

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITLEY ABBEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whitley

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103655

Headteacher: Mrs N A Starritt

Reporting inspector: Mr C Ifould  
20962

Dates of inspection: 3-6 December 2001

Inspection number: 242945

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ashington Grove  
Whitley  
Coventry

Postcode: CV3 4DE

Telephone number: 0247630 3392

Fax number: 0247630 3541

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. David Beardshaw

Date of previous inspection: 29 September - 2 October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20962	Chris Ifould	Registered Inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	How high are standards - the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well are pupils taught?
13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents? How well is the school led and managed - accommodation and resources?
30075	Mike Duggan	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How high are standards – pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well is the school led and managed?

15025	Ali Haouas	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Physical education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils – assessment?
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Whitley Abbey currently has 171 pupils on roll aged from 4 to 11 and is a smaller than average community primary school. It serves an area of mostly private housing in a rural area one mile south of Coventry city centre bounded by major roads and industrial areas. The school has 15 pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds at present with five at an early stage of learning English. There are 39 pupils on the register of special educational needs of whom two are at the highest stage; these represent proportions found nationally. Historically, pupils' attainments on entry have been much the same as those found nationally; now they are below those standards. In the last year, 12 children have joined the school and 14 have left at times other than usual. The increasing number of these movements is significant in lowering overall attainments since the usual pattern is for higher-attaining pupils to leave and be replaced by lower attainers.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective in enabling most pupils to attain the standards expected nationally in English by the time they leave at 11 against a background of these pupils having lower prior attainment on entering the school, either in Reception or at different times of the year. Almost all teaching is satisfactory or better with a very small proportion that is unsatisfactory. The headteacher and her senior management team provide strong leadership for the school although many staff with subject management responsibilities are inexperienced or recently appointed. Key members of the governing body are effective in working alongside the staff to produce a thorough school improvement plan. They assist senior managers in judging the effectiveness of developments and keeping a careful eye on finances. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school provides a good standard of teaching in over half of lessons, with teaching of Years 4, 5 and 6 and the Reception class being strongest.
- The headteacher, her deputy and the subject leader of Years 3 - 6 form a strong management team and give clear vision and direction to the school's development.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. The school has effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance; it also makes good provision for pupils' personal development and for those with special educational needs. The school provides a secure and caring environment for learning, and has good health and safety procedures.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are generally strong, and the school also has good relationships with parents. It provides frequent and useful information for parents.

#### **What could be improved**

- Attainments in mathematics throughout the school.
- Levels of attendance.
- The balance of time allocated to the teaching of different subjects.



- The provision for outdoor play for pupils in Reception.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in the autumn of 1997. Since then, it has raised standards in design and technology, information and communication technology, and physical education as required and has made good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers now use day-to-day checking of pupils' attainments to inform their short-term planning and identify appropriate learning outcomes. Teachers have better knowledge of pupils' attainments in English, mathematics and science, and are developing procedures for checking attainments in other subjects. The school now reports to parents on attainment and progress in information and communication technology and on progress in other subjects. The new headteacher also made the improvement of teaching a priority and has all but eradicated the high percentage of unsatisfactory teaching reported last time. The school still lacks appropriate provision for outdoor play for children in Reception.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	C	C	C	well above A average above B average average C below average D well below E average
Mathematics	B	C	D	D	
Science	D	D	A	A	

Pupils at the end of Year 6 met national standards in English, representing an improving trend over time. However, standards in mathematics have been declining and pupils performed below expectations in 2001. There was a considerable rise last year in the number of 11 year-olds gaining a higher than expected standard in science. At the end of Year 2, pupils' reading was above average and their writing was similar to that found in schools nationally and of a similar nature. However, performances in national tests in mathematics were below average when compared to similar schools. Teachers assessed standards in science in Year 2 as well below average. Standards in other subjects broadly match those expected nationally by the time pupils leave the school. The school has exceeded its agreed targets in English and mathematics. Pupils who stay at the school tend to make good progress overall; those moving into the school progress satisfactorily and some do better. Most pupils achieve good standards by the time they leave in comparison to their attainments on entry to the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good - pupils enjoy school and most are well motivated and interested in the work. This has a good effect on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good - pupils, with few exceptions, behave well in class and around school during dinners and playtimes; they are friendly and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Good - pupils are keen to volunteer for duties. They are mutually supportive and show consideration and respect for one another.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory due to a small number of families keeping their children away from school. Unauthorised absences are above average but pupils are rarely late.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are almost always good in lessons and around the school and playgrounds. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Bullying is rare and dealt with speedily if it occurs. Despite considerable efforts by the school, a minority of parents fail to send their children to school regularly. Levels of unauthorised absence have improved since last year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Good, with many very good features

*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.*

Almost all teaching is at least sound and over half is good or better. Teaching in Reception is good. The teacher has a strong understanding of how younger pupils learn and an effective working relationship with the adult who assists her. Very good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 is well matched to pupils' needs and clearly planned with high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Lessons move at a brisk pace. Planning and support staff take satisfactory account of all pupils' learning needs. Teaching of English is always at least satisfactory and a third of lessons are very good. Mathematics is usually well taught. Teachers apply the methods recommended by the Numeracy Strategy well. Literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills are being used to support learning in many other subjects, although the school recognises the need to develop more planned opportunities for using and applying what is learnt in literacy lessons.

Pupils' learning is closely matched to the strength of teaching and they make good, and often very good, progress in more than half their lessons. They respond well to the clear explanations of what they are expected to learn and the activities planned for them. Most of the time they concentrate hard and make a good effort to work at the challenging tasks and pace asked of them.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The allocation of time to teach different subjects is not yet balanced across all ages. Otherwise provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, with good provision of additional activities to support and extend learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good - all such pupils have individual education plans that teachers understand well and take into account when providing work and support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory - most pupils make sound progress in learning English but more could be done to equip teachers to promote this more consistently at times when specialist support is not available.
Provision for pupils' personal, including	There is good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good - pupils' attainments and needs are well known, and there are generally good procedures for looking after them, although the level of supervision at morning playtimes is not enough to ensure safety.

There are thorough plans to ensure that pupils are taught what is required by the National Curriculum and the locally agree religious education syllabus. A good range of extra-curricular activities extends learning at lunchtime and after school and visits and visitors develop pupils' learning in many subjects. The school has not yet established firmly when and for how long all subjects are to be taught. The school works well in partnership with parents. They are well informed about how their children are getting on and how they can support their children's learning through setting and meeting targets and helping with home learning tasks. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety and an effective programme for their personal and social development. Procedures for chasing up absence and lateness are good.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior managers provide strong leadership and have a clear vision for the development of the school. Many subject leaders are fairly new to their posts but already subjects are being managed effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are effective in being very supportive, having a good overview of its work and helping set the strategic direction of the school through a costed improvement plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is now taking many useful steps to analyse data about tests and pupils' attainments and progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is drawn up appropriately and resources are allocated effectively. The school ensures that it gets the best value from its spending decisions.

The school is adequately staffed by teachers and classroom assistants. The accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum adequately except that pupils in Reception do not have access to suitable outdoor equipment or space to use it. Resources for learning are generally adequate and accessible. It has made a sensible decision in distributing and using computers around classes as there is not a suitable area to base sufficient numbers of computers to enable class teaching of information and communication technology skills. Senior management and key governors give strong leadership to the school and its focus on improving standards. There is a thorough improvement plan that guides developments and

this enables staff and governors to see how effectively targets are being met and funds are being used.

**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The attitudes, values and good behaviour that the school promotes, especially behaviour targets.</li> <li>• The availability of the headteacher and staff, and the frequency and quality of information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although most parents are satisfied with the amount of homework, some think more could be given.</li> <li>• Many would like more extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The team agrees with the majority of parents that the amount of homework is satisfactory. The team found good provision for extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school, and feel that some parents may not be aware of all that is available for pupils during lunchtime.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. In national tests for 11 year-olds in 2001, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard for their age group in English and mathematics was higher than that found nationally. In science the proportion was very close to the national average. When compared with the test scores of schools nationally and in a similar context, the school's performance was well above average in science, close to the average in English and below average in mathematics. The school's science results compare favourably because of the high proportion of pupils who gained a National Curriculum level higher than that expected for 11 year-olds, whereas in mathematics a smaller proportion than that found nationally and in similar schools reached a higher level.
2. In the 2001 national tests for seven year-olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and writing was close to the national average, but was well below average in mathematics. The proportion gaining a higher level in reading and writing was also broadly similar to that found nationally; in mathematics the proportion was below the national average. The school's performance was above average in reading and close to the national average in writing when compared with the test scores of schools nationally and in a similar context. In mathematics, the test scores were close to that found nationally but below average when compared to schools in a similar context. Teachers' assessments of pupil's performance in English and mathematics matched that found in the national tests. They assessed science as very low in comparison with the national average.
3. Over time, standards reached by seven year-olds have dropped back from a peak four years ago but still exceed the national average for their age group in reading and writing. There has been a steady rise over time in 11 year-olds' performance in English, keeping broadly in line with improvements nationally. A steady downward trend in mathematics has taken overall results for the school's 11 year-olds below those found nationally. Science has been steadily improving but has lagged behind national averages. The 2001 results show a sharp rise in average points that take them well above those found nationally.
4. When compared with schools that obtained similar results for seven year-olds in 1997, pupils' performance as 11 year-olds was well below average in English and mathematics but above average in science based on the results of the 2001 national tests. A crucial feature when considering pupils' attainments at Whitley Abbey is that up to a third of Year 6 pupils have left or joined the school during Years 3 to 6. Those who leave are among the higher-attaining pupils while those who join are usually lower attainers. There is also a decline in the attainments of pupils on entry to the school in Reception. Where these have been close to national expectations in the recent past, they are now firmly below expectations and only the higher attainers are likely to reach the national expectations in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development by the end of the Reception year. The majority of pupils are likely to meet the expectations for their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development.

