspection. However, the greater emphasis given to physical education during Key Stage 2 means that by the age of eleven the standard of the pupils' work in both dance and swimming exceeds the expected levels.
125. There are good arrangements to ensure that all the children learn to swim. Effective use is made of the school's outdoor pool during the summer months so that each class swims once a week. In addition, every class receives four weeks swimming instruction in the pool at the local sports centre. As a result, almost every pupil leaving the school at the age of eleven over the past few years has been able to swim a minimum of twenty-five metres. Most swim much further having passed a variety of watermanship and survival tests. The most able swimmers include a number of children who have special educational needs affecting other aspects of their life at school. The school's determination to ensure that these pupils experience pleasure and success in swimming is a good indicator of the inclusive ethos of the school.
126. By the age of eleven, much of the pupils' work in dance is of high quality. This is because the teachers have benefited from recent training and the support of the new subject co-ordinator. From the outset of each lesson, it is clear that the teachers mean business. They are fully changed into tracksuit and trainers in order that they can lead and demonstrate what they want the pupils to achieve. For instance there has been some effective work to ensure that at the start of every lesson the pupils are thoroughly 'warmed-up' through a range of exercises designed to encourage mobility and flexibility. This was a strong feature of all the lessons observed with the teachers leading and joining in with the pupils. This also has a positive effect on the children's response to their work because they can see that the teacher is committed to their learning.
127. The teachers are skilful in choosing an interesting range of music to support the pupils' work in dance. However, the difference between the generally good teaching and the occasional outstanding lesson lies in the way that the best teachers succeed in focussing the pupils' attention on the rhythm of the music and how that might be reflected within their movements. All lessons provide good opportunities for the pupils to reflect and evaluate each other's performance, but in one excellent lesson the teacher never let the groups work for more than three or four minutes before calling for the attention of the whole class. She did so in order to re-focus the work on the basis of what she had observed. Although the pupils had chosen to work in single gender groups

this did not matter because the commitment and concentration of both girls and boys was intense, and their dance was of equally high quality. Even when the bell for morning break shattered the mood of one group's performance no-one objected to remaining to discuss the dance and everyone stayed focussed for a thorough warm-down, carried out to the accompaniment of tranquil music.

128. As a result of this good teaching the pupils work together extremely effectively in small groups to produce short dance pieces. The current Year 6 dances are linked to the science curriculum and based upon the human circulatory system. In their work, the pupils demonstrate good attention to devising movements that reflect the pumping of the heart and the expansion of the lungs. They incorporate a wide range of levels and seek to develop patterns of movement that can be repeated at different points within the dance. Many make penetrating evaluations of their work, but offer these with sensitivity; 'I liked the way they used their hands to show the flow,' or 'We need to work on the ending!' The dances observed show that most Year 6 pupils are gaining increasing control and precision as they link the different movement sequences in their work. They also show very good awareness of the need to co-ordinate their own contributions with those of the other dancers in their group.
129. The new subject co-ordinator has made a good start. However, the absence of a proper job-description that sets out clearly the extent of her role and responsibilities hinders the further development of the subject. For instance, it is not clear who needs to tackle the issue of limited physical education at Key Stage 1, nor at what stage the co-ordinator is expected to begin a more rigorous monitoring of the teaching in this part of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. There are indications that standards are beginning to rise as a result of a recent planning review that has drawn upon national guidance to supplement the locally agreed syllabus. This initiative is beginning to ensure that the knowledge and understanding gained in some topics in Key Stage 1 are being built upon in Key Stage 2. An example is the depth with which different year groups learn about celebrations and festivals in different faiths and the way in which concepts about the Creation are developed. The impact of this initiative is at an early stage so that there is not yet a volume of recorded work to reflect what the curriculum now contains.
131. At Key Stage 1 there are opportunities for the pupils to acquire a sound knowledge of celebrations such as those which take place to mark harvest time. They acquire an understanding of some of the special words and phrases used in Christianity and Judaism and recognise some similarities and differences in the way different faiths celebrate this festival of thanksgiving. They learn about special homes and how people of different faiths such as Hindus and Christians express their belief through their domestic practices. The concept of the world as a very special place is emphasised. This is usefully illustrated as the younger pupils have opportunities to care for birds and plants in the school's conservation area.
132. By the age of 11, the pupils have extended their knowledge of Christianity and begin to understand how Christian belief is reflected, for example, through the work of Dr Martin Luther King and organisations such as Oxfam. They learn the significance of the church in the community and about the church building. Some pupils have visited a Sikh temple and been able to compare the different features of that building with those of the local church. The oldest pupils have also had opportunities to experience how various art forms express faith. This has enabled them to appreciate the links between art and design and religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. More recently, learning about the Creation has enabled the pupils in Key Stage 2 to compare various stories about the Creation, drawing also on their knowledge of myths and legends. The learning in Years 5 and 6 has not yet reached the depth inherent in the units of work, as there has

been some dovetailing of the curriculum for personal, health and sex education with religious education. This has resulted in some encroachment upon the time intended for religious education. This has been recognised by the school and recent planning reflects the clear intention to ensure that more distinct provision is made for both these important areas of learning.

133. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, and there are some good features that involve careful checking of the pupils' understanding before introducing new learning. This was done through skilful questioning to stretch the pupils' thinking. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall but varies widely; one lesson observed was excellent, but in another lesson there were some unsatisfactory features. Where the teaching is of high quality, the pupils are confident and articulate in discussion and use their knowledge well to support their assertions. Most lessons are very well planned and ensure that the learning builds on what has gone before. The shared planning across classes is a strong feature and ensures that all pupils receive similar learning opportunities. In the good quality lessons, the learning objectives are very precise and well communicated to the pupils. When this is not the case, the learning opportunities are diminished. The level of the teachers' knowledge is above average, and has been enhanced by a recent initiative to explore the more spiritual dimension of the pupils' learning.
134. The co-ordinator has an enthusiasm for the subject and is energetic in her support of colleagues through the provision of a good range of resources and advice about teaching approaches. However, she has no clear role definitions of her responsibilities for the future development and monitoring of the teaching and learning in the subject. She has a vision for the further development of religious education as a core subject, but now needs time to monitor the implementation of recent planning and also to audit the time actually devoted to the subject. She is aware of new government guidelines (QCA) for assessment in religious education and work is already in hand to address this.