

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLEFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridgnorth

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123432

Headteacher: Mr N Boyle

Reporting inspector: Mrs W Knight
12172

Dates of inspection: 19th - 22nd November 2001

Inspection number: 243308

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Castlefields Bridgnorth Shropshire
Postcode:	WV16 5DQ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr F Pickford
Date of previous inspection:	29th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12172	Wendy Knight	Registered inspector	Design and technology Music	Leadership and management How well the pupils are taught The school's results and achievements
19697	Janice Moorhouse	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well pupils are cared for How well the school works in partnership with parents
22805	Jo Greer	Team inspector	Science Geography History Foundation Stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
3751	Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	English Art Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	
15223	Roger Salt	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castlefields Primary School serves the outskirts of the Shropshire town of Bridgnorth with some pupils coming from the outlying villages. There are 191 pupils aged 5 - 11 on roll plus 22 children attending the nursery part time from the age of four. In two year groups the number of boys and girls is unbalanced particularly in Year 4. The majority of pupils are from advantaged homes and a small percentage of pupils is entitled to free school meals. An above average number of pupils have English as an additional language but no children are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils currently on the register for special educational needs is average. Attainment on entry is above average overall although there are documented variations between intakes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Castlefields is an effective school. Standards are well above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. The teaching is good in nursery and reception and satisfactory overall in the infants and juniors. The school is soundly led and managed. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain very high standards in speaking and reading
- High standards are achieved in science through effective practical work
- It provides well for nursery and reception children - which is a significant improvement since the last inspection
- It encourages enthusiastic attitudes and mature, self-disciplined behaviour amongst the pupils
- It offers rich opportunities for extra-curricular activities in the juniors

What could be improved

- Standards in design and technology and music
- Curriculum structure and relevance and the use of assessment to build on prior learning
- Consistency of teaching, particularly in the juniors
- Rigour in monitoring and evaluating curricular provision
- Opportunities for co-ordinators to develop the areas for which they are responsible

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 October 1997. It has improved satisfactorily since then.

- Standards have improved for higher attainers in tests although planned work in lessons is not always sufficiently challenging for them. Assessment data is analysed.
- Teaching has improved overall, but there is still inconsistency between year groups.
- National Curriculum planning for information and communication technology (ICT) and geography are better and attainment in these subjects is now satisfactory.
- Attainable key priorities are identified in the School Development Plan. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have been implemented but are not sufficiently well advanced to ensure optimum development.
- Appropriate opportunities for spiritual development are offered, although planned chances to reflect are not built in to the subjects of the curriculum.
- Standards in science have risen, and the high standards in reading have been maintained. Understanding of place value and using and applying mathematics have improved.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children in the nursery and reception (Foundation Stage) exceed expectations in all areas except physical development where they meet them. Standards at the age of 7 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science in 2001, having improved considerably since 2000. Attainment at the age of 11 was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science, which was less good than in previous years. However, the group of pupils who took the tests in 2001 contained a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The trend in results for all tested subjects is below the national one over time and results compared with similar schools are below average in English. However, the school met its realistic targets in 2001 and inspectors found standards in the present Year 6 to be well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Pupils' reading skills are very well developed by the age of 11. Pupils have the ability to infer and use skills like skimming to find information. They are also attentive listeners and articulate speakers who have extensive vocabularies and are able to use their language to reason. These skills enable them to learn effectively in all other subjects and to achieve well. Pupils write effectively for a range of purposes although their spelling is relatively weak. Pupils have good mental strategies and can calculate accurately. They have good scientific knowledge and can conduct investigations well. Attainment in all other subjects except design and technology and music meets expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. While higher attainers do well in tests at 11, their progress in the years between reception and the upper juniors is less good than expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to learn and eager to take the opportunities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Usually pupils are mature, self-disciplined and sensible especially when unsupervised. Some of the classes of younger pupils contain one or two individuals who are less mature and who occasionally disturb the smooth running of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships are developed between the pupils and between pupils and adults.
Attendance	Very high rates and very low unauthorised absence ensure pupils make good progress.

Pupils are co-operative and kind towards each other and polite to visitors. They behave well because they are self-controlled and aware of how their actions affect others. Older pupils are able to take

responsibility sensibly because of these highly developed social skills. Pupils' progress is helped by their maturity and positive attitudes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is not consistent across the school. It is good and often very good in the Foundation Stage and upper juniors and consistently sound, with over a half good, in the infants, but there are shortcomings in Years 3 and 4. English and mathematics are satisfactorily taught overall with effective focus on basic skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the school so that pupils acquire and practise these regularly. In the Foundation Stage planning is always clear and teachers take account of children's existing knowledge to decide on the subsequent lessons. Pupils receive a good grounding for future learning. In the weaker lessons in the juniors objectives are not sufficiently well thought out, or teachers are not able to assist the pupils to improve because they fail to assess precisely what needs further attention. Teachers are generally good at questioning pupils in class discussion and encourage them to explore words and meanings; they offer varied and interesting activities and provide orderly, purposeful organisation so that pupils sustain their concentration and work productively. While the best lessons, particularly those in the Foundation Stage and upper junior classes, provide challenge for higher attainers, pupils are not always required to make maximum effort and there is too much consolidation or overuse of restrictive worksheets elsewhere. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported both in class and during the additional lessons which provide extra practice in basic skills throughout the school. They generally make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although all subjects are taught adequately, planning is not well enough structured to ensure smooth progression, regular challenge and relevance for Castlefields pupils. Pupils are helped to see how learning is related by useful links between subjects, especially in history and English.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported in class and basic skills are also the focus when they are withdrawn from class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are appropriately supported by staff and make similar progress to their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Very good moral dimensions are discussed in daily work and there are many opportunities to learn to work and play together. Pupils have appropriate chances to appreciate their own culture but fewer experiences of the diversity of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and feel safe and secure.

Assessment	Procedures are only in place for assessing progress in English and mathematics and the information is not used to inform planning of the curriculum.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	There are effective links with parents, who contribute significantly to the school's provision through their active involvement and fundraising.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher promotes a positive ethos and commitment to high attainment, but too little responsibility is delegated to co-ordinators so that they can develop the areas for which they are responsible and assist in evaluating the provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive, challenge provision appropriately and conscientiously fulfil their responsibilities. Minor errors or omissions occur in the prospectus and annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school does monitor and review its performance, but procedures are not sharp enough to ensure that all provision is scrutinised and any shortcomings dealt with.
The strategic use of resources	Available resources are allocated to appropriate areas, which have been agreed as priorities.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Appropriately staffed including experienced and effective classroom assistants. Adequate although inconvenient accommodation with thoroughfares through teaching areas. Shortages of resources in important areas.
Principles of best value	The school takes account of best value in purchasing goods and services and in consulting when necessary; it does not have formal procedures for judging effectiveness of choices made.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards achieved • Pupils' behaviour and attitudes • The quality of teaching • Welcoming and approachable staff • The safe and happy atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of higher attainers • Information on pupils' progress • Aspects of leadership • Extra-curricular activities • The type of homework set

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. They disagree with parents about extra-curricular activities, although they do acknowledge that most of the opportunities are for older pupils. Inspectors partially agree with parents' concerns about higher attainers because not all teachers provide regular challenge in lessons. Homework for older pupils is regularly set, but tasks are not always relevant and too many undemanding worksheets are used. Although appropriate information on progress is provided, the timing of parents' meetings is not ideal for enabling parents to actively support their children's learning and because assessment is only done formally in English and mathematics reliable

information about other subjects is limited. The parents' concerns about leadership and management are largely due to the relative sizes of the two lower junior classes. The situation is more complex than it appears to be and viable options are limited in practice, especially as the staff appointment for one of the classes was not finalised until the summer holidays. The headteacher is still considering alternative arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 By the end of reception children are in line with Early Learning Goals in physical development and exceed them in all other areas. They make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Children listen and concentrate well, take turns and work diligently. They enjoy stories and join in with reciting rhymes with enthusiasm. They are able to recognise sounds and rhyming words. Higher attainers are already able to read simple texts while average and lower attainers recognise everyday words. Children are able to write their names, forming their letters correctly, and some children start to write independently. Children can count to 10 and recognise numerals. Higher attainers are able to add numbers to 10. Children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to practise counting and to sort shapes. They have good knowledge of animals and light as the result of the work on nocturnal animals and they have begun to use plans for mapping. They are able to move with increasing control, co-ordination and awareness of space in physical education lessons, but skills with scissors and simple tools are relatively less well developed. Children enjoy singing and use their imagination in response to music and stories as well as exploring a variety of media to make pictures and models.

2 Attainment in English has improved overall since the last inspection, with significantly more pupils achieving higher levels in national tests. Infant pupils already express their ideas and thoughts confidently. They have good vocabularies which enable them to offer a variety of appropriate words, and their command of the language enables them to offer more succinct or more suitable ways of expressing their thinking during class discussions. Many pupils enjoy using words and like to suggest the most interesting ones. They are able to listen attentively to each other and readily follow instructions given by adults.

3 By the age of seven attainment in reading over time has been above average and was well above average in the 2001 national tests, including compared with similar schools. Reading has improved since 1997. There are no significant gender differences but higher attainers score well in the tests with results at level 3 being in the top 5% nationally in 2001. During the inspection pupils demonstrated well above average reading skills. Most pupils are already able to read suitable texts confidently and with understanding. They have a range of strategies for working out unknown words when necessary, such as using sounds and recognising letter combinations they know. Pupils are able to use their skills effectively across the curriculum to obtain information and complete tasks.

4 National test results in writing have been less consistent over the long term with a decline from 1998 - 2000 in relation to the national picture. However, standards were above average in 2001 tests and average compared with similar schools, and the overall trend is similar to the national trend. There is no significant difference between boys and girls over time. Many higher attainers achieve the expected level 2B, but not the higher level 3 in writing. Pupils are currently able to write on a variety of topics in sentences which are demarcated by some full stops and capital letters - higher attainers use punctuation more reliably.

5 Junior pupils are articulate speakers with a developing facility with words and expressions. Pupils are well aware of standard English and the need to consider their audience. Higher attainers are able to understand nuance and select words precisely. They can use language to assist in reasoning and generalising. Average and lower attainers are

able to express themselves confidently and persuasively. Pupils listen carefully to various points of view before putting forward their own thoughts.

