

INSPECTION REPORT

ELLESMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ellesmere

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123365

Headteacher: Richard Pallett

Reporting inspector: Anne Elizabeth Kounnou
30810

Dates of inspection: 1st to 4th July 2002

Inspection number: 244354

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: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Elson Road
Ellesmere
Shropshire

Postcode: SY12 0BE

Telephone number: 01691 622288

Fax number: 01691 624893

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P. McLaughlin

Date of previous inspection: 15 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Liz Kounnou 30810	Registered inspector	History Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What could be improved?
Bill Walker 19366	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
David Shepherd 2905	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
Jean Peek 25281	Team inspector	Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Ann Simpson 7420	Team inspector	English Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mohindar Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography Equal opportunities The provision for and standards achieved by pupils who speak English as an additional language	

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5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ellesmere Primary is a larger than average community primary school with 365 pupils on roll. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Children from a wide range of ability groups attend the school. However, when they start school in the nursery at four years of age the achievements of the majority are broadly as expected. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average at just over 13 per cent; very few pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals fluctuates; it is currently below the national average at 9 per cent. About the same proportion of pupils leave or join the school during the school year as is typical of most schools. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and some of these speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ellesmere is an effective school that provides satisfactory value for money. Standards in English, mathematics and science have begun to improve for the oldest pupils. The quality of teaching is sound throughout the school, with a substantial proportion of excellent teaching. Children in the nursery get off to a flying start, but their rapid progress is not maintained. It slows because the curriculum is not planned well enough to meet pupils' needs. The senior management team - led by the headteacher and his enthusiastic deputy and supported by a hard working governing body - have introduced a number of new initiatives which have recently begun to bring about a rapid improvement in standards in Year 6, particularly in English and science.

What the school does well

- Standards are improving in English and science in Year 6.
- The quality of education in the nursery is a strength of the school. It is consistently very good and often excellent.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good and, as a result, pupils' attitudes to school are good. They behave well because most teachers value pupils' contributions.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils and teachers.
- Governors provide good support for the school and are kept well informed by the headteacher.
- The well kept accommodation provides a good environment for learning.
- There are good links with parents, who have positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough in English and science in Years 1 and 2 or in mathematics and geography in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in history throughout the school have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- Strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are not sufficiently rigorous because the delegation of staff responsibilities is not effective.
- Assessment procedures still do not inform future planning sufficiently and, as a result, teachers' day-to-day planning is still not fully effective.
- The curriculum does not ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities build on the skills, knowledge and understanding they have already learned in all subjects as they move through the school. As a result, pupils, particularly the more able, underachieve in many subjects.
- Attendance is below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Although a clear action plan was drawn up to address the key issues following the last inspection in September 1997, it has not been fully effective and the school has not made enough improvement. Standards are not as high now in some subjects because teachers' day-to-day planning has not improved sufficiently. A good new system has been introduced to help teachers improve this; however, these daily planners are not used consistently. A good range of assessment procedures are now in place, but teachers do not routinely use the information from these assessments to plan the next steps in learning. This has a direct impact on the standards achieved. Standards in history remain below those expected because there has been no rigorous monitoring of learning or checking to see how skills develop in mixed age classes. Pupils' writing has improved because there are greater opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes in a range of subjects. As a result, although standards are still too low, writing has

improved in Years 3 to 6 and is no longer lagging behind reading in Years 1 and 2. Standards in information and communication technology are higher now because there has been considerable investment in resources and staff training. Overall, the school is well placed to make rapid improvements. Standards have now begun to rise rapidly in response to the clear leadership of the headteacher and other senior staff, who have brought about significant changes in organisation and begun to improve the quality of assessment and planning.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2001 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

Early indications, from standards seen in the inspection and the 2002 tests, are that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in each subject has improved considerably. The trend in improvement since the last inspection broadly reflects the national trend. However, standards declined in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science, when compared to those achieved in similar schools, because pupils did not make enough progress in these years to build on the results they achieved in Year 2. Pupils still do not make enough progress in Years 3 to 6 to achieve the higher levels that could be expected given the above average results they achieved in Year 2 in 1998, or to achieve the targets that were set. Nevertheless, recent rapid improvements in standards are likely to be sustained due to changes to the organisation of classes and an improvement in teachers' planning.

In Year 2, pupils achieved average results in the national tests in 2001. Early indications are that pupils achieved lower standards in the recent 2002 national tests in reading and writing. This is mainly because teachers' planning does not ensure that all pupils' needs are met in the mixed age classes.

In the nursery, children make very good progress. From the moment they start school they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and every lesson is packed with challenging activities. In the reception classes, where activities are often undemanding, progress is satisfactory and achievement is broadly average at the end of the reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good. In the nursery they are sometimes outstanding.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in most lessons and when playing outside.
Personal development and relationships	The quality of relationships in the school is satisfactory; most staff support pupils well, treating them with trust and respect.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory because attendance rates are below the national average.

In some lessons, pupils are not managed well and pupils' behaviour deteriorates. Overall, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and personal development. However, the nursery is an outstanding example of exceptional opportunities for developing personal and social skills.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.