5. On the basis of work seen during the inspection, most pupils should achieve national expectations at the age of 11 in English, and exceed them in science. Pupils' investigative and enquiry skills in science are particularly strong. There is a concerted emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics, particularly for seven to 11 year-olds, and this is having a good effect on standards in the subject. Most pupils are achieving well but many recent arrivals and some lower attainers are unlikely to reach the required standard in mathematics. Planned opportunities to develop and apply pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are becoming more effective, with a range of work seen across all ages and many subjects. There is, however, scope for more planned opportunities to use and apply literacy skills.
6. The school has met its agreed targets for English and mathematics. It has set new targets. All pupils have their own targets for English and mathematics, although these are not necessarily linked to meeting the overall targets or made more rigorous by having time limits. Pupils also have personal development targets. Parents are made aware of their child's targets at termly consultation meetings and are asked for their own observations and suggestions.
7. Standards in pupils' information and communication technology work match what is expected nationally in the aspects seen during the inspection. Pupils have not yet had time this year to work at every aspect required by the National Curriculum. Despite this, pupils in Year 2 are confident users of programmes that develop their use of language and the computer mouse. By the end of Year 6, pupils show information about themselves using an animated presentation application and talk knowledgeably about getting information from Internet websites. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 know about important texts from different religions. In Year 4, pupils learn the events of Jesus' birth and the need for his parents to take him to Egypt soon after his birth.
8. Standards of work seen during the inspection show pupils' attainments as matching national expectations for seven and 11 year-olds in all other subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 use controlled patterns of movement in dance to represent a building site. In geography, they identify pleasant and unpleasant places around the school site using maps and their own knowledge. In design and technology in Year 2, pupils make careful plans for vehicles that they then construct using materials such as wood, card and fabric. In geography in Year 3, pupils begin to learn about compass directions and map co-ordinates. In Year 4, pupils learn how people, including other pupils, affect their school environment. This builds soundly on work done in Year 1. In physical education, Year 4 pupils build sequences of movements, varying direction, level and speed. Year 5 pupils design and make different types of bread and its packaging, with good attention to health and safety aspects of food handling. In geography, they investigate the effect people have on environments beyond their immediate area. Again, this uses and develops skills learned earlier. In music in Year 5, pupils listen to passages of music suggesting journeys before composing and playing their own interpretations. Year 6 pupils learn about more technical aspects of composing, developing what they learnt earlier in the school. They demonstrate good ball handling and marking skills in a games lesson. In art these pupils sketch with control and close observation a doll posed in different attitudes.

9. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is close to the national average. Twenty-seven pupils are at Stages 2-5 of the special educational needs Code of Practice. Two have a statement of their special educational needs, which is a smaller proportion than that found nationally. Overall, these pupils' attainments are satisfactory in relation to their relative abilities and their learning is sound.
10. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language improve appropriately in relation to their prior attainment. However, when no specialist support is available, the needs of some pupils at an early stage of learning English are not met consistently. Pupils from ethnic minorities who are underachieving are appropriately identified and receive the particular support they need.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Many pupils enter the school with personal and social development below what is found elsewhere and not all match what is expected by the time they leave Reception. However, early in Year 1 and thereafter throughout the school, the great majority of pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This positive attitude has been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Pupils are friendly, welcoming and open in manner. They appear to be happy in school and readily accept the school's values and rules to which they have contributed. During extra-curricular activities, in lessons and in assemblies, they show interest and enjoyment. Sometimes they are reluctant to terminate a discussion, for example when talking about Henry VIII and his six wives. Most pupils settle to work quickly, engage eagerly in lessons and work purposefully to complete tasks with little direct supervision. Examples observed included geography lessons in Years 4 and 5. Extra-curricular activities such as football and choir are supported well by both boys and girls. The dance club has failed so far to keep boys who join.
12. Behaviour is good overall both in and outside school. The regular lunchtime supervision by the headteacher contributes greatly to this. With few exceptions pupils behave well in lessons. Playtimes are lively and good-natured. Most pupils know clearly the bounds of acceptable behaviour. They understand and respect the system of rewards and sanctions and in most cases respond to them. Pupils are well mannered. They greet staff and each other politely and often hold doors open for visitors. School and personal property is treated with respect and the school grounds are virtually litter-free. There have been no exclusions within the past year. Bullying is rare and speedily and sensitively dealt with when it occurs.
13. Relationships are good. Pupils show concern for others, witnessed during lunchtime when a Year 6 pupil kept company with a younger girl who was ill and waiting to be collected. Another example included pupils in Year 3 writing 'Get Well' cards to an injured classmate. Pupils are tolerant of views different from their own and are generous in supporting and sometimes initiating programmes. This was much in evidence during a school council meeting about issues affecting pupils' contribution to playground activities. During such discussions pupils show genuine sympathy for the tragic plight of war or terrorism victims, for example Afghanistan and New York. The elected school council has representatives from every class and many pupils have regular duties such as answering the telephone. In lessons, pupils readily take part in discussions, enjoy giving their views and offer assistance to teachers or their peers as and when opportunities arise.



14. The school takes care to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and they form an integral part of the school community. Pupils with special educational needs approach their learning positively in all subjects and extra-curricular activities, and apply themselves with real commitment. They can work independently, in pairs or within a group. A small number need frequent support from the teacher or classroom assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language mix well with their peers and are keen to participate fully in activities and school events. They are highly motivated and keen to learn; this contributes significantly to the progress they make.
15. Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Despite the considerable efforts of the school a significant minority of parents does not place a high priority on regular school attendance. There are fewer unauthorised absences since last year, which is an improvement. All lessons in the school day begin and end on time. Pupils rarely arrive late at school and little time is lost in movement between lessons.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. Teaching is satisfactory overall with many good and very good examples. Fifty lessons were observed during the inspection of which twenty were satisfactory, the standard expected of professionals. A further 17 were good and 11 very good lessons were seen, making 96 per cent of teaching satisfactory or better overall. Teaching is now much stronger than during the last inspection when 16 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory; just two lessons, amounting to four per cent, were less than satisfactory this time. Fifty-six per cent of teaching is now good or better compared with 43 per cent in 1997.
17. Teaching of Reception pupils is good. The teacher has good knowledge of how children of this age learn and works effectively with another adult to develop children's use of English across all the areas of learning recommended for them. Teaching of Years 1 and 2 is sound overall with stronger features in Year 2. There are some unsatisfactory features in Year 1 when lessons extend beyond the time allocated to them and questioning is not used effectively to keep all pupils engaged in oral activities. Better teaching is well planned and prepared, and pupils are clear about what is expected of them because activities are explained and demonstrated well.
18. There is good overall teaching of Years 3 to 6. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good overall and most teaching in Year 4 is very good. This is based on a very good relationship with pupils and on high expectations of their learning and behaviour. Lessons move briskly but also allow pupils to engage in worthwhile activities and discussions. Some teaching of pupils in Year 3 is unsatisfactory when a minority of pupils' respect and response are lost. They stop concentrating on what they are supposed to be doing and disrupt learning for all in the lesson. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is always at least satisfactory and most teaching of pupils in Year 6 is very good. This is based on very good subject knowledge and challengingly high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Lessons move at very good pace and are based on interesting tasks and activities. This is also true of the best teaching in Year 5.

19. Planning throughout the school is secure and usually takes account of the differing needs of pupils by identifying how lessons or materials are to be adapted, what extra support is to be given to some pupils, or if some are to produce different outcomes from others. The lesson structures and teaching methods of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies feature consistently, and many features of these are extended to teaching of other subjects.
20. Teachers are involved fully with the special educational needs subject leader in writing individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. These plans outline clearly the way the curriculum is to be adapted to meet specific identified needs. Teachers are skilful at briefing classroom assistants. The good support provided by these dedicated assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress.
21. The quality of support provided by the externally funded assistant for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory and well targeted. These pupils are given the same tasks as their peers. However, planning does not always show how the language demands of certain tasks and the opportunities for language development are to be used in order to achieve learning objectives. Liaison between the assistant and teachers is good and assessment information is fed back to the teacher and used to inform planning.

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

22. The planning and content of the curriculum provided by the school are satisfactory. Overall, the curriculum is broad but subjects like physical education and religious education do not have a balanced time allocation in different years groups. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met, as are the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Children in the Foundation Stage follow the nationally recommended areas of learning. The issues raised in the last inspection report concerning the lack of breadth in information and communication technology, physical education and design and technology have been resolved appropriately. This aspect has made sound improvement since the last inspection. The school is in the early stages of identifying and planning for pupils who are gifted and talented.
23. The school's provision for literacy and numeracy is fully in place and meets the requirements of the National Strategies. In literacy, checking of provision and the use of assessment information has enabled the school to focus more on writing as an area for development. The school is aware that further development in the use of literacy skills across the curriculum is needed. There is satisfactory and increasing use of information and communication technology to support learning in an appropriate range of subjects.
24. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good. In sport, there are football and netball clubs with regular opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions with other schools. Other activities include dance, Spanish and chess. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments, including violin and recorders, or sing in a choir. A range of visits also enriches the curriculum for different subjects: theatres for English; museums for history; a business partnership centre for science, design and technology, and information and communication technology; and, several places of worship to promote learning in religious education. Year 6 pupils take part in an annual residential journey to Wales. All activities are open to both boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs are equally included. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also fully involved in all the activities on offer. In order to ensure they settle quickly and make appropriate progress, those who are recent arrivals are appropriately catered for and benefit from focused observation and checking. Many

opportunities in a range of subjects are used to develop pupils' insights into cultural diversity. Resources in the school and the community are used effectively, including drawing on pupils' own backgrounds especially when celebrating their first languages and also their faiths.