6 By the age of eleven English attainment is well above average. Although national test results dipped to average levels in 2001 and below average compared with similar schools, levels had been above average for the previous three years and the Year 6 group who took the tests in 2001 included a large number of pupils with special educational needs. There is no consistent pattern of boys or girls doing better than their peers, although over the long term girls exceed the national average by more than boys. The number of higher attainers achieving level 5 was still above the national average. The trend in English results has fluctuated over the last four years but results on average have been good. The school exceeded its reasonable target in 2001 and has set a realistic target for 2002.

7 In reading pupils are mature readers with tastes for particular authors and genres. They are able to deeply understand what they read through inferring and deducing writers' intentions. Higher and average attainers are confident about locating information to assist them with their work across the curriculum, being flexible with skills like skimming and scanning to enable them to access what they need, but lower attainers are often less proficient in this aspect.

8 In writing, pupils are able to write fluently and grammatically for a range of purposes, using appropriate structures and styles. They are able to edit and amend their own work. Pupils have plenty of practice in writing for different purposes across the curriculum, although worksheets do restrict these opportunities in some classes. Spelling is relatively weak, however, and handwriting is not consistently neat and fluent.

9 In mathematics standards have improved since the last inspection. They were above average in Key Stage 1 national test results in 2001, having improved from below average in 2000. Compared with similar schools attainment is average. Over time there are no significant gender differences. The trend in mathematics results is generally in line with the national trend. Higher attainers achieve similarly to their peers. During the inspection standards were judged to be average with relatively few pupils achieving higher levels. Pupils do mental calculations competently using numbers to 20 and counting in 10s beyond. They can use written methods for larger numbers and have sound knowledge of shape and data handling.

10 Key Stage 2 results in mathematics in 2001 were above average compared with schools nationally and in comparison with pupils' prior attainment, but average compared with similar schools. Over time there is no pattern of differing achievement by girls and boys. The trend in results is below that found nationally. Higher attainers have done well with an above average number achieving level 5 even when compared with similar schools. The school reached its realistic target for mathematics in 2001. During the inspection standards were judged to be above average. Pupils understand the use of place value in their mental calculations and are able to employ a range of strategies for obtaining correct answers. They perform written calculations accurately and are able to solve written problems satisfactorily, although this skill is still relatively weak. Pupils use their numeracy skills confidently in geography, history and science work which involves measuring, angles and graphs.

11 Teacher assessment for science at Key Stage 1 in 2001 gave very high scores at the expected level 2, but with higher attainers doing relatively less well at level 3. At Key Stage 2 test results were well above average when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools and these have been consistently high over the long term. Boys and girls do equally well. The trend in science results is similar to that found nationally and standards have risen significantly since the last inspection. Higher attainers do as well as their peers. Pupils have

good scientific knowledge and are able to make sensible predictions and undertake investigations sensibly. Older pupils understand the need for a fair test and learn how to explain results and generalise principles from their practical work, although they rarely devise their own investigations.

12 Attainment meets national expectations in art, geography, history, ICT, physical education and religious education at both key stages, but standards in music are below expectations and in design and technology are well below. Standards have been maintained in art, history, physical education and religious education since the last inspection, improved in geography and ICT, but not maintained in design and technology and music. In art pupils enhance the work done in other subjects, but drawing skills are weak. Pupils have good mapping skills and a sound knowledge of places in geography, while they are able to elicit information from a range of historical sources of evidence. ICT is used effectively to support literacy and numeracy skills but is not incorporated into all subjects and use of control is limited. Pupils have reasonably accurate games and gymnastic skills and are able to work expressively and collaboratively in dance. In religious education pupils explore emotions such as fear and have sound knowledge of Christian beliefs and celebrations, but understanding of other faiths is not as deep. Pupils' singing is poor and their confidence in composing is limited. Although they do cookery and make other products they have limited skills in designing and evaluating a range of artefacts.

13 Pupils with special educational needs, who work in small groups withdrawn from the classroom, make good progress with their learning. They work towards suitable individual targets set for their learning in their individual education plans. Good links between class teachers and classroom support teachers ensure that knowledge of pupils' learning is shared and progress is monitored. Within the classroom, the level of support varies, as does the match of work to need. However, in lessons observed, pupils with reading, writing and spelling difficulties were receiving extra help and so making at least steady progress. Some effective support in Year 5 with pupils with specific learning difficulties on the higher stages of support, enables them to make good progress. There are no pupils at the early stages of speaking English although a few pupils are bilingual. All pupils speak English confidently and write English with growing competence. They are actively encouraged to make contributions in lessons, make similar progress to the rest of school groups and work in a similar range of ability groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. At the time of the previous inspection pupils had very positive attitudes to school and discussed their work willingly and with interest. This situation has been maintained and pupils currently show considerable enthusiasm for learning. In the majority of situations pupils work purposefully, demonstrate interest and have positive attitudes. Inspectors saw noteworthy examples of this in a science lesson when pupils added to their learning by their sustained interest in the investigation. During a lesson in English, pupils worked independently and maintained concentration when positioning adverbs in a set sentence in as many sensible ways as possible. A significant majority of parents replying to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting agreed their children like coming to school. In mathematics and science pupils handle and share resources sensibly and they worked together co-operatively during physical education where they were eager to take a role in a team game. In an ICT lesson they took turns fairly and waited for each other to complete each task.

15 The previous inspection praised pupils' behaviour and inspectors during the current inspection found it still to be a strength of the school. The behaviour of pupils in the classroom and when moving around the school is very good although if lessons are slow

paced or lack focus pupils do display signs of restlessness. The behaviour of pupils in situations outside lessons is often better. In the dining hall and playground, pupils demonstrate a mature self-discipline that makes a positive contribution to their social and personal development. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected and this results in consistently good and orderly behaviour throughout the school. Parents have no concerns about behaviour. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed the school has an 'unspoken way' of encouraging good behaviour that is very successful. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

16 Pupils respond willingly and reliably to opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school. All pupils have responsibilities within their classrooms and for keeping shared areas tidy and some pupils help to keep the playground free of litter. Older pupils come in early to help prepare their classrooms. Pupils enjoy being register monitors, preparing the hall for assemblies and enjoy their involvement in fundraising activities run through the parents' fundraising group. Pupils carry out these responsibilities sensibly and maturely. All these responsibilities make a contribution to pupils' personal development. When talking to pupils, inspectors found them to be polite, friendly and interesting.

17 Relationships in school are very good as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The respect shown by pupils for the feelings and values of others is very good and no incidences of unkind behaviour between pupils were seen. Inspectors saw kind and caring attitudes between pupils of the same age and between older and younger pupils. One Year 2 pupil comforted another who felt unwell in a music lesson, for instance. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting agreed pupils get on well together and display loyalty towards each other. There were no incidents of bullying seen or reported during the inspection and none were mentioned by parents at the pre-inspection meeting. Pupils form positive relationships with each other, with teachers and with other adults, including visitors. Pupils work and play together collaboratively in groups and pairs. The very good quality of relationships between pupils and teachers has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and achievement.

18 Attendance at the school is very good with figures well above national averages. Pupils are keen to come to school and are generally punctual. This enables lessons to begin promptly and the school day to get off to a good start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19 The overall quality of the teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, but is still not consistent across all age groups. Across the school 20 per cent of lessons observed were very good, 40 per cent good, 34 per cent satisfactory, 4 per cent unsatisfactory and 2 per cent poor. In the Foundation Stage teaching was never less than good with 23 per cent of lessons very good, while in the upper juniors over a third of lessons were very good, a fifth satisfactory and the rest good. Although there was no unsatisfactory teaching in the infants, a lower proportion of lessons was very good (13 per cent) and good (40 per cent). As at the time of the last inspection the least good lessons were observed in the lower juniors with only 8 per cent of lessons being better than satisfactory and 23 per cent had shortcomings.

20 Literacy is soundly taught with an appropriate focus on the basic skills of reading and writing. While there is regular consolidation of this work through the work pupils do subsequently in groups, there is often insufficient challenge, especially for higher attainers. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects. The teaching of numeracy is consistently sound and better in the infants and Years 5 and 6. The National Numeracy Strategy is well used and pupils are becoming confident at a range of strategies for mental arithmetic and are effectively taught basic computational skills.

Teachers use a range of resources to help pupils grasp new work and deploy classroom assistants to provide good support for lower attainers.

21 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is effective because of the thorough planning for the Early Learning Goals and the use of assessment data to ensure activities are structured to build on previous learning. There is a planned purpose for play activities as well as more formal sessions in reception. Higher attainers are regularly challenged and all pupils learn to make choices and develop their independence. The basic skills of reading, writing and number are well grounded, regularly practised and create firm foundations for later learning. All the adults work effectively as a team and are vigilant about what children are doing so that they are on hand to demonstrate, support, instruct and encourage whenever necessary. This regular feedback and the well-focused work ensure children learn to use their time well, concentrate and work diligently.

22 While good planning is a feature of the best lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, even if objectives are not explicitly written, a lack of clear objectives is evident whenever there are shortcomings. Where planning is not sufficiently clear, teachers are not supported by whole-school schemes of work and procedures which enable them to decide exactly what pupils need to learn and how this can be taught effectively. In a Year 6 music lesson, for instance, pupils are introduced to the themes of songs from World War II, but there is no direct teaching of any musical skill. Even in the best lessons teachers seldom conclude by recapitulating the objective and encouraging pupils to state how far they have achieved it which means that pupils are not fully involved in understanding what they have learnt. Where lessons are well planned, teachers incorporate a good range of activities and use a variety of methods to ensure pupils are able to apply their skills and knowledge to different situations. In a numeracy lesson in Year 2, for instance, pupils counted in twos using a number line, a counting stick both horizontally and vertically and oral repetition. Similarly, in the more effective lessons useful links are made with work in other subjects so that pupils understand the relevance of what they are doing and how it relates to what they have done before. In Year 5 the map work for geography is based on the routes of the Spanish Armada which reinforces basic atlas use while learning what happened in Tudor times; in literacy the same class use an account of Sir Francis Drake's life.

23 In less successful lessons much of the recording is heavily reliant on worksheets. These are not always suitable for the pupils or fail to provide an appropriate progression because they are easier than work done previously. This occurred in a Year 4 literacy lesson when higher attaining pupils recorded adverbs using a worksheet, which limited their ideas and failed to use their extensive vocabularies. Teachers are generally good at developing pupils' speaking skills by introducing the correct technical vocabulary and encouraging descriptive language. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were asked for a range of words to write about *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. They contributed 'talons' and 'nipped' as well as a range of adjectives to describe the seagulls before the selection of 'greedy'. One pupil confidently suggested reducing the length of the sentence by saying the food was packed in 'separate plastic bags' and this was used to edit the model. Resources are often well used to support pupils' learning. Whiteboards for the instant assessment of pupils' knowledge of number are used in Year 5, for instance, and spreadsheets are deployed to solve mathematical problems. Meanwhile in a Year 1/2 numeracy lesson pupils have access to plastic shapes, sorting trays, adhesive shapes and Carroll diagrams to help them with their class work. Less successful lessons are often ended with no more than a general overview of what pupils have done. In the best lessons the concluding plenary session offers pupils the opportunity to apply or extend their learning as in Year 6 where pupils end their numeracy lesson on perimeter by applying the formula to polygons.