The quality of teaching is consistently very good or better in the nursery. Teaching of personal and social skills in the nursery is particularly strong because the nursery nurses mirror the very high expectations of the teacher. The whole team ensures that every moment of time is packed with learning through play. Children's planning of their own school day is remarkably effective. This practice does not continue in the reception classes, where teaching is not as effective and is occasionally unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is variable in Years 1 and 2 and from Years 3 to 6. There were some unsatisfactory lessons in Years 3 to 6. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught appropriately. The main weakness in teaching is that teachers' planning does not usually spell out how each group of pupils will be supported or challenged to achieve the next steps in learning. In too many lessons, work is not sufficiently challenging for pupils that are more able. The management of behaviour and relationships with pupils are unsatisfactory in one class and affect the standards achieved in lessons. When teaching is most effective, teachers manage pupils well and involve them in lessons, planning work that is suitable for their needs. In the very best lessons, there is a high level of pupil participation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is not planned well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. However, there are exciting extra activities to enrich pupils' experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly from teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual and moral development are particularly good, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility. Opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school. All the staff know pupils well. Assessment procedures are sound, but are not used effectively to plan lessons.

There are effective links with parents who are supportive and have positive views of the school. The wide range of residential visits to provide outdoor and adventurous activities for pupils from Years 3 to 6 is a strength of the school. Health and safety aspects of these visits are evaluated rigorously. However, procedures for ensuring that health and safety issues within the school are identified and addressed are not rigorous. This is mainly because the school does not have a member of staff to take specific responsibility for identifying day-to-day issues.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides clear leadership and is very well supported by the deputy head teacher. Other senior managers are effective, but some staff do not have the skills to bring about improvement in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are hard working and are kept well informed because they work in partnership with the headteacher and other senior staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A great deal of information has been gathered through monitoring, but action taken to bring about improvements is not sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school's development plan identifies appropriate priorities and provides clear information about the cost of improvement, but does not always include the cost of staff time.

Staff are suitably qualified and are confident teaching all subjects except music. Teaching assistants are well qualified for their roles. The accommodation is well kept and provides a good learning environment. There are appropriate resources to teach the whole curriculum. The school adopts the principles of best value appropriately, ensuring that competitive quotes are obtained for purchases, consulting parents to gauge their opinions, comparing school performance and challenging itself to raise standards higher.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way questions and problems are dealt with. • The high expectations and good teaching. • Their children like school. • The level of pastoral care. • They have confidence in the headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More competitive sports activities. • More information about pupils' progress. • Changes to the amount of homework. • Traffic safety on the school site.

Inspectors mainly agree with parents' positive views. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are not consistently high enough. There are a few competitive sports activities, including swimming, and exceptional opportunities for outdoor and adventurous physical education activities. Homework is used particularly well in lessons and the amount set is more than is usually found in most schools. The information for parents about pupils' progress is good and typical of primary schools. Heavy traffic on the site is a problem that has been the subject of meetings between the school, the local education authority and other interested parties. It is clear that the governors have taken advice and acted responsibly in seeking a resolution, although as yet none has been found.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are improving now in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 due to recent changes to the organisation of the Year 5 and 6 classes. This has meant that lessons have provided the right level of challenge for pupils' age and ability. The trend in improving standards is broadly in line with the national trend. Nonetheless, because pupils are not making enough progress in Years 3 to 6 to build on the standards they achieve in Year 2, standards are still not high enough. The tables below show the standards achieved when compared with all schools in Year 6 and Year 2 in the 2001 national tests and teacher assessments. Comparisons with similar schools for both year groups are the same as national comparisons.

Year 6	Standards in 2001
English	below average
Mathematics	well below average
Science	below average

2. These results were considerably higher than the school expected in science, broadly as expected in English, but well below the targets that the school set itself in mathematics. The standards achieved in each subject are lower than at the time of the last inspection. When a comparison is made - using the results that Year 6 pupils in 2001 achieved with those that this group achieved in 1997 when they took the national tests in Year 2 - it is seen that standards in 2001 were not high enough.

Year 6	Progress since 1997
English	poor
Mathematics	poor
Science	unsatisfactory

3. During the inspection, the results of the 2002 tests were received. There is no comparative information available at this time. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in each subject in 2002 has improved and is higher now than the school has ever achieved in the national tests. However, when a comparison is made with the results that the current Year 6 pupils achieved in English and mathematics in 1998 - when they were Year 2 - they have made poor progress from Years 3 to 6 in both subjects. Pupils' work in all three subjects shows a marked improvement this year when pupils began to work in sets in single year classes. Pupils' progress has improved rapidly because the work that is planned is suitable for Year 6 and tailored to broadly meet the needs of the more and less able pupils. Standards are, therefore, beginning to rise rapidly in Year 6, but the rise has not been sufficient to make up for the lack of progress in previous years. Planned changes to the organisation of classes from the beginning of the next academic year mean that these improvements are likely to be sustained.
4. In Year 2 in the 2001 tests and teacher assessments, standards were average and about the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress as the assessments that teachers make of children's achievements in the reception year indicate that most pupils achieve average levels when they start school.