25. Provision for personal, social and health education, including learning about drug misuse and sex education, is good. A programme of work following national recommendations has been developed to inform planning. Elements of citizenship are also being developed through a recently formed school council as well as projects involving officers from the local council, with respect to litter, for instance.
26. The school maintains a satisfactory range of links with the community to enrich the curriculum, including links with the community police. A range of visitors contributes to activities, including a musician who regularly leads assemblies and accompanies pupils' singing on his guitar. The school has good relationships with its neighbouring secondary and special schools with shared days organised collaboratively. Good links are also maintained with local playgroups.
27. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have equal access to all subjects and extra-curricular activities. The school is successful in the way it adapts the curriculum to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Good planning and effective use of resources enable pupils to work successfully towards their identified targets.
28. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; this maintains the finding of the previous inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is promoted through assemblies and whole class discussions. Together with the religious education multi-faith curriculum, assemblies enable pupils to gain insights into the values and beliefs of the principal faiths. They also provide opportunities to reflect on personal experiences and explore relationships with others. Opportunities for spiritual development are enhanced through a range of visits to local places of worship and occasionally through contributions from pupils, for instance, experiences such as Diwali and religious occasions such as a Sikh wedding. However, there are few planned opportunities to promote spiritual development across the curriculum.
29. Provision for moral development is good and gives pupils a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The schools' ethos and expectations promote good moral values. These are reflected well in the school's behaviour code that spells out pupils' rights and responsibilities. Pupils respond positively to the code and all classes get an opportunity to discuss their own class rules. Personal, social and health education topics enable pupils to reflect on and discuss feelings and personal issues.

30. Opportunities for pupils to work, play and pursue social activities are well and actively promoted. This is reflected in the way older pupils take the initiative in running their own clubs under teachers' supervision and in their involvement in the school's council where they discuss issues of interest to them and their younger peers. Social development is also enhanced through teamwork in sport and when pupils go on a residential trip to Wales.
31. In most subjects pupils have good planned opportunities to develop an appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions. For example, they study aspects of their cultural heritage when studying the Tudors. Cultural development is enhanced by a number of visitors, including a puppet theatre company that worked with Year 2 pupils. Visits, such as one to Lunt Fort which linked to the study of the Romans or to the Herbert Gallery to look at sculptures, are well used in promoting pupils' cultural development.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

32. The school takes good care of its pupils and makes good provision overall for their welfare, health and safety. This maintains the position reported at the last inspection.
33. Pupils are well known to staff. The school has effective systems in place to identify, assess, support and monitor pupils with special educational needs whether they are physical, behavioural or academic. Timely and appropriate help is given to all pupils. This includes close liaison between the school and the local education authority's support services. The school maintains good pastoral care for these pupils. Areas for development in pupils' learning are recorded in their individual educational plans and are reviewed regularly. The school meets the needs of those with statements. The special needs Code of Practice is implemented fully.
34. The school's has very good procedures for ensuring regular health and safety audits in school. Termly fire drills are held; physical education equipment, fire-fighting equipment and electrical appliances are given annual safety checks. The school has two qualified first aiders on the staff and is planning for the rest to receive first aid training. There are concerns over the supervision of pupils during the mid-morning break when only one person is present in each in the school's playgrounds. The number of lunchtime supervisors is appropriate.
35. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have identified, with staff, their behavioural and social targets and have a good grasp of how well they are achieving these, for example, publicly through the Achievement Assembly and through house points, marking and merits in class. However, a few pupils do feel the personal, social and health education programme is too centred on 'asking how you feel about something' rather than 'teaching you things'. The school is sensitive and practical in the guidance and support it gives to children in Reception who are coming to school for the first time. This also applies to those who are 'changing over' to a new class each September and those who are about to make the transition to secondary school. The school works closely with a wide range of external agencies to provide medical and therapeutic support and also, for instance, to raise pupils' awareness of litter prevention and their role as part of a community.

36. Procedures for complying with the requirements of the Area Child Protection Committee are good. The headteacher, who is the designated person, has received up-to-date training in child protection and the deputy headteacher, although not recently trained, has been a designated person in another school. Staff do not receive child protection training as a routine part of their induction but they are all aware of referral procedures. Child protection training has been identified as an area for updating all staff, particularly those new to the school.
37. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are good. Computerised registration systems ensure up-to-date data on pupils' punctuality and absences is quickly available. There is close liaison with the education welfare service, and procedures for maintaining a late book and a signing-in-and-out book are in place. Nearly all unauthorised absences are attributable to just a few families who do not co-operate with the school by getting their children to school regularly or by giving reasons for their children's absence. Procedures for promoting attendance are satisfactory. There are certificates for pupils who have a 100% attendance over the whole of a school year but no initiatives to reward improved attendance, class attendance or even very good weekly attendance.
38. The schools' procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and to ensure that bullying is eliminated are both good and varied. Good behaviour is promoted in several ways: pupils enjoy receiving stickers to reward it; they work hard to fulfil individual class targets and, for example, enjoy completing 'rocket' targets. They understand well that the 'stages' build up to disciplining and during a discussion one said 'most of us stop at Stage 2'. The school council has recently suggested the introduction of 'bullying boxes' so that concerns about being bullied can be recorded anonymously. However, pupils spoken to felt confident that teachers dealt with bullying quickly and effectively, and it was not felt to be a big problem. On the few occasions when a teacher does not manage pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour by following agreed procedures, pupils' learning is affected.
39. The school's arrangements for checking pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Procedures for gauging standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are sound but procedures are not sufficiently developed in other subjects. Checking of pupils' progress, including optional tests, is carried out regularly in English and mathematics. Records of these tests and other checking procedures are kept, showing pupils' progress across year groups. These are used to identify individuals and groups who are achieving below as well as above that which is expected and who are then targeted for support. Regular evaluation of pupils' attainments is used to inform target setting and the grouping of pupils. These are now well developed in English and mathematics and pupils are constantly reminded of their targets, for instance in literacy and daily mathematics lessons. The school's analysis of test results is effective and has led to the identification of areas for improvement. These include writing, where they are used to improve pupils' attainment and to target particular groups, including higher attainers. Clear and effective procedures are used to identify the needs and then target support for pupils with English as an additional language. Ongoing evaluations, based on observations by the assistant, are shared with class teachers and target setting is becoming established as part of the planning and evaluation cycle.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents' views of the school are good. Overall, parents are happy with the standards their children achieve although not all are aware of how the school's performance measures up to that of similar schools. They are pleased with the help given to their children, especially where extra help has been required. For example, one pupil was given a list of extra reading books to supplement the school's reading programme.
41. Generally, parents are pleased with the attitudes and values that the school promotes. They like the fact that there are signs around the building promoting good behaviour. Most feel their children are well behaved in school. They especially approve of their children being set targets for behaviour and the school's more effective communication with parents regarding these. Some thought having a fence around the school had improved behaviour since the influence of older pupils from the nearby secondary school is now no longer a concern. Parents feel their children are secure in school.
42. The majority of parents are satisfied with the amount of homework their children receive, although a number think pupils could be given more. The home-school books in which comments are made about children's learning are widely approved of. Parents value the teacher's commitment in marking homework, seeing this as an acknowledgement of the care and attention their children have invested. The school also works hard to show parents how they can help their children with work at home through numeracy meetings and curriculum workshops, for example. Parents are pleased with the amount of information they receive through newsletters, on notice boards, in bulletins and on curriculum 'walls'. They are especially pleased with the information regarding their children's progress in the annual written reports: these are now more personalised and parents are asked to make a contribution by commenting on their children's achievements outside of the school. These represent good links with parents.
43. Parents feel the school is approachable and that staff are ready to listen when they have suggestions or concerns. The format for parents' evenings has been changed because of this, for example. Parents like the fact that the headteacher not only gives them feedback on an issue they may have raised, but also to tell pupils what is happening. Parents' help is valued and a substantial number come into school regularly to assist in lessons. They feel very welcome and know their work is appreciated. Parents also make a valuable contribution through the work of the Friends Association. The school's resources have benefited from their generosity, most recently from new library books and furniture.
44. A small number of parents remain concerned that the school is not offering enough activities outside lessons. These concerns do not take into account the large number of lunchtime clubs and sporting activities that take place.
45. From the time each child starts school, substantial efforts are made to create a healthy partnership with the parents. Staff visit new pupils in their home if parents are agreeable. The school's initial meeting introduces parents to teachers and those outside specialists who will be available to help their children. A number of parents also get to know the school when their children attend the 'Acorn' group, a voluntary pre-school group held once a week in the school hall.

46. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus now meet statutory requirements; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Although none attended the latest governors' meeting for parents, no parents consulted felt this reflected a negative view of the school. People were put off by feeling that the meeting would be much the same as in the previous year, by the difficulties presented after dark by poor lighting around the outside of the school and there having been no crèche provided at the meeting.
47. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved fully in the initial meeting and review of their child's progress. They are informed regularly about their children's targets and the progress made. The school does not as yet offer a translation service for those families where English is an additional language. Home-school contracts are in place and ensure that parents are aware that the school expects them to be involved in their child's education. A very small number of parents do not support the school in its efforts to make sure all pupils attend regularly and are punctual. Overall, the school has maintained the good overall partnership with parents reported in the previous inspection.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. Since her appointment seven terms ago, the headteacher has provided very strong leadership for the school, and has a clear vision for its development. She is supported well by all other staff, including the deputy headteacher and senior management team. Since her appointment, she has quickly gained the confidence of governors, staff, pupils and parents. She is committed, purposeful and focuses the attention of staff and governors on the implementation of procedures to improve the school's educational provision and to raise standards further. Senior staff and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based in part on regular observations of teaching and learning. This has provided the framework for writing the school improvement plan, the priorities of which provide a good basis for educational development during the next two years. The plan reflects clearly the aims of the school's mission statement, as found during the previous inspection. As a result, a calm, purposeful atmosphere exists where a close working partnership is the norm. This ensures effective attention to pupils' learning and, above all, to how well they achieve.
49. Many subject leaders are fairly new to their posts but have already built up a good overview of progress and standards in their subjects. They check teachers' plans and evaluate pupils' work effectively. The role of the deputy headteacher has developed recently, particularly in the area of data analysis and checking the effectiveness of teaching. She is therefore in a good position to support the work of improving standards. The senior management team carries out its duties conscientiously and effectively. They check the quality of teaching and learning in numeracy and literacy, offering verbal and written feedback to teachers. This is being developed to include other subjects.
50. The governors are very supportive of the school and have a good oversight of its work. They fulfil their statutory duties well and have a clear vision for the school's future. They are well informed about their own responsibilities and those of the headteacher. All governors are involved keenly in discussion about targets for the school improvement plan. The curriculum committee analyses data and results to evaluate the school's performance, especially in relation to pupils' achievements. As a result, one of their priorities is the improvement of standards, especially in mathematics. This aspect of management shows an appreciable improvement since the last inspection. They are committed fully to school improvement and consider

themselves an integral part of school life. Some governors meet frequently with key staff, such as those with responsibility for literacy, science and special educational needs. For example, the chairman and vice-chairman have observed teaching and learning in a number of literacy and science lessons respectively. The chair of governors, whose knowledge and understanding of the educational system is wide-ranging, is in constant communication with the headteacher. Both he and the vice chairman visit the school regularly and both are well known to pupils and staff. This is a confident governing body with all relevant committees in place and providing good strategic leadership.