24 During plenary and introductory sessions teachers' questioning is usually pertinent and enables pupils to contribute ideas and thoughts as well as recalled factual knowledge. At best, the questioning also encourages pupils to reason, infer or generalise. At the conclusion of the Year 6 science lesson pupils summarise what affects the fall of their autogyros, for instance, and in Year 4 geography pupils offer reasons for pollution. In most lessons teachers also make timely interventions which ensure pupils are able to fulfil the requirements of the tasks set. At the most effective such interventions make pupils aware of how successful their work is, as well as ways in which it can be developed, amended or refined. Some teachers effectively add further challenges as in Year 1/2 art where the pupils explored different shades of black created by pencils and charcoal, and the teacher asked pupils to find the way to create the darkest and shiniest. Where teachers lack confidence in what they are teaching, particularly in music, this is a weakness, however, and pupils do not know what they need to do to get better. In studying World War II songs in a Year 6 music lesson, the singing is poor but no guidance is provided to help pupils perform more tunefully. While marking of pupil' work can also be effective, there is no consistency in the type of feedback given so pupils do not always know what they next need to focus on to improve.

25 While the best lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils concentrate and work productively for the duration of the lesson, there are too many sessions which make too little demand on pupils' efforts. Similarly, while some teachers effectively set tasks which are challenging to the highest attainers, there are too many occasions, especially in the lower juniors, when expectations of pupils are not high enough to ensure all pupils are making maximum progress. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3, for instance, on quick completion of a worksheet, search for further examples of spelling patterns in the dictionary, but this task continues without a deadline for a long time and pupils make little progress. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs are often given the targeted support of the class teacher or helped by regular discussion with classroom assistants who work alongside them giving them the confidence to make an effort. In a Year 1/2 literacy lesson, one pupil manages to write 'Hoot is not a fit owl' independently as a result of this type of assistance. Classroom support teachers have expertise and provide high quality support. Some support, particularly for improving spelling and knowledge of letters and sounds, follows established guidelines such as Additional Literacy Strategy work. Lessons in withdrawal groups have clear targets with small steps planned for learning. Clear assessments support this next step in learning and progress is shared with the pupil. Levels of differentiated work vary from class to class, but if classroom assistants are present then quality of support is high.

26 Most teachers manage pupils well so that they are interested and attentive. They have effective strategies for engaging most pupils in the work. Nevertheless, a few lessons are less purposeful than intended because of a few demanding or disinterested pupils.

27 Regular homework is set for the upper juniors, which ensures pupils acquire the good work habits needed to benefit from secondary education. Some of this work is interesting to pupils and well planned to be relevant to or reinforce class work. Year 6 pupils, for instance, practise further the work on perimeter introduced in numeracy. However, too many worksheets are given which are not designed to support the learning of essential knowledge and skills from daily lessons, and some of the work is not well matched to pupils' needs. Higher attainers are, for instance, often provided with lists of words they can already spell. Class time is wasted where teachers allocate sessions to setting homework instead of giving tasks related to work being done in a particular lesson. Practice on this setting arrangement and for the actual information given to parents is not consistent across the school.

In order to improve the consistency of teaching the school requires:

- A clear schoolwide planning system which makes it explicit exactly what pupils will learn with reference to National Curriculum attainment targets;

- Purposeful plenary sessions which extend, apply or generalise the main objective;
- School-wide procedures for providing pupils with constructive verbal and written feedback;
- Consistent challenge for higher attainers and the opportunity to make choices across the curriculum in all classes;
- Common practice over homework which is known to parents;
- Sharing of good practice and opportunities for teachers to assist colleagues.

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

28 Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. It meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, religious education, sex education, health education and drugs awareness. Although the curriculum is broad it lacks balance and relevance for Castlefields pupils. The structure does not ensure optimum progress for all pupils. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned. Pupils with special educational needs have suitable individual education plans so that they can make regular progress in basic skills and these are used well to provide suitable work when pupils are withdrawn for additional support.

29 Although there are policy statements for each subject, schemes of work are not always detailed and coherent. Except in English and mathematics, there are no effective assessment procedures so subjects cannot be planned to ensure that pupils build effectively on what they already know and can do. This is particularly important in a school where pupils have high level speaking and reading skills and there are a significant number of higher attaining pupils who require regular challenge and the opportunity to make choices and take decisions. Opportunities to problem-solve, investigate their own lines of enquiry (particularly in science), to evaluate and appraise, design and create and for pupils to involve themselves in role-play and drama are limited even in subjects where these are intended to be significant features. ICT is still largely used to reinforce learning in other subjects rather than for extension. As a result, chances to be imaginative, creative and analytical are few. This is similar to the situation described at the time of the previous inspection report. There are good arrangements for personal, social and health education which assist in helping pupils to be mature and responsible as well as informing them about maintaining their health and welfare.

30 Medium-term plans are in outline only and do not show how content is matched to different ability groups within classes. Topics are not precisely linked to National Curriculum attainment targets or levels. Learning objectives are too often vague and merely describe activities. There is no overview of individual subjects, except English and mathematics, to show continuity and progression or specific skills development. There is no consistent format for planning.

31 There are very effective strategies for teaching basic skills in English and mathematics. There are good links between subject areas, for instance in history, geography and science texts are used in literacy lessons. Good opportunities are provided in history for different forms of writing – diary, letter, autobiography and narrative. There are good links between science and geography, science and mathematics and between history and art to provide relevance for pupils.

32 Curriculum planning in the Foundation Stage is good. It is linked closely to the six areas of learning for the key stage. There is clear planned progression through the two classes. Planning shows how areas of learning link into the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 to cater for more able children. Skills development is identified and many play activities have specific learning objectives. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

33 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, but some pupils are withdrawn from planned class activities for focused special needs support or music teaching. Teachers do their best to ensure they have an opportunity to catch up.

34 The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits to places of interest. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have opportunities for extended residential visits. These support their personal and social development and contribute well to curriculum subjects, especially geography, science and physical education. There have been occasional links with local industry but this aspect is underdeveloped. There is very good provision for extra-curricular club activities including chess, gardening, music and a range of sports and athletics. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in local events and inter-school matches and competitions. Peripatetic instrument lessons are also offered.

35 Good links with the local secondary school ensure easy transfer for Year 6 pupils. Whilst there has been some curriculum liaison for English and mathematics, links between other subject co-ordinators and with other local primary schools to ensure consistency and relevance are few.

36 The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound overall. Provision for spiritual development, judged unsatisfactory in the previous inspection, has improved and is now satisfactory. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and good provision for social development. Provision for pupils' cultural development remains satisfactory.

37 Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and the school fully meets the requirements for the act of worship. Greater opportunities are now provided in school and class assemblies, for pupils to reflect on their own feelings and their place in the wider world. In Year 1, younger pupils discuss what makes them feel afraid and suggest to whom they may turn for help. They are given time for quiet thought and compose a simple prayer thanking God for his help. In Year 6, pupils consider the importance of the act of remembrance and why and how we keep memories alive. Teachers encourage pupils to share their ideas, and respect and value them. However, they miss the opportunity to develop a sense of amazement in everyday lessons, such as in art and poetry, or create an atmosphere for contemplation through music.

38 Moral development is very well promoted through the school's discipline policy. Parents are happy that the school teaches pupils what is right and what is wrong and that teachers provide good role models of fair play. Ninety per cent of parents think the school helps pupils to become more mature and responsible. Class rules are understood and carried out effectively and pupils are encouraged to make positive decisions about their conduct and attitudes. Individual teachers have their own systems for rewarding good behaviour. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to discuss wider moral issues, such as the way in which pollution is destroying the natural environment. Throughout the school, pupils show a high level of respect for each other and for adults and are happy to share each other's achievements.

39 Provision for the pupils' social development is good. Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and with other pupils. They have a natural curiosity about the world and show concern for those less fortunate through fundraising activities and support of charities. They take an interest in their school environment by designing and planting a 'wild flower garden' and support the wider community by helping to plant a copse nearby. In Year 5, pupils benefit from sharing new experiences during their residential visit to Plas Caerdeon in Wales. Pupils are expected to be kind to each other and courteous to visitors. The school

provides useful opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for routine administrative tasks, but there are fewer chances for older pupils to show initiative.

40 Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Pupils study their local cultural heritage and enjoy researching information about the way in which Bridgnorth has developed over time. The school makes good use of visits to places of local interest, such as Ironbridge, using its links with tile-making to stimulate creative work in school. Whilst religious education lessons provide the chance for pupils to find out about other faiths, there are fewer opportunities to learn about other cultures and ways of life. In a similar way, wider cultural influence is not explored in music, dance and art within school.

To improve the curriculum the school requires:

- A coherent scheme of work for each subject which identifies clear learning objectives and is linked to National Curriculum attainment targets and levels to show continuity and progression in knowledge and skills development through both key stages;
- Work which is relevant to Castlefields pupils, being planned to meet the needs of articulate, mature and often higher attaining youngsters;
- To use available assessment data to ensure planned work builds on prior learning at the optimum rate

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41 Castlefields Primary School takes good care of its pupils as it did at the time of the last inspection. The school's atmosphere is supportive and happy and makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress. The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are good. The school has good relations with outside agencies involved in pupil care. There are two trained first aiders on the staff. All necessary procedures are in place for reporting and recording cases of accident or illness. The school's comprehensive health and safety policy is based on local authority guidelines. The site manger is involved with the headteacher in termly health and safety audits and the headteacher reports to governors on the outcomes of monitoring health and safety performance. The risk assessment policy follows local authority guidelines and includes details for procedures for carrying out assessment in school and for off-site visits. The governors are aware of the need to provide a safe environment for pupils and staff.

42 Supervision during lunchtime is satisfactorily organised through a rota of four supervisors working in pairs. Lunchtime is a very orderly occasion as pupils behave in a mature way and take responsibility for their own discipline. Pupils treat supervisors with politeness and courtesy. Supervisors make positive comments for good behaviour and attitudes directly to pupils. There is useful daily contact between the supervisors, the headteacher and the class teachers.

43 There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. There are no whole school rules although a number of classes display their own rules and two operate their own reward systems. Bullying is very rare, but any instances are dealt with quickly and effectively. There is an expectation of a high standard of behaviour that is consistent throughout the school. The level of behaviour expected is clearly understood by pupils and parents. Good work is valued by teachers and mentioned during assembly when pupils may read their own work or play a piece of music. Awards for achievements made by pupils during activities undertaken outside school are presented during assemblies.

44 The procedures for monitoring absence and improving attendance are good. The reasons for unauthorised absence are usefully stated in the school's prospectus. The

headteacher monitors absence carefully and the school reminds parents of their responsibilities through letters and at parents' meetings. The school advises parents on the undesirability of taking their children out of school during term time for holidays. Staff know pupils well and monitor their personal development in an informal way although it does not have a formal system for recording personal development.

45 The school has made some improvements in the formal assessment of pupils' attainment since the time of the last inspection. These procedures have begun to give a clearer picture of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Information from the nursery together with data from assessments of pupils on entry to the main school provides a baseline from which progress can be measured. This is part of the process that ensures the early identification and support of pupils with special educational needs. As pupils continue through the school, teachers use observations, discussions and the marking of work to make informal assessments. Further information on pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills is obtained from the results in non-statutory tests in Years 3 and 5 and national tests at the end of each key stage. There are no arrangements at present for the formal assessment of progress in science and the foundation subjects.

46 Performance data from the end of key stage tests in English and mathematics is analysed by subject co-ordinators to identify areas of weakness. The resulting analysis is given to teachers with the purpose of informing their planning. There is also an agreed format for the evaluation of skills in literacy and numeracy to aid target setting. These procedures represent an improvement in the use of assessment data in curriculum planning for mathematics and English, but the evaluation of their impact requires consistent monitoring. In this respect the role of co-ordinators is insufficiently developed.

47 The progress of pupils as they move through the school is tracked using a system of class records that highlight attainment in elements of literacy and numeracy. This system is proving valuable to class teachers, particularly at the start of the school year. The accumulation of data is providing general targets from which individual pupil targets can be obtained. This process needs to be further refined but is already providing a tool for focusing on the progress of individuals. The monitoring of pupils' progress in other areas of the curriculum is based largely on informal transmission of information and is lacking in consistency.

Improve assessment procedures by:

- Developing procedures for the monitoring of performance in science and other foundation subjects;
- Extending the systems for monitoring the progress of pupils in English and mathematics to other curriculum areas.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48 There is a good partnership between parents and the school. The previous inspection reported parents being interested and involved in their children's learning and this has continued. Parents' views of the school are positive and the school has gained the support of a significant number of parents. The majority responding to the questionnaire agree or strongly agree that the school works closely with them. However, a significant minority disagree with this statement. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed that they receive copious amounts of useful information about what is happening in school. Letters to parents are good in relation to content and presentation. The school prospectus is well presented and contains useful and relevant information. There are two parents' meetings each year held in the first half of the autumn term and towards the end of the summer term

after annual reports have been received. Some of the concern over information about pupil progress is due to the timing of these meetings. Governors sometimes attend parents' meetings and gather parental views and opinions on different aspects of the school, for example homework. There are no meetings for parents related to the curriculum and information related to topics being studied by pupils is not sent home. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting felt they would like to know in advance what pupils are to study. A number of parents help in school on a regular basis and support staff by helping with activities including running a book club. There is an active fundraising committee that all parents are invited to join. It provided funds to purchase items not covered by the school budget and organises social events for parents, children and staff.

49 The home-school agreement was devised with the help of parents and pupils and is used as a reminder if procedures are not being followed. A copy of the agreement is included in the prospectus and has strengthened co-operation between parents and staff.

50 The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree to being kept well informed about how their child is getting on. A significant minority disagree with this statement and the school could usefully investigate the reasons for this dissatisfaction. A number of parents attending the pre-inspection meeting felt annual reports, although lengthy, do not necessarily give information about what the pupils know and can do or set targets related to future work. Reports scrutinised during the inspection contained a thorough and systematic record of pupils' academic progress and some information on personal development but targets for the next school year were not included.

51 The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree their child has the right amount of work to do at home. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed younger pupils receive sufficient homework. Parents of older pupils had experienced inconsistencies with homework finding tasks not sufficiently challenging and a lack of clarity on the purpose of worksheets. The school's homework policy, that is available to parents on request, contains details of the type of homework that will be set and the days on which it is given and expected back. Older pupils have a written list of the class teacher's expectations in relation to homework. Work scrutiny showed that good use is sometimes made of 'topic work' that is regularly set and completed at home. Pupils in Year 6 have undertaken a science project and for history there was evidence of individual study on hospitals in Victorian times. Inspectors saw good use of homework for older pupils and all pupils taking reading books home. However, inspectors agree with parents that the use of homework is inconsistent.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52 The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. There is a clear determination to maintain high standards in basic subjects and to maintain the positive ethos which promotes mature behaviour and positive attitudes amongst the pupils. There is currently only a part-time deputy headteacher and this has slowed progress towards certain goals and created insecurities in management of some areas. Responsibilities are currently not securely defined because of this temporary situation. The headteacher has been co-ordinator for special educational needs since September working from a structure and procedures already established by the previous co-ordinator. While the system is maintaining itself at the moment this is only satisfactory as a temporary measure. The other co-ordinators currently play a small part in developing the curriculum. Responsibility for delivery of the curriculum and ensuring that provision is satisfactory is not delegated to the postholders, although literacy, numeracy and ICT subject leaders have begun to be involved in monitoring. Although co-ordinators can request resources for their areas of responsibility, they are not expected to handle the finance nor take responsibility for what they purchase.

Similarly, the role does not involve reporting on what has been achieved and setting priorities for future development, so postholders cannot contribute to identifying critical shortcomings for whole school attention.

53 The school does identify appropriate priorities within the School Development Plan (SDP) and these are supported by careful financial planning. However, some of the shortcomings in the curriculum identified during the inspection had not been anticipated by senior staff, nor had anyone foreseen the failure to maintain standards in subjects, especially in design and technology and music. Nevertheless, actions taken on the agreed priorities have been effective and resulted in, for instance, significant improvement in writing results at Key Stage 1 and in the quality of writing throughout the school. Systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching have been established and used to support performance management procedures, but the process lacks the rigour and precision needed to pinpoint exactly what needs to be done subsequently. Although teaching has improved considerably as a result, there are still inconsistencies in the lower junior classes and no whole school procedures for important aspects such as planning. While teachers are committed to the school's aims and priorities, their individual efforts do not always ensure a concerted approach to improving provision.

54 The governing body effectively fulfils its statutory duties and is appropriately involved in the SDP and in ensuring the budget is set and monitored to support this plan. Governors question and challenge the proposals put before them using their expertise and experience, but rely heavily on the professionals to advise and guide them. This ensures that they have a good knowledge of standards as shown by national tests and a broad overview of other successes, but not necessarily potential weaknesses outside the tested subjects. Some minor omissions or errors occur in the prospectus and annual governors' report to parents.

55 In terms of financial matters, procedures are efficient, ensuring careful control and appropriate expenditure of specific grants. The school takes suitable account of best value principles in purchasing services and goods, and informally considers how effective its decisions have been in meeting the educational intentions, but there are no formal systems for challenging decisions. Similarly, when it is considered important to do so, as when parents requested an after-school club, there is appropriate consultation but arrangements are ad hoc. The school is beginning to use information and communication technology for a variety of useful purposes, but the age and type of some of the equipment has delayed its adoption across all possible uses such as recording curriculum planning, organisation and producing school-made worksheets.

56 There are sufficient teachers to cover the curriculum, although age groups vary in size making the maintenance of single age group classes difficult. As a result, parents are dissatisfied with the organisation of lower junior classes. There are good levels of classroom support assistants and these staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially benefiting lower attainers and those with special educational needs. Very good liaison exists between teachers and classroom assistants to ensure targets are used and the pattern of withdrawal and work organised to cause the minimum disruption to learning. Extra hours have been allocated to supporting ICT work and this is improving pupil progress. Because most of the professional development in recent years has been devoted to literacy, numeracy and ICT, there are some inadequacies in teachers' skills in teaching some creative and physical areas. New staff are appropriately introduced to school routines and well supported in their professional development.

57 The accommodation is adequate, although it has inconvenient features so that certain classroom areas are thoroughfares and cannot be closed off for potentially noisy activities. There is no outdoor play area for reception pupils and the nursery area is too small for these

older children. This has been recognised as an area for development by the school. Nevertheless, the school has enough room and access to ample outdoor space because of the adjacent secondary school grounds.

58 There are shortages of suitable resources in various subjects of the curriculum and in non-fiction library books. Some of these deficiencies have already been identified by the school or are already scheduled for replenishment or renewal, but shortages do currently adversely affect provision for art, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and religious education and outdoor play for reception children. ICT resources are due for enhancement through external funding and religious education artefacts have also been identified as needing to be increased. The non-fiction library contains too many outdated volumes.

To sharpen leadership and management the school should:

- Ensure co-ordinators take responsibility for -
 - planning and delivery of the curriculum;
 - standards;
 - the budget for agreed resource provision;
 - accountability for agreed priorities.
- Pinpoint the precise focus for monitoring provision, evaluate outcomes assiduously against this and use information acquired to ensure the correct action is taken to ensure improvement

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59 In order to raise standards even further and improve provision for all pupils the school should:

- **Raise standards in design and technology and music;**
(Paragraphs: 109 and 110 (design and technology) and 129 - 131 (music))
- **Improve the structure, relevance and coherence of the curriculum for infant and junior pupils and use of assessment to build on prior learning;**
(Paragraphs: 23, 27 - 30, 86, 89, 95, 97, 101, 104, 105, 107, 109, 110, 116, 122, 129, 131, 136, 142)
- **Ensure consistency in the quality of the teaching particularly in the juniors;;**
(Paragraphs: 20, 22 - 25, 27, 82, 89, 90, 95, 99, 96, 100, 115, 130)
- **Increase the rigour in monitoring and evaluating curricular provision;**
(Paragraphs: 53, 97, 103, 116, 122, 127, 136)
- **Provide opportunities for co-ordinators to develop the areas for which they are responsible.**
(Paragraphs: 52, 53, 97, 103, 107, 108, 116, 122, 127, 145)

The headteacher and governing body might also wish to consider the following minor issue:

- **Increase the opportunities for pupils to experience a range of different cultures.**
(Paragraphs: 40, 81, 107, 114, 127, 131, 136, 144)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	23	19	2	1	0
0	20	40	34	4	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	96
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	21	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	18
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	34	36	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (81)	92 (81)	97(86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	18	18
	Girls	21	20	21
	Total	34	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (81)	97 (86)	100 (100)
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	20
	Girls	11	11	13
	Total	27	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (89)	82 (86)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (85)	82 (84)	84 (91)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	186
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	127

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	398728
Total expenditure	398848
Expenditure per pupil	1749
Balance brought forward from previous year	12067
Balance carried forward to next year	11946

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	29	6	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	48	11	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	53	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	53	14	4	0
The teaching is good.	45	47	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	41	21	4	0
I would feel comfortable about the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	2	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	25	44	23	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	27	46	19	5	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	55	6	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	41	21	8	8

Other issues raised by parents

Progress of higher attainers.