51. All staff have negotiated job descriptions which are based on functions, roles and tasks and are linked to raising standards. A sound procedure to check the effectiveness of teachers' professional performance helps staff to reach the school's aspirations as expressed in its statement of aims. Individual professional development is discussed with the appropriate parties and sufficient opportunities are provided for in-service training to support any emerging needs. Good induction and mentoring procedures are in place for newly appointed and qualified staff, including a useful handbook. This process is successful in establishing new staff as effective members of the team from an early stage, as witnessed during the inspection.
52. The school has sufficient teachers to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Apart from the support staff designated for pupils who have special educational needs, the school employs a limited number of classroom assistants and a part-time teacher to help raise standards in literacy and numeracy. All the support staff work well to give pupils in their care good support and guidance. In line with school priorities, teachers attend appropriate training courses to extend their skills further. The school site manager, cleaning staff, the cook, lunch-time supervisors and voluntary parent helpers make a valuable and valued contribution to the smooth running of the school and pupils' welfare.
53. Accommodation is satisfactory and meets most of the requirements of the curriculum. As there is no secure outside play area, it does not meet the requirements for the Foundation Stage curriculum. There are, however, limitations. The building is on a slope and this has created a problem with mud running onto pathways and into the drainage system. Rather than bringing pupils together into one suite, computers have been provided in individual classrooms. This gives pupils good access and computers are used regularly. Since the building of a new fence around the extensive school grounds, damage to items of equipment and instances of vandalism have virtually ceased.
54. The provision and availability of learning resources is generally satisfactory. The library has recently been re-equipped and, after an audit by the school library service, many old books have been thrown out. Provision of software for computers has also increased. Both these examples mark an improvement since the previous inspection. However, now more software has been provided, there are not enough computers to make full use of it. Learning resources for pupils with special education needs and for the personal, social and health education curriculum are good. To support the curriculum, good use is made of the immediate community and area, for example, the partnership centres. There is still not enough large equipment for children in the Reception class. There are now sufficient resources for design and technology, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good and maintained well.
55. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It ensures that the national Code of Practice is fully implemented. The teacher with this responsibility is



an effective teacher of pupils who have special educational needs, promotes equality of access and opportunity and ensures that pupils' individual education plans meet their specific needs. The relationship between the subject leader, teachers and classroom assistants is very good. Identification, support and analysis of tests and monitoring are organised effectively. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is very supportive and checks some lessons when she is able.

56. Day to day financial control and management of the school are good as a result of the overview of the headteacher and the work of the very efficient administrator and secretary. The governing body is involved appropriately in the school's financial affairs through reports, relevant discussions at each of its meetings and through the work of its very focused finance committee. Financial planning is good. For example, governors revised the administration and secretarial hours from 69 to 50 while comparing expenditure with similar schools. Special funding is allocated appropriately for the needs of pupils and to support in-service training for staff. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used to provide good support. The school makes good use of computerised systems to monitor financial and other data. Effective systems are in place for the handling, recording and auditing of all incoming and outgoing monies. Most of the recommendations of the latest local education authority audit report have been addressed already. The school ensures that it gets best value from its spending decisions through measures such as competitive tendering, consultation and comparison for all major work.
57. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is appropriately targeted to provide for specialist staffing. However, apart from the externally funded Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant assistant, staff new to the school do not benefit from training specifically focused on the needs of pupils with English as an additional language.
58. Given the above average expenditure per pupil, their attainment on entry, the school's socio-economic circumstances, the progress made by pupils and the standards they reach, the school gives satisfactory value for money. This is similar to that which was reported in the last inspection.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve further the school should:

- (1) raise attainments in mathematics by:
  - a. ensuring that pupils have secure and speedy recall of basic number facts and tables;
  - b. know and use a range of strategies to answer questions, and,
  - c. have full opportunity to investigate and understand all aspects of the subject;  
(paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 60, 66, 76, 77)
- (2) reduce the level of absence in conjunction with all families, but especially the few families responsible for the majority of absences;  
(paragraphs 15, 37)
- (3) identify when and for how long all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are to be taught by using, for instance, a long-term curriculum map; and,  
(paragraphs 22, 118, 124)
- (4) endeavour to provide pupils in Reception with access to a suitable outdoor area where the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum can be met.  
(paragraphs 53, 54, 68)

The first two of these issues are contained in the school's current improvement plan. Other issues that should be considered by the school are:

- ensure that pupils are adequately supervised on playgrounds during morning breaks;  
(paragraph 34)
- improve the standard of pupils' handwriting;  
(paragraph 73)
- identify and plan opportunities to apply and develop pupils' literacy skills in all subjects;  
(paragraphs 5, 23, 75) and,
- ensure that new staff are trained at the earliest opportunity in the school's child protection procedures and to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language.  
(paragraphs 10, 21, 36)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	17	20	2	0	0
Percentage	0	22	34	40	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	171
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	11	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	10
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	24	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (93)	89 (93)	85 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	9
	Girls	14	12	9
	Total	24	22	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (93)	81 (89)	67 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	18	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	24	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (84)	76 (80)	86 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	23	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (80)	76 (76)	90 (84)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	130
Any other minority ethnic group	5

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	24.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	427 797
Total expenditure	403 354
Expenditure per pupil	2 332
Balance brought forward from previous year	7 308
Balance carried forward to next year	31 751

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	171
Number of questionnaires returned	51

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	39	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	51	2	2	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	54	10	0	4
The teaching is good.	36	58	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	41	14	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	48	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	47	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	53	8	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	35	57	2	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	53	2	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	31	29	2	16

## **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**

60. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage Reception class is good, which is a similar judgement to that reported in the previous inspection. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class as four year-olds is below national expectations overall and well below in communication, language and literature. Due to good teaching and time invested wisely by the teacher and other adults, children's learning is good and they achieve well. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given effective support to make good progress. By the end of the Reception year, indications are that many higher-attaining pupils will reach the standards expected of them. However, for most children their language, communication, mathematical and social development are below national expectations for pupils of this age. This is below the standards reported at the last inspection and reflects the lower attainments of children when they enter full-time education at Whitley Abbey.
61. A common characteristic of good teaching is the way in which the teacher uses opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills. She provides clear explanations and uses effective questioning to enable children to express their ideas. She uses a good range of strategies to engage them in learning and help them co-operate with each other. Such good examples were noted when children were role-playing, wrapping and sending gifts to their friends by post. The teacher is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and works well with the classroom assistant and other adults. Work is planned well to ensure that all areas of learning are covered. There is an appropriate balance between teacher-directed work and what children themselves choose to learn. All members of staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes to learning. This was demonstrated well in a lesson concentrating on the identification of the 'b' sound in familiar words when children made good progress resulting from their very good efforts.
62. Adults listen to what children have to say and through careful questioning attempt to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The teacher includes scientific and technological activities to stimulate curiosity and guide the children in the desired direction with her comments. This was seen to good effect in computer programme activities where children, using the mouse, learned to click and drag shapes and numbers across the screen. Staff manage these young children well, making sure that they settle quickly and happily into the daily routines. Provision also includes appropriate activities through which children can develop their creative talent. For example, during group rotation, children excitedly chose to paint pictures of rainbows, flowers and spacemen.
63. Checks on the quality of learning and attainment are undertaken regularly and the information gained is used to set appropriate work. The induction arrangements are good. Good links, including home visits, are established with parents, who in the majority of cases support the work of the school. Good communication with the school-based 'Acorn' playgroup ensures that the Reception class teacher is aware of children's attainments prior to their entry. Parents appreciate these smooth transition arrangements. The very knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader manages this age group ably and ensures that all areas of learning are covered effectively.

## **Personal, social and emotional development**

64. Children's personal and social development are given high priority and to good effect, with learning in this area generally good. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices about their activities, such as role-playing in 'Biff and Chip's' corner or during their farm visit where they witnessed chicks hatching. They know what is expected of them and behave well. Nearly all are interested and enjoy the activities. However, some fail to sustain concentration for any length of time, as observed with a group using the doll's house. All adults show good examples to the children of how to form positive relationships and to care about others. As a result, children become more confident and feel secure. During many activities such as in the sand or play corner areas, children have opportunities to co-operate and collaborate, learning therefore to take turns. Higher and average attaining children reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year, but many are still working towards them.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

65. In communication, language and literacy, children make good progress in relation to their very low prior attainments. This is due mainly to the effective dialogue between children and adults during the beginning and end of lessons and group activities. Children are provided with a wide range of activities to promote speaking, listening and an interest in books and the written word. Most children listen attentively and higher attainers are becoming confident speakers, using appropriate vocabulary and constructing sentences well. Such an example was noted during a shared reading session using the text of 'Kipper's Birthday'. A significant number, mostly those with special educational needs and including some average attainers, are still at an early stage of developing reading skills, but are improving as a result of the purposeful learning atmosphere. They all know that print carries meaning, can read simple key words and recognise their own names. The best readers have reached Level 1 in the English National Curriculum programme of study. During lessons they enjoy listening to stories and sharing and handling books. They learn letters, sounds and words in a range of worthwhile activities, such as letter and word banks, to build up words and simple sentences respectively. All are aware of the purposes of writing and write their own names and simple words, with higher-attainers writing simple sentences. This was evident in a lesson where children wrote invitations to the school Christmas party. By the time they complete the Reception year many have reached the learning goals, but overall attainment is below that expected for this age nationally.