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 Children start nursery at the beginning of the term in which they are four and move to reception at the beginning of the term in which they are five. All children have a full year in nursery but varying lengths of time in reception. Children attend nursery five mornings a week. They attend reception full time.

61 Attainment on entry to the nursery is above expectations for their age. Most children have good speaking skills. They speak clearly and in complete sentences describing their needs and experiences and are very familiar with books. Their physical skills are variable. While they have good pencil control, scissor control is variable. They control their bodies well in movement. Many children count out five objects correctly and count to ten accurately. Children's social skills are well developed. They attend to their own toilet and hygiene needs, mix well with other children and adults but they are less independent in dressing themselves and often expect to be helped.

62 There are very good links with parents, especially in nursery. Parents accompany children in the morning and settle them by engaging in prepared activities, such as colouring or puzzles. Parents help their children change the shared picture book. There is easy contact at the beginning and end of each session to exchange information. A very good information booklet has been produced for newcomers explaining how the nursery operates.

63 Teaching is always good and sometimes very good, especially in reception. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are carefully planned to build on what children already know and can do. In nursery, play activities supervised by an adult have specific learning objectives, others do not. Children's learning would be enhanced if all activities had a specific purpose rather than just 'to explore its potential'. In reception all activities are planned to extend or consolidate the specific learning objective of that lesson. In both classes, daily planning includes the teaching assistants. Extra help from parents and other volunteers is managed well and contributes to children's learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

64 The curriculum is well planned within the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Having been produced collaboratively by the two teachers, it shows progression towards the expected goals for the end of the key stage. It also identifies how knowledge and understanding of the world leads into National Curriculum science, history, geography, religious education and design technology so that more able children who achieve the expected goals are well catered for and make good progress. Progressive skills and techniques for art and craft are clearly defined.

65 Assessment is ongoing through informal observation. Achievement is recorded each term in the well produced local authority record book and shows clearly how well individual children are progressing. This is being used well in nursery but not continued throughout reception, where recording is usually against National Curriculum subjects after the first term.

66 Accommodation in nursery is barely adequate for the number of children attending. Indoor accommodation is too cramped for large toys, large building equipment or for physical activities. The resources and equipment are also barely adequate, many need replacing, as they are worn and unattractive. There is little evidence of equipment to introduce the multicultural nature of modern society. Outdoor provision is barely adequate. The hard play

area is small for the number of children, especially when the tricycles are being used or the grass is too wet. The new tumble screens and balance logs are a very good addition. There is no provision for climbing or sliding. The tricycles are too small for the children and do not allow them to develop balance or braking skills. There are sufficient balls and other small games equipment but few other suitable large outdoor toys.

67 Accommodation and resources in reception are satisfactory except for outdoor provision and large play equipment, although there is little evidence of multicultural resources. Children use the climbing apparatus in the school hall for climbing, sliding and balancing. The only secure outdoor play area is by the nursery. It has limitations because of its distance from the classroom and its use by the nursery. The hard play area there is too small for reception children. There are no suitable bicycles or large play equipment for reception children.

Personal, social and emotional development

68 Children make good progress through Foundation Stage. From the outset they are encouraged to be independent. Nursery 'plan, do and review' sessions encourage children to take responsibility for their own activities, which are carefully monitored by the teacher. Children learn to listen to one another during the planning and review stages. In play they learn to share and take turns, to care for the equipment and help tidy up at the end of each session. They are actively encouraged to undress and dress independently and not wait for adult help.

69 Reception children quickly learn the class routines. Good strategies are adopted so that children know what activities are available when they have finished the set task so they do not need to ask. This frees the teacher to concentrate on targeted children. Children are polite and very well behaved. They concentrate well, listen attentively and complete their set tasks diligently. Both classes provide a happy, well organised, supportive atmosphere in which children feel secure.

Communication, language and literacy

70 Children enter nursery with good speaking skills and a familiarity with books. They are encouraged to listen attentively to stories and join in singing nursery rhymes and songs. Children begin to identify aurally the initial sound of their own name and then recognise their name card during self-registration. An 'office' area provides a range of writing materials and office equipment, a computer, stapler, hole punch and treasury tags, so children begin making marks on paper to represent writing and compile little books. More able children begin to trace over and copy beneath captions to pictures. They write their own names and recognise some letter shapes; the most able children try to find words on display and write them independently. This is above average attainment for their age.

71 In reception, children build on their phonic awareness. Because of their high attainment, they are introduced to the literacy strategy in the first term. Most children recognise initial sounds aurally and visually. They start to blend simple three letter words, so that the most able children begin to read simple texts very quickly. Children recognise families of rhyming words. Very good teaching methods help them recognise how the initial letter changes to form these words. Most children write their own name independently and the more able children begin to attempt independent writing. Great care is taken to ensure that they use the correct letter formation. The computer is used very well to support letter and word recognition with appropriate programs. Children make good progress and achieve beyond the expected level.

Mathematical development

72 In nursery children enjoy singing counting rhymes. They practise counting to five and then ten whenever the opportunity arises. A very good feature is the regular session when several volunteers supervise children in small groups playing number and matching games. Children are grouped by ability so the less able practise counting objects to five and recognising the associated number. More able children match number cards to domino dots which add together to make five. All children know the primary and secondary colour names. They recognise basic plane shapes and some solid shapes. Children are aware of size, more able children begin pretend measuring of length. Children make good progress.

73 In reception children continue to develop their number awareness. They practise counting to ten and beyond. Children who are confident in counting objects and number recognition begin to add two sets together. The teacher uses practical apparatus very well to show children how two sets of frogs can be combined on a log and counted. She introduces the concept of counting on instead of re-counting the new set. This is good practice. More able children continue this addition in written form. They calculate one more than, and one less than a given number. Most children understand the concept and complete tasks by counting objects and recording the number. Less able children continue to develop their counting and recording knowledge. Good emphasis is placed on writing numbers correctly. Children recognise, sort and match basic plane and solid shapes. Appropriate computer programs are used regularly to reinforce learning. Children demonstrate increasing mathematical understanding by sorting coloured blocks on the computer screen. They make good progress and achieve beyond the expected level.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74 Children enter the nursery with the expected knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Topics and activities help them develop an understanding of past, present and future. Walks around the environment of the main school and adjacent secondary school and in the local neighbourhood introduce the idea of location. When reading a story about a farm, the teacher draws a very simple plan of where the main features might be. This is a good way to introduce the early stages of maps. Visits by the local emergency services and their equipment introduce children to people who may help them. Children look at builders at work and extend this to include bridge building. They explore their learning through role-play, dressing up and building with bricks, straws and card.

75 Reception children learn about nocturnal animals, their habitats and habits. They are introduced to this through a story about baby owls. This is linked to a topic on night-time and sources of light. Each term a different topic links all areas of learning to make it relevant to the children. Children display a very good understanding of animal nightlife using complex explanations of cause and effect. The pupils in reception learn to control the computer mouse by moving graphics to appropriate places in a picture. They achieve beyond the expected standard.

Physical development

76 Nursery children have few opportunities to develop physical skills. They need reassurance when balancing along the newly installed balance log. They cycle vigorously on the little tricycles but cannot develop greater balance or steering and braking skills through lack of equipment. There are no facilities for developing co-ordination through climbing and sliding. Children throw, catch, kick and aim balls and beanbags with appropriate accuracy. In the hall they move with awareness of space and generally avoid bumping into each other. They move in different ways, slowly, quickly and by hopping and jumping with appropriate control. They are at the expected level for their age.

77 Reception children have limited opportunities to develop co-ordination through using large apparatus. Outdoor facilities and equipment are unsatisfactory. The hall equipment is designed for older pupils. Children learn to move in different ways. They have a good awareness of space and their place in it and move with increasing control. Progress is sound.

Creative development

78 Nursery children have access to a satisfactory range of materials and resources to develop their creative awareness and skills. They have opportunities to explore different media, such as paint, crayons, felt pens, glue and sticky papers. They model with playdough and clay. In the hall, they express ideas in response to music. They act out events and characters in role-play and through dressing up. Most children keep time to simple rhythms. They enjoy singing nursery rhymes and songs and maintain a reasonable pitch. Their pictures and drawings of people are at least in line with expectations; some children produce very mature drawings of people, including detailed features.

79 Children continue to develop skills in reception through a variety of activities and media. They improve their control of paint and modelling media. In the hall, they use their imagination well when responding to music by moving in different ways. Children develop their imagination during story time, when they suggest reasons for things happening, and different ways in which the story might end. Progress is good.

ENGLISH

80 Over time, standards in the national tests in English have remained well above those found nationally for eleven year olds. Although results in the 2001 tests dipped to average levels, inspection findings indicate this year's standards have risen and are, once again, well above average. The large number of pupils with special educational needs in the 2001 Year 6 caused the temporary dip. Attainment at seven years of age in reading has remained well above the levels achieved nationally, but standards in writing have varied over time. Results in the 2001 national tests show writing has improved considerably and that attainment is now above the national average. The high standard in reading has been maintained.

81 The findings of this inspection indicate that attainment in English is well above average by the ages of seven years and eleven years. Speaking skills are of a high standard and contribute to learning in lessons in English and in other subjects. Pupils talk confidently and explain their thoughts and ideas clearly. Listening skills are also good.

82 Much has improved since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be similar to those found nationally. This is because basic skills with grammar and punctuation are taught successfully and are used with growing consistency by pupils in their own written

work. Initiatives to widen the range and purpose for writing are helping to raise standards, by enabling pupils to shape and organise their thoughts and ideas into stories and to structure non-fictional writing. The quality and range of reading books, about which a concern was voiced by parents, has improved and is motivating interest and improving skills with reading. It is also providing greater depth and challenge for pupils capable of reaching the higher reading levels. However, younger readers, attaining average levels, are often guided in their reading through structured reading schemes, which do not always offer an appropriate level of challenge.