## **Mathematical development**

66. Although the attainments of many children are close to national expectations, standards overall are below those that children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. Suitable activities are provided for the development of their mathematical skills and learning for all children is good, as a result of well-planned lessons and high, but realistic, teacher expectations. Children recognise colours, two- and three-dimensional shapes, and sort objects into correct categories using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. For example, children used a variety of coloured candles and different sizes of birthday cakes to investigate methods of making given numbers up to five. They know the terms 'longer', 'shorter', and count to 10 by rote, with higher attainers counting on and back from given numbers up to 20. Their recorded work includes simple pictorial charts of, for example, class birthdays. A good foundation is being laid for future mathematics work through organised play activity and games, with opportunities involving counting, sorting and matching. Examples noted included counting spoonfuls of sand to fill a jar, sorting items beginning with 'b' into a set, and counting up to four rhythmic beats during a music lesson.



## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

67. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live and will reach the expected learning goals by the time they leave the Reception class. Outside areas, including the Spinney, provide very good opportunities for scientific work. For example, children observe the seasons through the changing colours of foliage and weather patterns, and investigate the habitats of mini-beasts and birds. During visits they learn about life on a farm, how lambs are reared and how sheep provide wool. Water activities arouse curiosity about why some objects float and others sink. They begin to understand how a computer works and many use the mouse accurately to move pictures, words and numbers around the screen, as observed in supporting activities during mathematics and English lessons. They talk about their route to school and identify some of the main features. They begin to learn about life in the past by studying photographs of their parents and grandparents when they were young.

## **Physical development**

68. By the end of the Reception year children's physical development is similar to that expected nationally for this age. Through play with table-top games, modelling materials such as dough, pencils, brushes and crayons, they begin to improve their control while manipulating small items. They also develop skills in handling threads, scissors, glue-sticks and collage materials. All children, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in movement and co-ordination skills. In physical education lessons they use small equipment with increasing accuracy to develop co-ordination during throwing and catching activities. They have appropriate opportunities to use a good range of large indoor apparatus that helps develop whole body control and balance, as well as establishing confidence. Children respond well to instructions and develop an awareness of space and consideration for others while moving around. They follow instructions well as they move around the hall. They are beginning to develop good co-ordination as they move on to and off apparatus while paying particular attention to safety aspects while landing, for example. Children generally use the outdoor area well. However, the provision does not meet the requirements for children of this age and there is not, for instance, a range of large outdoor apparatus. The school is aware of this and has plans to address the situation when funds become available.

## **Creative development**

69. Attainment is sound in all areas of the creative aspects of learning and children, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. Children are provided with interesting creative activities each day and there is a good balance between free choice and more structured work. They have good opportunities to use different media. Children use paint and crayons to picture themselves, their families, everyday objects such as fruit and flowers, and characters from stories such as 'Handa's Surprise'. They manipulate, press and pull modelling materials, and play imaginatively with other resources and equipment, as was observed in the 'gift wrapping service' area. In music, for example, they follow instructions well. A prime example was observed in a lesson where children kept a steady four beat rhythm on a variety of percussion instruments including triangles and bells, while following symbols on the whiteboard. During practical activities they listen frequently to classical music and many express the feelings that they associate with it.

## **ENGLISH**

70. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests showed that standards attained by seven year-olds in reading were above average, indicating an improvement when compared with results from the previous year. Results in writing were average with standards being maintained since the previous year. When compared with similar schools, results were average. For 11 year-olds, standards were similar to the national average and those of similar schools. Improvements in results have been maintained over the last two years and have improved in comparison with results in 1999 when they were below average. Performance data shows that there is significant gender variation with girls outperforming boys in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. The school is aware of this and some action has been taken to motivate boys by purchasing non-fiction books. Evidence from the inspection matches these results, indicating that seven and 11 year-olds perform appropriately against their prior attainment.
71. Pupils' attainments in speaking and listening are similar to those which are expected for seven and 11 year-olds. By the time they are seven, higher-attaining pupils listen and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts and take an active part in discussions when given the opportunity. An instance of this was when Year 2 pupils, in pairs, shared ideas in response to the teacher's questions. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils respond and engage well when discussing texts. Pupils can identify and control their own agenda as, for example, when Year 6 pupils met as members of the school council and discussed the organisation of playground activities for younger pupils. However, although pupils listen well, opportunities for speaking are not planned regularly in other subjects. When this does take place, it is often incidental and not specifically designed to enable pupils to talk at length or argue a particular point of view. The school lacks a programme of work to enable teachers to check pupils' progress against clear objectives and set specific targets for their future learning.
72. Attainments in reading are similar to those expected for seven and 11 year-olds. By the time they are seven, pupils read a range of texts with fluency and accuracy with higher-attaining pupils showing good expression. They tackle words by combining letter sounds and read for meaning on the basis of how words are used in sentences. Higher-attaining pupils recognise the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and express preferences. They are familiar with the organisation of non-fiction books and use the contents and index pages to find information. By the time they are 11, pupils are highly motivated, confident and read from a range of different styles. Some lower-attaining pupils still lack expression and are tentative when talking about characters. However, given their starting point, the attainments of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, are satisfactory. All pupils keep a record of their reading in a home-school diary. However, records kept by teachers do not consistently include diagnostic comments and are not always linked to objectives that allow targets for future learning to be set.
73. At the ages of seven and 11, attainment in writing is similar to the national average. By the time they are seven, the majority of pupils develop their ideas in sequence and use capital letters. They write both in narrative and non-narrative forms with higher attainers organising writing appropriately, extending ideas and showing increasing control of punctuation. For a significant number of pupils handwriting is unsatisfactory with many not having sufficient control over the size of letters. For the majority of pupils spelling is satisfactory. By the age of 11, higher attainers write extensively and produce a variety of narrative and non-narrative texts. Writing is well organised with appropriate use of paragraphs, complex sentences and ranging over different types of writing including poetry and playscripts. Evidence from analysis of work shows that pupils achieve appropriately over time, showing gains in the use of punctuation and the length of pieces of writing. Older pupils' handwriting is legible, fluent and mostly joined. Although all pupils have targets for improving their writing pinned to their

books, marking is inconsistent with many examples of teachers not identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses or suggesting how work might be improved. The clear exception to this is in Year 6 where marking is good.

74. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with very good teaching in Year 6. In the best cases, teachers have a very good subject knowledge and understanding. Lessons are clearly focused to enable pupils to have ample time for discussion of shared texts. Effective use of questions enables them to consolidate knowledge and respond critically. This was well illustrated in Year 6 where the teacher used pupils' ideas and employed skilful questioning which enabled them to note different details from the text. In order to ensure that all pupils could succeed at the activity, she steered their writing to demonstrate how different aspects of characterisation, such as the use of dialogue, can make the character come alive. This oral part of the lesson was exploited well by pupils, using the ideas discussed to create their own invented character. In cases where teaching is less effective, learning objectives are not shared with pupils in order to help them understand the standards expected and independent tasks are not always closely linked to the main learning objectives. These contribute to insufficient attention being given to the needs of individual pupils, especially those with English as an additional language.
75. The school uses the National Strategy appropriately. The curriculum is kept under constant review. This process identified the need for and led to a more concerted focus on writing and more attention being given to boys' achievements. The new subject leader is experienced and has a clear overview of the subject. Priorities identified for development are based on tracking pupils' progress and analysing assessment information. Teachers' planning, pupils' work and teaching are systematically checked and this is also being used to inform improvement planning. The school knows that literacy skills are not yet sufficiently or systematically promoted in other subjects, and the planned use of information and communication technology is not fully developed.

## MATHEMATICS

76. In national tests in 2001 for 11 year-olds the proportion attaining the national standard was broadly as found nationally. However, fewer than average gained a higher level and, based on overall points scored in these tests, pupils' attainments were below those found in schools nationally and in similar contexts. In national tests for seven year-olds, the proportion reaching the expected standard was below that found in other schools. Although test scores matched those found in schools nationally, they were lower than those in schools in similar contexts. Again, a smaller proportion of pupils than that in other schools attained above the expected standard. This is worse in comparison to findings during the last inspection when pupils' attainments by the end of Year 6 were good. The increase since the last inspection in the number of higher-attaining pupils moving out of the school to be replaced most often by lower attainers contributes to this lowering of standards; ten of the 29 pupils in the last test group joined the school during Years 3 to 6.
77. Scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence from lesson observations confirms that standards for many pupils are still below expectations for their ages although the overall picture is improving. In both Years 1 and 2 and juniors, higher-attaining pupils' knowledge and rapid recall of number facts is good. In Year 2, these pupils have no difficulty in doubling numbers on dice and adding these numbers up to 100 straight away, while in Years 5 and 6 they respond instantly to questions about square numbers and square roots. Lower-attaining pupils are often well below the standard they ought to be achieving. Many in the lower set in Years 5 and 6 struggle to recall the 2 and 5 times tables quickly, accurately and consistently. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use commercial workbooks to record written calculations that reflect appropriate standards. Average attainers add and subtract numbers up to 100; higher attainers find missing numbers in additions and subtractions up to 100 while lower attainers work within 20. In Years 3 and 4, lower-attaining pupils count readily in odds and evens, and know numbers that add up to 10. Higher attainers readily subtract numbers up to 100 and explain different mental strategies for doing this.
78. Evidence from books and displays show that pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape and measure are generally sound and develop as they should as pupils move through the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils measure length and weight with non-standard units. They have adequate knowledge of simple two-dimensional shapes' features. Year 3 pupils compare standard units of measure and draw lines of given lengths accurately. They describe properties of three-dimensional shapes, using confidently language such as 'edges' and 'vertices'. Older pupils investigate shapes thoroughly, including isosceles triangles. They extend this to join the midpoints of the sides of parallelograms to produce smaller ones, translate simple shapes and work on patterns of co-ordinates. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 attain satisfactorily in their collection, presentation and interpretation of data. This features regularly in subjects other than mathematics and often involves use of computers. Older pupils count their heart rate and pulse and make block diagrams showing their findings.
79. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and at the upper end of the school they are very good. They respond well to exciting and challenging teaching where questions really make them think. They also enjoy working at speed. The learning in almost all lessons is at least sound and in most lessons in Years 3 to 6 it is good. Pupils build up their knowledge and recall of number facts, strategies for solving problems, and facts about measures and shapes. They frequently use and interpret raw and graphical data both in mathematics and other lessons. They make progress in line with the quality of teaching and, where the pace of teaching is slow and questions are not well directed, pupils' learning suffers.

80. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily in most lessons in Years 1 and 2. Work is well matched to what pupils need to learn and an appropriate range of activities are planned and carried out. This enables those whose attainments are below expectations to begin to catch up. Sometimes lessons extend beyond the recommended time and the pace of learning slackens. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is usually very good. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and what they expect them to do in the time. They communicate this well to pupils and to other adults who give effective support to pupils. Lessons are brisk and little time is wasted. This enables lower-achieving pupils who have recently arrived to make good progress towards attaining as expected nationally. Some higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 benefit small group work with a specialist teacher to boost their performance; these are taught satisfactorily and pupils make sound progress in attaining work of a standard higher than is expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make progress at the same rate as other pupils in building knowledge, skills and understanding towards their targets.
81. The subject leader is experienced and knowledgeable, and knows what challenges face the school in raising standards in the subject through checking lessons, planning and pupils' work, and thorough analysis of test results and assessments. She gives clear direction and support to colleagues on ways to raise attainments. This is also one of the priorities in the school's improvement plan. Strategies includes booster classes for higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 during school time and sessions before school for particular Year 5 pupils led by the subject leader. Teaching of the subject is securely based on the National Numeracy Strategy and this can be seen in all classes. Additional adults give good support when they are available; they normally target lower attainers or those recently arrived at the school. Resources are adequate and readily accessible. There have been improvements in the subject since the last inspection in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy throughout the school and introducing teaching in Years 3 to 6 in groups set by pupils' prior attainments. These have not yet resulted in halting the decline in standards reported at the last inspection but, from what was seen in lessons and other evidence, the largely new teaching staff have made a useful and potentially effective start to raising standards throughout the school.

## **SCIENCE**

82. Standards reached in national tests for 11 year-olds in science compared well with schools nationally and in similar contexts based on test scores. This is a great improvement on recent years when standards had fallen behind the national average. However, teachers adjudged pupils' attainments at the end of Year 2 last year to be below nationally expected standards. The class teacher left just before the official testing period and there were problems in locating records of pupils' attainments. Those pupils are now in Year 3 and evidence from a lesson and scrutiny of their work suggests that they are attaining the level that is expected.

83. Evidence seen in lessons and from scrutiny of pupils' work show that good attention to scientific enquiry enables all pupils opportunities to learn and the majority to attain at least in line with expectations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 classify their favourite foods as, for instance, fruit or vegetable, or sweet or savoury. They compare an ordinary meal with birthday party food and know that party food is 'fat' and therefore unhealthy. They learn that their pulse rates are higher after exercise than when resting by counting and comparing. They learn about the life cycles of butterflies and humans; in the latter they associate 'mums' and 'dads' with 'babies'. They sort plants from animals and know the names of important parts of each.
84. In Years 3 and 4 pupils identify foods that will keep their pets healthy and record this clearly as bar charts that they can later interpret. They describe how they 'warm up' for games and understand well why this is important. Pupils predict which objects they think will be magnetic and record their investigation as a race to see which a magnet can pull along. They draw valid conclusions such as 'rusty objects are magnetic'. Others make predictions about the effects on a buzzer of adding a variety of additional batteries into a circuit. They then verify their ideas by carrying out practical tasks. In another lesson, pupils investigated the power of elastic bands when applied to toy cars. Again, pupils thought carefully about what might happen. Many also took careful steps to limit the number of things that would change. Not all groups worked effectively to ensure that accurate records were kept so that some were unable to draw conclusions based on accurate results.
85. Older juniors begin to investigate how much air is in certain solids, such as sponges, sand and a collection of marbles in a jar. When they investigated, they had many plausible ideas about how to measure this but none succeeded in the course of the lesson because time and resources were limited. They showed good awareness of the need to control variables. Others study forces including gravity and those exerted by air and water. Pupils dropped a new sheet of paper and others they had folded or screwed up into a ball after predicting what effect these might have as they dropped to the floor. Year 6 pupils thrived on challenges that extended their knowledge of electrical circuits to control two lights in a circuit or built a pressure pad into an 'alarm' circuit also containing a light and a buzzer. Levels of co-operation and discussion were good. Pupils recorded their findings by drawing their circuits pictorially as notes. They also knew the diagrammatic symbols for different electrical components.
86. Teaching is at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and activities are chosen carefully to interest pupils and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers encourage careful thought about what is being studied and provide experiences that appeal to and challenge their pupils. Pupils' previous knowledge was recalled and drawn into the planned activities through careful questioning. What was to be learned and carried out was explained clearly and lessons were well prepared. Teachers made good use of resources that in some cases were limited and meant that larger groups than desirable had to share and work together. However, pupils responded well and talked and worked together effectively in most cases. During the practical part of the lessons, teachers went from group to group to give close support and encouragement to keep pupils on task and clarify their ideas and thinking. Pupils were kept busy and productive throughout sometimes long blocks of time and this includes those who have special educational needs and who are in the early stages of acquiring English. When general points needed to be raised and discoveries shared, teachers brought pupils back together to redirect their energies and consolidate learning. Better teaching was based on more secure subject knowledge and good challenge in activities that were well resourced. Pupils' learning was better developed as they applied their good knowledge to meet fresh and more difficult challenges. In lessons, all but a small minority of pupils work well and try their hardest to succeed.

87. The newly arrived subject leader for the subject encouraged teachers to develop pupils' skills of enquiry and investigation as the catalyst for the rapid rise in attainments that was needed. This was much in evidence in all lessons seen and confirms the effectiveness of the advice given. She adopted a national model programme of work to replace an outdated programme that was a disincentive to pupils in some cases when topics were based on teachers' interests and not the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good use is made of mathematical skills, particularly graphical, and improving use made of developing and applying pupils' writing and speaking skills. Little evidence of the use of information and communication technology was seen. The subject leader has led the subject previously and has good knowledge of the subject and her role. She checks planning, teaching and pupils' work, and has succeeded in raising standards of teaching and learning in a relatively short space of time. She has identified the resources that need to be acquired to meet the needs of the planned programme of work and has a budget to do so. She is also in the process of making these resources more accessible. There has been good improvement in the leadership and organisation of science and, although just last year and for juniors, the standards achieved. These have enthused staff and pupils to make the gains they clearly have.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

88. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Additional evidence was drawn from scrutiny of sketchbooks and displays and from discussions with pupils and the subject leader. Attainments broadly meet what is expected of pupils at seven and 11. Standards overall have been maintained since the last inspection.
89. In Year 2, pupils have a basic understanding of how to use and mix primary colours and how to obtain shades by adding white. An art display representing string pictures of autumn leaves and discussions with pupils about it reveal clearly skills in the use of different media and a knowledge of how to create special effects, for instance, the use of a paint wash for background and good observational skills when reproducing the exact shape of a leaf. Work linked to history in Year 3 sketchbooks shows good use of charcoal when drawing Greek ships. In Year 6, pupils continue to build on skills acquired earlier. They develop their awareness and understanding of movement in pictures as they study closely a range of work by different artists illustrating this theme. They use this as a stimulus for their own sketches, starting with two figures in action. Lower-attaining pupils use mannequins to help them visualise moveable parts and reproduce an outline representing a particular body shape. Much of what pupils achieve in this work is due to the care the teacher takes in explaining how to obtain the right effects and ensuring that pupils have plenty of examples to draw from.
90. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately as they learn a range of techniques and styles often using the work of other artists to inspire them and employing appropriate techniques to communicate their ideas. The majority of pupils use their sketchbooks well to gather ideas and test particular techniques. Pupils' attitudes are positive and contribute to the progress they make. They listen attentively, participate actively in discussions and evaluate their work at the end of lessons. They share resources sensibly and show responsibility when asked to clear away and store resources.
91. It is not possible to comment directly on the overall quality of teaching as only one lesson was seen. However, judging by evidence of the planning, provision is at least satisfactory with some good links with other subjects and clear objectives identified. Appropriate emphasis is placed on close observation and on design to enable pupils to adapt and change initial drawings. In the lesson observed, clear exposition was used in order to focus pupils' attention on the key idea of movement. Effective explanations and demonstration, using a mannequin,

and studying the work of other artists enabled pupils to note the importance of expression and the emotions movements can denote. Resources such as transparencies were well used to illustrate the concept of how movement has been interpreted by different artists and also employed as a basis for experimentation.