83 A strength is the way in which literacy skills and writing are developed successfully in other subjects, such as in history. An instance is in Year 6, when pupils study World War II, and write accounts of the plight of evacuees or study the use of propaganda and persuasive language in posters. The school makes sound use of computers to record information and develop research skills.

84 An issue in the previous inspection related to the lack of guidelines for teaching some aspects of the National Curriculum. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has provided a clearer structure for English. Teachers plan clearly for 'class lesson' time in the literacy hour, and work with words and sentences progresses year on year. Effective questioning by teachers and the high quality of pupils' responses moves learning on. This is evident when pupils in Year 1 learn about vowels and consonants and use their new skills to write words independently. Similarly, Year 4 pupils consider how the place of adverbs in a sentence can alter meaning. In guided group time, independent work does not always ensure that the higher and average attaining pupils are working to the best of their abilities. An instance is when worksheets, linked to identifying and using rhyming words, consolidate rather than expand learning. In some class lessons, the size of shared texts is too small for all pupils to read and this is holding back learning.

85 The school works hard to provide the opportunity for all groups to learn and work together successfully. Pupils from minority ethnic groups speak and write English confidently and are making similar progress to others. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with work that is well matched to their individual needs. They are well supported by capable classroom support teachers, in small groups withdrawn from the classroom. There is no marked difference between the learning of boys and girls.

86 Throughout the school, pupils' speaking skills are of a high standard. The careful way in which pupils listen in lessons and their competent, spoken response, enables teaching and learning to flow at a good pace. Teachers build upon this strength in their lessons in English and in other subjects, by nurturing interest and enthusiasm through their questioning. An example is when Year 4 girls collaborate in a small group and explain that, 'pollution dirties, possibly intoxicates water and the earth; most pollution is from human waste'. A pupil in Year 1, writing about a ghost, shows how clearly pupils use talk to explain their thinking. 'I don't think ghosts have any arms, so I can't write that they pick up things'. By the end of the juniors, the vast majority of pupils are able to empathise, add to discussions and put forward their own point of view. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to act in role-play activities or to co-operate in presentations to the whole school.

87 Standards in reading are well above average by the ages of seven and eleven. From the start of school, very good skills with speaking enable pupils to explore and share books with enthusiasm. In the infant classes, reading skills are developed well, as pupils link letters with sounds and recall words by sight. By Year 2 the vast majority of pupils read with understanding in an accurate and fluent way. Although the school has improved the quality and range of fiction books, on occasions, average readers are capable of tackling harder and more exciting books. By the age of eleven years pupils read in a mature way and with a

deeper sense of meaning. They make choices of author and compare style and genre. Reading reviews give an interesting insight into just how many pupils enjoy reading. As one boy states, 'I would recommend this book to anyone with a good sense of humour. Philips Ardagh is a great author and I would like to read his next book.' Although the quality and range of fiction books has improved, the non-fiction library has some older, less up-to-date books, which need replacing. Texts giving insights into other cultures are relatively limited. In all year groups, less capable readers are unsure about how to find books in the library using the school's classification system.

88 Standards in writing are above the national average at seven years of age, whilst eleven year olds in school reach well above average standards. An emphasis on providing a purpose for writing and a chance to experiment with different forms is paying dividends. Younger pupils in Year 1 write simple sentences that make sense. This learning is built upon in Year 2, where there is a greater focus on spelling skills and developing longer pieces of personal writing. Good work with journalistic writing in Year 6 enables pupils to explore how writing is structured and to understand the purpose of headlines, introductory sentences and reported speech. Challenging work in Year 5, linked to an historical account, widens pupils' knowledge of how language was used in the past. By eleven years of age, pupils confidently shape their ideas and feelings in writing and can read through and improve their work. As yet, they have limited opportunities to make choices about the form their written work will take or to write longer, original pieces of personal writing.

89 Handwriting and presentation varies considerably from class to class and can be untidy, particularly at the start of the juniors. However, handwriting skills are being taught throughout the school and there are signs of neater writing and better presented work being produced by Years 5 and 6. Given the higher standards many pupils reach in English, skills with spelling are lower than expected. In the past, spelling tests were too easy for many pupils and spelling rules and patterns were not consistently taught and developed year on year. However, effective teaching in the upper junior school is helping to raise standards, by providing spelling tests matched to ability levels, and by introducing new spellings linked to class topics.

90 Teaching is variable, but is sound overall. In lessons where teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge and work is well paced and holds challenge for all ability groups and as a result pupils are keen to learn, work well in different collaborative groups and value the contributions of others. In less effective lessons, where the pace of learning is slower and work is not planned specifically enough to meet the needs of more capable learners there are occasional pockets of restlessness and inattention, particularly in the lower junior classes. Teachers use the class time and the plenary (feedback session) successfully in the literacy hour, to teach new knowledge and skills. However, at times, work in guided group time consolidates rather than develops this learning. An improvement since the previous inspection is the use of everyday assessment. Work is regularly marked and at its best offers encouragement and guidance with improving literacy skills. Older pupils are encouraged to respond to comments and so take a more active role in their own self-assessment.

91 The subject is managed by two co-ordinators, who work well together to provide a clear way forward for the subject. They have helped to put in place initiatives to improve writing and have identified the need to raise standards in spelling.

92 Resources for the literacy hour are appropriate to meet the needs of the pupils. The school is widening the quality and range of fiction books throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

93 The standards of attainment in mathematics as seen at the time of the inspection are average in Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2 which is an improvement since the last inspection. Current standards in Year 2 are not as high as those achieved in the 2001 national tests because of a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs although pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because of the support they receive. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys although girls do slightly better overall. Those pupils with English as an additional language have a good facility with language and are not disadvantaged in their mathematical progress. High attainers tend to do less well than their peers at Key Stage 1 although they improved in the most recent national tests. The high percentage of pupils reaching level 5 in national tests over recent years confirms that high attainers do well at Key Stage 2.

94 Since the time of the last inspection the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully and the school is developing an early mathematics initiative in order to support the lower attainers at Key Stage 1. Appropriate resources have been purchased to support the new strategy and the quality of teaching has improved following training and opportunities to visit other schools and observe exemplary teachers. The results of national tests are analysed by the co-ordinators in order to determine areas of weakness. Using and applying mathematics was identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection and is being addressed by teachers through advisor-led training in problem solving. Performance data is also analysed, enabling targets to be set and the school is evaluating a system whereby pupils are set personal performance targets. The school has a better overview of progress in mathematics since evolving an agreed format that enables pupils to be tracked as they move through the school.

95 Teaching is never less than satisfactory in both key stages. Lesson plans are sound, showing the learning objectives and how they relate to the mental and main phases of the lesson. They do not however, follow a consistent format from class to class. Classes are well managed and classroom assistants are effectively deployed in support of individuals and groups. Pupils have sound numeracy skills and the majority can explain their mental strategies with confidence. All abilities make good progress in shape work and data-handling and they are improving in their ability to apply mathematical knowledge within a problem-solving context. The majority of pupils across both key stages are well behaved, show interest, and demonstrate good social skills when working collaboratively.

96 Teaching is generally good in Key Stage 1 and consistently good in the upper end of Key Stage 2. Lessons are good when the teacher is well prepared and the activities are well matched to the ability of the pupils. They are even more effective when the learning is challenging and the lesson proceeds at a brisk pace. An example of such an effective lesson was in Year 2 when pupils were involved throughout and had understanding of the purpose of the activity. They acquired new knowledge and were able to produce block graphs to illustrate the results of their number work. These characteristics were also evident in Year 5 where the teacher constantly challenged the pupils to explain their thinking and gave relevance to the subsequent calculations by setting them in a familiar, historical context. The pupils sustained their concentration and were able to use a spreadsheet to solve a series of mathematical problems.

97 Mathematical resources are sufficient to support the teaching within the National Numeracy Strategy. There is insufficient application of information and communications technology to support and enhance learning. The mathematical language of 'Logo' is insufficiently employed and the potential for presenting problem-solving tasks within good quality software is largely undeveloped. A strength in the management of mathematics is that it is shared between co-ordinators who teach at the ends of each key stage. Their work in

evaluating data from national tests and other performance indicators is beginning to provide an overview of the subject. This improving picture does not extend to the monitoring of teaching however, and in this respect the role of the co-ordinator is insufficiently developed. Promoting consistency between classes and maintaining the recent improvement in standards at Key Stage 1 remain priorities for development.

SCIENCE

98 Standards at the end of each key stage are well above average. This reflects the results of national tests in 2001 and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds. All pupils achieve the expected level for their age and a high proportion achieves the higher levels. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

99 In most lessons teaching is good. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to learn through practical investigations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are generally well planned with clear learning objectives. Pupils are managed effectively so that they learn efficiently through good practical activities. In the rare ineffective lesson, there is confusion in the planning, and class management is not securely established so that pupils do not pay attention, listen properly or make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding.

100 Pupils in Year 1 have good opportunities to investigate images produced by various reflective surfaces, such as a shiny tin, spoons and concave mirrors. Through play they learn that some surfaces distort images and some invert them. Pupils in Year 4 are very articulate in explaining their predictions when testing different soils for drainage. They are surprised by the carefully undertaken test results and suggest they should repeat them to check the results. Most older pupils undertake investigations sensibly, although a very small minority spoil their work by being silly. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the need for one variable when undertaking fair tests. The organisation of a carousel of investigations in Year 5 is very effective, so that all pupils have good opportunities to learn how pitch and volume of sounds can be varied and the best materials to use for sound insulation. Most of the work planned is well matched to pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, but worksheets are used too often, especially in the upper junior classes. Some of these are inappropriate.

101 Whilst there is good provision for pupils to learn through practical experience, the development of this aspect of science is too prescriptive for the older, more able pupils. They should have opportunities to develop the higher enquiry skills by formulating their own questions to investigate scientifically, to devise their own experiments and draw their own conclusions using their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain their results. This aspect is more important than working towards National Curriculum level 6 in factual knowledge. Insufficient use is made of ICT.

102 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and make good progress while the few pupils for whom English is an additional language are not disadvantaged and make similar progress.

103 The co-ordinator has produced a clear policy and outline programme of study. However, it is unsatisfactory that there is no coherent, whole school scheme of work with clearly identified learning objectives linked to National Curriculum attainment targets and levels for each year group. It is also unsatisfactory that there is no associated structured assessment system to monitor the acquisition of learning and skills development. Because the teaching and pupils' work through the school is not regularly monitored there is no overview of provision and existing good practice is not shared to develop better consistency

throughout the school. There are no established curricular links with other primary schools or the nearby secondary school.

104 The school makes good use of its immediate environment to support learning about living processes. Visits to local places of interest, such as the Jackfield Tile Museum and the Ironbridge power station are used well to support aspects of the curriculum. There is good use of science texts during literacy lessons, but writing for different purposes is less well promoted because of the use of worksheets especially in the upper classes. Resources to support topics are sound.

ART AND DESIGN

105 At seven and eleven years of age, pupils achieve similar levels to those found nationally and all pupils make steady progress. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the good links between art and other subjects. Pupils in Year 4 use their imagination to create silhouettes of trees to enliven their work in poetry. They make steady progress as they experiment with different colour washes to create images of sunsets with good effect. Art is used to enhance work in history, as pupils reflect on how artists' styles and techniques have changed over time. Little use is made of information and communication technology within the art curriculum. In Year 6, pupils study posters from World War II and create similar bold images in their own work, whilst another class group visit an Anderson shelter and make observational drawings. Although progress in this activity is satisfactory, work in sketchbooks generally shows limited improvement with drawing skills and the use of proportion. There is a lack of guidance on how to improve these skills.

106 In infant classes the theme of bonfire night is used effectively to develop techniques with painting and collage. Pupils explore colour and texture as they create exciting images of fireworks and blazing fires. They also use the work of artists, such as Mondrian, as a stimulus for creating something new themselves, for instance, using flowing, curved lines in their paintings of abstract shapes, instead of the straight, angular shapes used by the artist.

107 Teaching in art is sound. Individual lessons are well planned and paced and teachers encourage experimentation. This encourages pupils to share ideas and resources amicably. They enjoy explaining their intentions for their work and are willing to make changes for improvement. An example is when pupils in Year 6 concentrate on producing the correct size and shape for lettering on posters, but are critical of the outcome and plan to put matters right. However, although there is an overall structure for what is to be taught and learned, teachers are unclear about the way in which skills are to be built upon year on year. This is evident in the lack of progression with skills development in drawing or work with clay and textiles. As yet, lessons provide few opportunities for pupils to make choices about the materials used in their work or to compare and appreciate the work of artists from different cultures.

108 The newly appointed co-ordinator has begun to plan the way forward, including provision for skills development. Resources in art are appropriate to support pupils' learning. The school makes good use of the expertise of craftsmen from the wider community, to enhance work with clay and tile making.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109 No design and technology lessons were timetabled during the inspection, but scrutiny of work, interviews with pupils and staff and detailed analysis of planning provide evidence that attainment is well below expectations throughout the school and standards have not been maintained since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils recently considered and recorded

preferences about aspects of milkshakes such as taste and appearance before deciding which flavour they would like to prepare, but Year 6 pupils only take account of similar simple factors when appraising their wartime carrot cookies. Although pupils have regular opportunities to cook, these usually involve following a given recipe and any evaluation is very basic. Pupils have constructed artefacts with clay, cardboard and recycled materials, but other materials are seldom used in lessons and the items which are made are often decorative rather than functional. Pupils do not complete the whole process of designing, making and evaluating products regularly. They do not record their ideas and intentions using increasingly more complex plans and any evaluations tend to be brief and restricted because of the use of worksheets for the purpose, despite pupils' good reading and writing skills. In Year 3, for instance, the effectiveness of cardboard packaging has been considered, but conclusions are limited. Pupils do not understand what design and technology involves and when talking about their work they are confused as to which activities undertaken were design and technology. Progress for all pupils including those with special educational needs is erratic.

110 The design and technology curriculum lacks balance and progression. There is an over-emphasis on cookery at the expense of using a range of materials for making various useful artefacts, and scientific applications are rarely used. There is no useful scheme of work to ensure that skills are taught, practised and applied within different projects. While individual projects can be useful in developing particular skills and techniques, the same group of pupils do not necessarily use these again during their time in the school. Moreover, since individual teachers plan their own work, all pupils have different experiences and it is difficult for teachers of upper junior classes to ensure the work is more challenging and demanding. In practice some of the Year 6 work is much easier than that done by younger pupils. Traditions such as constructing post boxes for pupils' Christmas cards persist even though they do not contribute to developing design and technology skills. Planning records also show that design and technology lessons are too often cancelled because of national tests and school events so that intended work is not always carried out. Provision is haphazard and the subject under-valued. While there are some useful connections with other subjects such as the use of data on milkshakes in numeracy in Year 2 and using electrical circuits within a portable light in Year 4, the design and technology skills are not always as well developed as they could be. Poor finishing and inadequate construction are common. Other projects such as making apple charlotte as part of a Victorian project are not actually developing design and technology skills.

In order to improve standards in design and technology the school requires:

- A systematic, progressive and balanced scheme of work which ensures the teaching, practising and developing of essential skills;
- A system for ensuring new work builds consistently on what has already been learnt ;
- Monitoring of provision to check that the curriculum is delivered thoroughly, regularly and fully including the full designing, making and evaluating processes;
- Improvement in the range of materials and resources available for design and technology work;
- Functional rather than decorative projects to be planned; any work linked to other National Curriculum subjects to be equally developed for design and technology as the associated subject.

GEOGRAPHY

111 Standards at the end of each key stage are in line with national expectations and all pupils make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to develop mapping skills and learn the location of places. They use the local environment well to learn about human effects on the landscape, but information and communication technology is not often used to support geographical work. Few lessons were observed during the inspection, but further evidence was gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work displayed in classrooms and books, and discussions with the co-ordinator and older pupils.

112 Pupils begin to understand maps by looking at objects from the side and above. They make simple plans of their classroom and locate sites on a plan of the school, followed by the local area. The oldest pupils produce plans of the alterations to the Year 6 classroom. They use modern and old maps to compare Bridgnorth today with the town in Victorian times and consider the changing use of land.

113 The school environment is used well. Older pupils learn about the effects of buildings on the microclimate by taking and recording temperature measurements in different locations. These are plotted on graphs. Younger pupils learn about rivers, their features and how they affect the landscape. This includes a study of major British rivers, using a map of the United Kingdom. They learn about the water cycle and how different forms of pollution can affect it.

114 Pupils have opportunities to study contrasting United Kingdom locations, especially during the residential visits arranged in Years 5 and 6. In Year 5 they also study a contrasting location in the developing country of St Lucia. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the occupations, agriculture, economy, education, climate and lifestyle of the people and some of the reasons for these based on its location. A good feature in the upper juniors is the discussion of 'what's in the news' to relate cause and effect of world events related to their location. A good example was the sensitive discussion of the plane crashes on September 11th in the United States. Pupils located its destination and considered why the passengers might be undertaking that particular journey. They used their learning about St Lucia to apply it to the Dominican Republic. However, work on contrasting localities does not provide regular insights into a range of different cultures for all pupils.

115 Evidence available suggests that teaching and learning are effective. There are good links with other subjects, particularly mathematics. Pupils use co-ordinates to locate places, graphs to record measurements, scale when studying maps and length measures when calculating distances. There is an overuse of duplicated worksheets.

116 There has been considerable improvement in geography provision and pupils' knowledge and understanding since the last inspection but there is room for further work. The co-ordinator has a very good background in geography and has produced a detailed policy. This is being used effectively to produce a coherent scheme of work, however it does not clearly identify the skills to be developed each year and the National Curriculum levels at which they are pitched. There is currently no way of assessing how well each pupil has achieved to help teachers plan future work. The co-ordinator does not monitor teachers' plans or pupils' work for effectiveness. Resources are barely adequate, especially for environmental work, and too many library books are out of date.

HISTORY

117 Standards at the end of each key stage are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils make expected progress in learning about history. Pupils have good opportunities for first-hand evidence and experience by handling artefacts, using contemporary writings, role-play and visits to local places of interest such as a Telford museum, a local Anderson air raid shelter, Shugborough Estate and Wightwick Manor. Less effective use is made of information and communication technology.

118 Pupils develop a good sense of chronology by studying different periods of history and identifying them on a time line. Younger pupils know about significant events and people from the past. Infant pupils know about Guy Fawkes, Grace Darling, Samuel Pepys and events such as the Great Fire of London. Older pupils know about significant periods of British history such as Tudor and Victorian eras and life during World War II.

119 Teaching and learning are generally good, with some very good lessons seen. A particularly good lesson for infant pupils about Sir Humphrey Davy's development of the miners' safety lamp was taught. Pupils learned why the lamp was needed when the teacher adapted the library corner into a darkened mine tunnel lit by a candle. A perfumed taper gave off an invisible odour. The candle was extinguished while a loud bang was heard to simulate a mine explosion. Pupils were then told about working in a mine, the dangers of invisible firedamp gas and how the safety lamp was developed.

120 Older junior pupils used a good range of first hand evidence to investigate events relating to Spain's attempted invasion of England in Tudor times. Evidence was carefully chosen by the teacher so pupils of different abilities were equally challenged both by the evidence itself and the questions they had to answer. Pupils' effort in this lesson was very good as they had limited time to complete the tasks by considering evidence, discussing content and making deductions using it and their previous learning. Each group reported back to the whole class and so built up a complete picture of the events and consequences. In another good lesson pupils looked at a range of posters from World War II and considered how effective each was in conveying a propaganda message. To help pupils empathise with life at the time, they saw for themselves what actually constituted one person's ration for one week and how this could be used in recipes to last the whole week. Pupils had interviewed elderly relatives and acquaintances to record their experiences during the war. The reports have been bound and added to the school library for future reference. Both these lessons gave pupils very good opportunities to learn about the past in a meaningful way and to develop skills of deduction, reasoning and the ability to distinguish fact from opinion and to consider bias.

121 A particular strength is the very good link with other subjects, especially English. Pupils use history texts for literacy and guided reading sessions and write in different forms: a report, diary, letter and autobiography. An in-depth study at home of an aspect of the topic

being studied gives pupils responsibility for independent research, such as aspects of the topic on Victorian life in Year 6.

122 The co-ordinator has produced a skeleton programme of study for the whole school but no coherent scheme of work which identifies the skills to be developed each year and the National Curriculum levels at which they are pitched. Topics do not have clearly stated learning objectives. The curriculum is supported by meagre resources which are supplemented from the local museum service and contributions from pupils. There is no structured procedure for assessing pupils' attainment and progress so there is no information to help teachers plan future work. The co-ordinator does not monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum or scrutinise the work done in each class.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

123 Standards in ICT are broadly in line with national expectations at both key stages. Since the time of the last inspection, there have been improvements in the number and availability of computers. This has been achieved through the provision of two small computer suites, one at each key stage, and an Internet link positioned in the library. The confidence of teachers and ancillary staff has increased through training in the use of the National Grid for Learning.