92. The subject leader is new to the subject and much of the subject's development is limited to auditing resources. There is no clear overview of how the subject is to be developed and no mechanism to enable the subject leader to monitor planning and standards. No extra-curricular opportunities to enhance the curriculum have been considered. The range of work displayed is narrow and little use of information and communication technology was seen.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. Two lessons were seen and work on display and in pupils' books was scrutinised. Standards are similar to national expectations at the ages of seven and 11. This represents sound improvement since the last inspection when standards were below what is expected. In Year 2, pupils have designed and constructed vehicles with moving wheels. They work confidently with simple tools, including scissors and a saw, to shape card, fabric and wooden dowel to their requirements. Pupils are aware of the importance of safe use of sharp tools and those needing help are supported in ways that encourage their independence. They combine and join these with appropriate use of adhesive tape, glue and split pins. In Years 3 and 4, pupils follow instructions to make paper weavings and different forms of paper aeroplanes. In Years 5 and 6, pupils study, design and make shelters capable of having a pupil inside them. They work together to construct prototype models and take care to add accurate measurement to their designs. Thorough study of different types of bread helps pupils think about how they will shape dough to bake a small loaf of their own design, for instance like a croissant. They are aware of the need for washing hands and tying back hair in order to work hygienically. They pay careful attention to the instructions they will need to give to someone else to realise their design and then design packaging to protect and display their product.
94. Teaching was based on satisfactory planning and clear instructions about what was wanted from the lesson and what it was helping pupils to learn. The lessons were well prepared and good practical work was encouraged by the amount and quality of resources provided. Additional adults also gave good support to Year 2 pupils, especially with use of a saw, but all pupils seen participated fully in lessons. Pupils responded positively to what they were asked to do and were keen to translate their ideas and designs into finished items. They worked well alone and in small groups, both when helped by an adult and when given their independence. Teachers brought pupils back together as needed to refocus activities and move learning on. They praised pupils' efforts genuinely and shared good work and ideas to stimulate others efforts.
95. The subject leader is experienced and has undergone a major training course in the subject. She has modified a national model programme of work and existing local guidance to fit into a topic-based approach to learning and the need to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. She sees work when visiting other classrooms out of lessons and advises on planning when asked but has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly. Nonetheless, she has led the efforts of a new and enthusiastic staff to achieve a sound improvement in standards in a short space of time. There is no formal record keeping or annotated portfolio of work but effective use is made of taking pictures of models and artefacts as a partial record of attainments. The subject is adequately resourced.



## **GEOGRAPHY**

96. Pupils' attainments at the ages of seven and 11 match standards expected nationally, which is similar to the previous report. Evidence includes lesson observations, discussion with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of pupils' past and present work. From this it is clear that pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is sound as they develop geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. Overall, pupils achieve soundly due generally to their good attitudes and through teachers setting appropriate tasks.
97. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have satisfactory recall of subject knowledge and skills. In Year 1, pupils know how to carry out simple mapping and can describe their route to and from school. On a map of the world they identify Britain and the main features of the local area on a map, including their own streets and the school. In Year 2, pupils understand the difference between human and physical features such as shops and houses, rivers and hills. They compare weather patterns across the world, for example in Switzerland, Holland, Australia and England. Higher-attaining pupils in this year group can identify and name some of the major cities and rivers in the British Isles.
98. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their mapping skills and use co-ordinates; some higher attainers use four- and six-figure grid references. In their work on landscapes they distinguish accurately between highlands and lowlands on a physical map. Pupils in Year 3 use compass points successfully to locate towns and other features on a map of the West Midlands. In their study of the local environment, pupils' suggestions in Year 4 included upgrading the playground furniture and markings, and installation of different types of collection bins for cast-off materials and rubbish prior to recycling them. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' knowledge of other parts of the British Isles is developed soundly. For example, pupils in Year 5 compare North Wales with their own area and develop further their understanding of how physical features and climatic conditions influence ways of life and job prospects. In Year 6, pupils identify accurately on a map of the world the main continents, cities, mountains and rivers. Higher attainers talk knowledgeably about features such as river sources, tributaries and estuaries.

99. Pupils have a positive attitude to work. Most listen carefully and respond well to questions. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson where pupils predicted the reason why different types of glasses are aids to people's well being throughout the world. Once on task they work effectively either independently, in pairs or in groups. Pupils enjoy lessons, especially when it involves field-work, as noted in a Year 4 class looking at how unpleasant features in the school grounds could be made more attractive.
100. The quality of teaching is sound overall with a small percentage less than sound and some good or very good towards the end of Years 3 to 6. Lessons are planned well, which holds pupils' interest, and effective pace is maintained through a range of activities. For example, in a Year 4 lesson very good use was made of enlarged slides from which pupils identified areas and features they had studied during previous fieldwork. In a Year 5 lesson a taped account by a North Wales farmer about his life from early childhood reinforced pupils' knowledge and understanding of how life differs in scattered rural communities and sprawling urban settlements. Where teaching is less good, some pupils lose interest in the task and therefore do not meet the set objectives.
101. The subject leader is an enthusiastic advocate of the subject and has worked hard to promote it. She has devised a programme of work that ensures that pupils learn the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. She monitors teachers' plans on a regular basis and has carried out a limited number of classroom observations. Future plans include developing the current assessment system further. In-service training courses attended by the subject leader have included linking literacy and information and communication technology into the geography programme or work. Resources are adequate and are easily accessible to both pupils and teachers. Overall, the subject is managed well.

## **HISTORY**

102. It was not possible to observe any history lesson during the inspection as the school was in its cycle of geography topics. Judgements are therefore based on an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them and their teachers. Evidence indicates that at the ages of seven and 11 pupils' attainments match national expectations. This is similar to the judgement reported in the last inspection. Taking account of achievement and the work covered over time, pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is sound. Overall this reflects sound teaching.
103. Pupils begin to build their sense of chronology from an early stage. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate effectively their understanding of past and present when they compare photographs of themselves now and when they were two or four in relation to a time-line measuring their growth between birth and the age of six. When they study the 5<sup>th</sup> November, they associate Guy Fawkes with a man who lived a long time ago. In their study of Remembrance Day, pupils in Year 2 learn about the significance of the poppy wreath laying ceremonies and why the Royal Family and senior politicians honour those who died in the wars. Some higher-attaining pupils recall some events in the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Shakespeare. By the time they are seven, pupils use photographs to compare the dress style, vehicles and buildings of former times with those of the present.

104. By the time they are 11, pupils show a sound understanding and knowledge of periods that they have studied, such as the Victorians, Tudors, Ancient Greeks and Romans. Pupils in Year 3 begin to learn how democracy works when they study the different systems of government in Sparta and Athens. In Year 4, pupils become aware of the influence Roman occupation had on road building and choice of settlements in Britain. They recognise from their knowledge of Latin derivations that places such as Chester, Chichester and Bath were originally Roman towns. These pupils attempt to empathise with history by visiting Roman forts, such as the Lunt at Baginton, and dressing up in the costumes of the Romans and Iceni tribes. In Year 5, pupils use primary source material to learn about life in Victorian times, for example, a doctor's report about how 'John Saville aged seven had his leg broken by a truck, having fallen asleep after twelve hours down the coal mine'. They compare the life-styles of the rich and poor then and now, and write about how some things have changed and some have not. While studying the Tudor period, higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 begin to understand how the introduction of tomatoes, potatoes and tobacco, through journeys of discovery, influenced life-styles for many people in Britain. However, the majority of pupils do not have well-developed skills in investigating and interpreting information drawn from historical sources because they have not been given sufficient opportunity to do so. Visits to museums such as the Victorian Black Country Museum help to enhance pupils' understanding of the past and how it sometimes influences the future. Discussion with pupils indicates that they have a good attitude to history and particularly enjoy the visits to museums and other places of historical interest. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
105. The subject leader is knowledgeable, energetic and works hard to maintain a sound range and quantity of resources. Procedures for checking the standard of pupils' work at the end of each block of teaching require further development. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to work on it. The programme of work, which is based on a national model programme, is detailed. Overall, the subject is managed well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

106. Pupils make regular use of information and communication technology as required by the National Curriculum, to support learning in a range of subjects. Most classes have a timetabled lesson devoted specifically to developing information and communication technology skills, but it was possible to observe only two of these, both in Years 3 to 6, during the inspection. Further evidence was drawn from observing what pupils were doing and talking with them in a range of lessons including English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and personal and social education. Based on this, standards are similar to those expected for pupils' ages throughout the school.
107. In Years 1 and 2, pupils word process their 'friendship' poems, thinking about how the lines are laid out. They use programs that reinforce their reading skills and help with their knowledge of basic mathematics facts and calculations. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use the computers on a rota to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge. In a lesson, they show good recall of features of a word processing programme when editing a piece of text. They 'replace' with more powerful adjectives the word 'nice' that they 'find' with the appropriate command. Only a minority recall learning this at first but as the lesson progresses more and more pupils contribute with confidence. Pupils also resort to an electronic 'spellchecker' as one strategy to confirm the spelling of an unusual word; these are used with increasing familiarity in many classes. In Years 5 and 6, pupils 'write' their names in a drawing application. Others use symbols and lettering from the computer to construct a branching 'decision tree' that enables logical identification of shapes from their properties.

Pupils engaged in a variety of activities during a timetabled lesson in information and communication technology. Some programme a computerised toy to move and turn as they require. Others build on learning from a recent visit to an education technology centre to programme a set of traffic lights following instructions. Using the additional computers located in this room, several pupils continue work on animated presentations about themselves. These pupils approach tasks with confidence and understanding.