124 As the current facilities do not allow for whole class teaching, evidence is based on the observation of small groups working with ancillary staff, the scrutiny of previous work and discussions with pupils. There are examples, however, of computer work that relates directly to teaching and enhances mathematical learning. Pupils from Years 1 and 2 use a program to consolidate their learning during a lesson where the main theme is to recognise two-dimensional shapes. Pupils in Year 5 are taught how to enter data on to a spreadsheet as part of a lesson in partitioning large numbers. Later in the day and a group at a time, they demonstrate their understanding by solving problems using an actual spreadsheet. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in lessons and the attitudes of pupils to their work are good. At both key stages pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They show interest and enthusiasm and well-developed social skills when working collaboratively.

125 In Year 1, pupils can write simple stories using a word processor and experiment with changing the colour and size of text fonts. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are confident in producing captions for a story entitled 'Bedtime' and descriptions of a boat made in design and technology using word processing. They learn about data handling by creating graphs about birthdays and understand how to write commands for a programmable robot. They also make effective use of a digital camera to record the seasonal changes to a tree over the course of a school year.

126 In Year 3, pupils learn to refine their word processing skills by drafting, editing and using punctuation keys. They can enter information to create a database on eye colour and use a database in science to promote their understanding of conductors of electricity. They research information on countries and cities to support a project in geography. In Year 4 the pupils refine their skills further by deleting and inserting so that the tense of sentences changes from past to future. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate their skills in graphics by designing a bedroom. They also support their learning in history by using the Internet to research the Tudors. By Year 6 pupils are confident in applying their word processing skills to composing match reports, designing programs and creative writing. They show discriminating skills by choosing the sort of graph that is best suited to display a particular set of statistics. The Year 6 pupils also make good use of the digital camera to record class visits to Jackfield Tile Museum and Cosford.

127 A scheme of work and the recent purchase of relevant books are beginning to ensure the delivery of a more balanced curriculum. However, there is little evidence of pupils using 'Logo' and control technology. ICT is not used in all subjects. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well qualified to improve standards throughout the school. In this respect the training of ancillary staff to provide dedicated support time to each class is a constructive initiative. The role of the co-ordinator is limited however and there are no formal procedures for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum or for measuring the progress of pupils. The poor quality of many of the present computers and the restricted access to the Internet is also a hindrance to the development of ICT, though there are plans to rectify this in the near future.

MUSIC

128 Only one lesson was observed in the infants, although this was a singing practice for three classes together; but three of the junior classes and the choir were observed and there were several opportunities to hear pupils singing in assembly.

129 Attainment is below expectations throughout the school and standards have not been maintained since the last inspection. Singing is not tuneful, not all pupils participate especially in the juniors, and pupils are not always sufficiently aware of the mood so that they perform appropriately. For instance, the choir sing all the songs in preparation for the Christmas production (a joint venture with other local schools) similarly, irrespective of whether these are sad, reflective or joyous. These pupils show little awareness of dynamics and pupils generally lack confidence when trying to learn new songs by listening and copying. Infant pupils find it difficult to modulate their voices and if asked for more volume end up shouting, and if there are accompanying actions the singing drops to a very low level. Those infant pupils who have the opportunity to accompany the singing with percussion instruments are not confident about maintaining the pulse. Year 3 pupils have had insufficient experience of handling instruments for all to know how to use them correctly or effectively. Moreover, they still need to experiment with the range of sounds the different instruments can make in order to select appropriate ones to compose a piece expressing a given emotion such as sadness. Any performances they do produce in Year 3 are individuals playing simultaneously not structured group pieces. Upper junior pupils are more aware of lyrics and appreciate differences in types of song. Year 5 pupils write new verses for a Tudor ballad and Year 6 realise why popular World War II songs celebrate food and patriotism. Pupils are able to listen attentively to music when expected to do so, but despite their well developed speaking skills they have limited technical musical vocabulary to describe their thoughts, and seldom discuss musical structure or effects. Thus the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs is not satisfactory.

130 The teaching of music is generally satisfactory in the lessons, although one lesson observed was unsatisfactory. Over time, though, the teachers' lack of confidence in the subject does not ensure pupils learn at the expected rate, and because teachers do not have the support of a structured scheme of work, knowledge and skills are not developed systematically. Teachers' lack of confidence also has an adverse effect on pupils' interest in the subject and by Year 6 few pupils are keen to sing at all. Even some of the choir lack enthusiasm for the songs they are practising for the production, although another group is eager to take home the words to learn. Teachers' general skills in managing pupils, ensuring they provide a variety of activities, organising available resources and providing the opportunity for pupils to contribute ideas ensure smoothly run appropriate sessions in which pupils acquire some new knowledge. When teachers need to evaluate pupils' work and provide feedback to enable pupils to improve, their lack of subject knowledge becomes apparent causing a slow pace, which adversely affects pupils' concentration. At worst, in the unsatisfactory lesson, no guidance was offered to pupils to improve their singing even though

they were regularly criticised for their performance. Lack of skills in assessing pupils' progress mean that the next work planned does not necessarily build on prior learning satisfactorily.

131 In view of the teachers' lack of confidence, the emphasis on singing as the main vehicle for delivery of National Curriculum music is inappropriate, especially as creative composing and confident performing are weaknesses. Moreover, the curriculum fails to utilise pupils' high level speaking skills in developing vocabulary to appraise music and make intelligent choices about creating their own work. While the curriculum does include a variety of different styles of music and effectively supports work in other subjects, particularly history, examples from other cultures are relatively few and resources for providing a rich experience of these are limited. Percussion instruments are also inadequate, especially as many of those that are available are damaged or in poor condition. There has been no opportunity for teachers to improve their expertise for a number of years nor for a more confident teacher to support colleagues. School productions sometimes take an inordinately large proportion of the music curriculum at the expense of broader and more creative music-making.

132 Extra-curricular opportunities enhance provision for pupils through peripatetic instrument lessons, after school recorder and music sessions and opportunities to participate in productions outside the school. Visits and visitors also widen pupils' experience of music.

In order to improve standards in music the school requires:

- Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence to improve;
- A systematic, progressive and balanced scheme of work which identifies and develops essential knowledge, skills and understanding;
- A system for ensuring new work builds consistently on what has already been learnt;
- Monitoring of provision to check that the curriculum is delivered thoroughly, regularly and fully;
- Improvement in the range of resources available for creating and appraising music;
- To introduce pupils to music from a wider range of cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133 Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with national expectations and broadly similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Since that time provision has been improved by the implementation of two initiatives. 'Top Play' is aimed at pupils in Key Stage 1 and provides opportunities to take part in small-sided games activities while 'Top Sport' introduces major sports to pupils at Key Stage 2.

134 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good movement and control when using music or poetry as a stimulus. They listen carefully to instructions and work individually or in collaboration with a partner to build a sequence of expressive movements. At the lower end of Key Stage 2 pupils practise the passing and catching skills of both football and netball. They apply their skills with reasonable accuracy in a games situation and demonstrate good levels of co-operation when working with others. Pupils in Year 5 show collaborative skills of a higher level when they perform sequences of gymnastic movements across a bench. In all these activities boys and girls have the same opportunities and are equally involved. At both key stages pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

135 Teaching is generally satisfactory, sometimes very good in Key Stage 1 and sometimes good in Key Stage 2. Teaching is satisfactory when lessons are well prepared and teachers know what learning is to be promoted in the lesson. Where teachers show

enthusiasm, offer challenge and take their lessons at pace, pupils sustain their concentration, become more motivated and make greater progress. An example of such very good teaching is in dance where Year 2 pupils are well managed throughout and show progression in skill development within the course of the lesson.

136 The curriculum for physical education is broad and balanced although dance makes a limited contribution to introducing pupils to different cultures. Apart from those elements observed during the inspection, swimming is available for pupils in Key Stage 2 and there is a programme of outdoor activities for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Teaching plans are inconsistent however, and there are no formal assessment procedures for tracking progress. The hall accommodation and physical education resources are adequate and the adjacent playing field offers good opportunities for games and athletics. The co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher, is keen to see that physical education does not become marginalised due to the inevitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. He is seeking therefore, to maintain the good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137 By the age of seven years and eleven years, attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Judgements have been made on two religious education lessons and a number of class and school assemblies, scrutiny of pupils' past work and teachers' planning.

138 There have been some improvements since the previous inspection, when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory in some lessons, with pupils showing a low level of interest in their work. In the lessons observed during the inspection, progress is at least steady for all pupils and pupils are interested and keen to learn. This is because lessons, although exploring deeper meaning, are linked effectively to everyday life experiences and so provide relevance to learning.

139 Good speaking and listening skills are enabling pupils in Year 1 to explore their feelings and explain what makes them afraid. They talk about being afraid of the dark and of ghosts and spiders. The teacher provides a chance to resolve these fears, by asking "Who can help us when we are afraid?" Most pupils make links with their family or with people they trust: one child mentions God. The teacher values all contributions and a focus is given to writing a class prayer thanking God and our families and friends for their help.

140 In Year 2, pupils consider 'special days' in their own personal life and at school. They study a range of cards related to special occasions and learn how important milestones in life are celebrated. Previous work, related to the way in which people from other cultures celebrate, is touched upon and remembered well by most of the pupils. The lesson looks at Christian celebrations and enables pupils to share their understanding of Christmas, Christian marriage and christenings in a very broad way.

141 Learning is at a deeper level In Year 6, when pupils reflect on why and how we keep memories alive. Work is well planned and draws from discussions of Remembrance Sunday and work on World War II in history. Pupils are able to discuss sensitive issues related to the qualities human beings had when they were alive and the impact they had on their lives.

142 Religious and spiritual dimensions to learning are being developed through class and school worship and in religious education lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when limited time was given to reflection and debate. Although other faiths besides Christianity are studied, such as Judaism and Hinduism, there are few links with people of other faiths or visits to places of worship.

143 Pupils are concentrate in lessons and are keen to answer questions and contribute to discussions. They are interested in finding out about other beliefs and reflecting on their own feelings and thoughts.

144 In the limited number of lessons seen, teaching is sound. Lessons are clearly planned and teachers promote the pupils' spiritual development satisfactorily. The school has yet to provide appropriate artefacts to help pupils understand the symbolism of different religions, a weakness identified in the previous inspection. Nor has the school explored the potential of information and communication technology to support learning in religious education.

145 The subject is managed adequately. A programme for themes and celebrations in school assemblies is being evaluated at present and which is planned to support pupils' understanding of their work in religious education.