108. Teaching and learning were good in the two lessons seen. One used the computer as an interactive screen for a whole class lesson on editing text. The screen was just large enough for pupils to see and they made little fuss in coping with this difficulty. The teacher was clear and knowledgeable about what she wanted pupils to do but lacked further knowledge of ways that the application could have supported her objective. Nonetheless, pupils were interested and keen to learn. Teaching was brisk and laced with good humour. Carefully targeted questions brought all pupils into the activity. Additional help from a trainee teacher also enabled some pupils with special educational needs to benefit from the lesson. The other lesson was based effectively on use of additional resources available in the particular classroom and on withdrawal of a group to carry out research in the library with another adult. This created space for practical work on the floor and a more manageable number of activities for the teacher to plan for, resource and support during the lesson. Her good broad knowledge and purposeful interaction led to little time being wasted and all pupils engaging fully in the challenging tasks set. Pupils made good progress in both these different styles of lesson.
109. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about promoting its use. However, she is recently appointed and the subject has not yet had priority for development. She has, nevertheless, carried out an audit of resources and skills, and contributed to the decision to relocate computers in each class. This has eased access in some respects but limits how many pupils can work on a computer at any given time. Teachers are rigorous in including use of information and communication technology in their planning and make good use of the increased range of programmes bought in by the subject leader. This ensures that all pupils have the best possible access and opportunity to develop and use information and communication technology. The subject leader has worked hard to provide good planning that gives teachers a secure basis for their teaching. This has helped the good improvement in standards since the last inspection, when information and communication technology was an issue. The subject leader, senior managers and governors are aware of the major financial implications in locating and networking sufficient computers throughout the building to better meet the needs of the subject but have made sensible plans to provide the best they can within resources. The subject benefits from good leadership with a clear and practical vision of how it must be developed.

## MUSIC

110. It was not possible to observe lessons involving pupils in Years 1 and 2 so no judgement about their attainments can be made. On the basis of scrutinising planning and discussion with pupils and the subject leader, standards in music are similar to national expectations for pupils aged seven and 11. Although the subject continues to have a high profile, especially for older pupils, overall provision is only satisfactory compared with the last inspection when music was a strength of many of the staff who were then at the school. The tuition provided for learning instruments continues to be good because of the quality of teaching provided by a specialist. This is reflected in the learning pupils achieve both in lessons and over time.
111. Pupils in Year 5 develop their appreciation of how music can be linked to themes as they listen to two different pieces and focus on the concept of a journey. They respond appropriately as they associate music to the kind of weather or transport it suggests. They comment on the mood of the music and use the ideas in the original pieces to compose their own theme about a journey. They explore sounds in combination, working in different groups and use ideas such as a journey into space. They rehearse their compositions and make changes in response to the teacher's suggestions. The majority of pupils succeed in translating their intentions when presenting their compositions to the rest of the class. However, they do not have the opportunity to comment on or evaluate their efforts or those of their peers. Pupils in Year 6 use examples of music that have variations based on a simple rhythmic pattern. The teacher's effective demonstrations and interventions enabled pupils to show good understanding of the concept and to use this to devise their own compositions. Pupils worked well in groups and quickly organised themselves with one member of the group leading the composition and the rest suggesting variations on percussion instruments.
112. The provision for singing is good and assemblies are used well to promote this skill. The majority of pupils sing in tune and with enthusiasm. They know and can memorise a range of songs, and respond well to accompaniments led by a visiting guitarist and the specialist teacher's piano playing. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make appropriate progress as they are exposed to an increasing range of musical traditions. Almost all participate in lessons and assemblies with real enjoyment and persevere in their efforts to improve their performances. They work well together and show respect for each other. They treat instruments with care and are ready help their colleagues. All the pupils taking part in extra musical tuition enjoy the sessions, are highly motivated and keen to improve their skills.
113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Although planning is sketchy and is not clearly linked to the programme of work, the specialist teacher has good knowledge that she uses well to enthuse pupils. A particularly strong feature of her teaching is the ability to use original music as a starting point and ongoing stimulus for pupils' compositions. This enables them to learn the combined skills of appraising, composing and performing and to apply skills in practical and accessible ways. Lessons are introduced appropriately with reference to previously acquired skills and knowledge, and provide ample opportunities for pupils to practice and improve their performance. Good use is made of questioning to extend pupils' understanding of the elements of music and of the teachers' own knowledge to promote learning.

114. The specialist teacher's knowledge and experience has a good effect on pupils' achievements. However, there are no clear procedures to ensure continuity between provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2, where class teachers teach the subject, and that of the specialist teaching of Years 3 to 6. The subject is enhanced through the additional tuition provided for pupils learning to play the recorder and violin, those involved in hymn practice and those in the choir that meets outside lessons. No checks on teaching and learning take place and the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

115. Attainment in physical education is similar to that expected nationally of pupils of seven and 11. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards for 11 year-olds were below national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, improve appropriately on their prior attainment. This is mainly the result of a substantial turnover in the teaching staff whose knowledge and understanding of the subject is better now that it focuses on developing skills. It is also based on effective interventions in order to evaluate and improve pupils' performance.
116. In dance in Year 1, pupils make connections between their class topic, 'On a building site', and appropriate movements. They practise and repeat bold representations of different machinery such as a wheel or mimic building a wall. Most pupils show reasonable co-ordination, when stretching for example, and move in different directions well. In Year 4 gymnastics, pupils perform sequences of three movements. As they practise in groups, they develop skills in changing directions, level and speed. Higher-attaining pupils show creativity in synchronising or mirroring each other's movements. Almost all pupils show good control and co-ordination and evaluate their performance as they attempt to lengthen sequences and as they combine different movements in an imaginative way. In Year 6, in a game of tag rugby, pupils demonstrated skills in passing the ball, defending and attacking, and understanding of the rules of a non-contact game. They applied these rules in response to the coach's clear instructions and showed an eagerness to compete. As a result of the good teaching of the subject, most pupils improve appropriately on their prior attainment. Their attitudes to learning in physical education are positive throughout the school. They are motivated, keen to participate in lessons and understand the importance of listening and following instructions, especially those related to safety. Pupils work well both individually and with a partner. They always have the appropriate kit, change quickly and willingly help in carrying equipment at the end of sessions.
117. The quality of teaching overall is good and has improved since the last inspection, especially with regard to older pupils. Clear objectives are identified and used to evaluate pupils' achievement. Teachers brief pupils about the skills to be practised and use effective demonstrations and interventions to enable pupils to improve their performance. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 4 class, where, through careful questioning and prompting, pupils were helped to assess the quality of their movements as they watched others perform, commenting on what they liked and on how sequences could be improved. Effective management skills often result in well-behaved pupils responding consistently to instructions.

118. Physical education is enhanced by a number of extra-curricular sporting activities, including football and netball, which are open to both boys and girls. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of competitive games with other schools. Since the last inspection weekly and termly planning have improved. However, the subject leader has not checked on teaching or learning directly and no priorities for developing the subject have been identified. The school does not have an agreed annual plan setting out clearly when and for how long the different aspects of the subject are to be taught.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. Pupils' attainments at the ages of seven and 11 match those expected by the local authority's agreed syllabus. This differs slightly from the last inspection, which reported standards as high for 11 year-olds. The main contributory factors for this decline are the high degree of mobility in the seven to 11 age range and the significant special educational needs in some age groups. Only a limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection, so that evidence includes an analysis of pupils' past and present work, and discussions with them and their teachers. Pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is good in Years 3 to 6 and sound in Years 1 and 2. Overall, pupils achieve soundly due to challenge, choice of appropriate topics and their willingness to learn.
120. Pupils develop a good factual basis from the topics they study. Throughout the school pupils not only learn about religion, but from it. They relate events and teaching to their own lives. For example, pupils in Year 3 were able to relate concern and care for an injured classmate to the story of Rama and Sita and the distribution of cards during the Hindu festival of Diwali. Pupils in Year 1 recall the main facts from Biblical stories such as Noah's Ark and David and Goliath. They have also drawn up 'caring' rules based on the Hindu faith. In Year 2, pupils know the story of Christmas and the importance of the Torah to Jews. As they begin to understand the meaning of these celebrations and stories, they develop a good awareness of self and respect for others.
121. In Years 3 to 6, in addition to learning more about Christianity, pupils study several aspects of major religions including Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam. They develop an understanding about different religions as they study celebrations such as Ramadan, Christmas and Passover. They recount events of the major Christian festivals including Easter. They link Biblical teachings to their own lives when they compare Herod's killing of all boys under two to recent events in America and Afghanistan, as observed during a Year 4 lesson. Pupils in Year 5 know about the five pillars of Islam, why Muslims face Mecca when they pray, and that Mohammed is Allah's messenger. In Year 6, pupils talk about the special room in the mosque where the Qu'ran is kept and were respectful of the artefacts used in Sikh rituals. Pupils are less knowledgeable about the moral implication of parables, for example the story of the Prodigal Son.
122. Visits to places of worship enhance pupils' learning, for example to the local church, a city mosque and Hindu temple, where the symbolic use of clothing and articles of religious significance are explained to them. School assemblies make an important contribution to the school's work in religious education. Themes of work are chosen to link with appropriate religious festivals or to promote the personal development of pupils. During one of the assemblies the theme was 'gifts', reminding pupils that Jesus' values are the real gift at Christmas.

123. Teaching is good overall. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is sound and in Years 3 to 6 is good. Teachers make good use of the school's programme of work, which is based mostly on the local education authority's agreed syllabus. Teachers begin lessons well, often creating an appropriate calm, spiritual atmosphere through the use of music or a lighted candle. A very good example was observed in a Year 4 lesson where pupils reflected about the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem while listening to the Coventry Carol. Learning is managed well, creating opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and spiritual awareness. Teachers handle discussions with sensitivity. Such an example was noted in a Year 3 lesson where pupils debated the similarities of the Christian and Hindu faiths regarding forgiveness, respect and love. During such discussions, pupils' attitudes are good, most are eager to contribute and the majority respond well by listening carefully and respecting the views of others.
124. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has extensive subject knowledge. She has supported staff well and this has enhanced their confidence in teaching the subject. She checks teachers' plans and future action for the development of the subject includes a review of the procedures for checking pupils' achievements against the attainment targets of the agreed syllabus. However, she and senior managers were unaware of one class having twice the amount of lessons in the subject as is found in the rest of the school. She manages funds and resources well, and resources are adequate and easily accessible.