Year 2	Standards in 2001
Reading	average
Writing	average
Mathematics	average
Science <i>Teacher assessments</i>	average

5. The results of the national tests in 2002 for Year 2 also arrived during the inspection and were disappointing for the school, particularly in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 is lower than expected. Pupils have not achieved the targets that were set. They have not made enough progress to build on the average levels achieved in the reception year. Pupils' work in English and science reflects this. Standards are not high enough in these subjects because work is not planned at an appropriate level for pupils to build on their previous skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject or to provide enough challenge for more able pupils. In mathematics, standards in the national tests are broadly average and higher than those achieved in reading and writing.

6. In other subjects, standards seen during the inspection are variable:

Subject	Standards in Year 2	Standards in Year 6
Religious education	average	average
Information and communication technology	average	average
Design and technology	average	average
History	below average	below average
Geography	average	below average
Art	average	average
Music	average	average
Physical education <i>(athletics and swimming)</i>	above average	above average

7. **Standards are variable because the curriculum is not planned effectively and pupils' work has not been monitored rigorously enough to ensure that planned work is completed appropriately. Raising standards in history and information and communication technology (ICT) were key issues in the last inspection report. Standards in history have not improved sufficiently because the curriculum does not set out how pupils will be able to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject as they work through the school. Standards in ICT have risen due to the substantial investments made in resources and staff training. In geography, standards are lower now than they were at the time of the last inspection, mainly because pupils are not covering enough work at the right level. Literacy and numeracy skills are used appropriately in other subjects; however, there are some missed opportunities to develop writing skills in history and geography due to the lack of recorded work in these subjects.**
8. **Pupils that are more able do not achieve the standards that could be expected in most subjects due to the way the curriculum is planned. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 work in mixed age classes. Work is planned on a two-year cycle so that pupils do not repeat the topics. However, this planning does not make sure that pupils work at progressively more challenging tasks as they move through the school. As a result, more able pupils are too often working at undemanding tasks that are at a similar level to those completed a year before. The**

school is aware of this weakness and has identified it as a key priority for improvement in the new school development plan.

9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve suitable standards across the curriculum. They make satisfactory progress in achieving their individual learning targets. English is an additional language for very few pupils. All but one are fluent in speaking English, they make similar progress to all other pupils. As yet, the school does not track the progress of ethnic minority pupils or actively promote high achievement for this small group. Both boys and girls throughout the school attain broadly similar results.
10. Children in the nursery make very good progress due to the consistently very high expectations, particularly of personal and social development. They are expected to take responsibility for their own learning right from the beginning, producing remarkable individual plans each day to show which activities they have chosen to do. Progress slows in the reception year because planning does not build on this exceptional foundation. Activities are often undemanding in the reception classes. Teachers in these classes do not have such a clear focus for teaching and learning in all the activities as is seen in the nursery. Nonetheless, by the time they are ready to start work in Year 1 most children achieve the early learning goals that are expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils enjoy school and the great majority attend regularly and on time, ready for a prompt start to the day. These positive attitudes and good behaviour have been maintained since the previous inspection. Relationships across the school are good. Pupils work and play well together and most have a high regard for their teachers. There are, however, a small number of pupils who are less co-operative, particularly when they are not managed well. Their attention span and concentration are limited. When lessons are not sufficiently challenging and move at too slow a pace, these few pupils sometimes become restless and distracted. Occasionally, they disrupt learning for the whole class. Levels of attendance have improved recently, but they are still below average. This is largely because of a few pupils who are frequently absent or late for school.
12. Staff have been successful in creating a happy and relaxed environment where most pupils arrive with a cheerful countenance and a friendly greeting. Even the youngest children have no qualms about taking leave of their parents. They settle down to the day almost immediately, clearly looking forward to the fun that frequently punctuates it. In the nursery, children react very well to the high expectations of staff, learning to share with each other, taking turns in using equipment and tidying up. For example, after playing outside, they vigorously and methodically put away all the games and equipment that had previously been left out without any further direction from adults. They helped each other to carry bulky items and within two or three minutes were sitting neatly and expectantly on the carpet, eager to learn what the next activity was to be. This exceptional start gives children a good measure of personal independence and the confidence to relate well to adults, sharing their work and talking about their activities, but is not built upon in the reception classes.
13. From Years 1 to 6, pupils adapt well to school routines. They know the rules and are familiar with the rewards and sanctions the behaviour policy provides. They know that most teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. Most pupils want to please their teachers. Work is usually neatly presented and pupils are keen to answer questions because they know their answers will be valued. In lessons where a minority of pupils are disruptive, other pupils behave extremely well, trying very hard to finish their work. They show much maturity and resilience in concentrating on their own work. The great majority of pupils are orderly, polite and friendly, whether at play, dining or simply moving about the school. They enjoy each other's company and mix well, often irrespective of age or gender. They always seem ready to defer to adults. For instance, they hold open doors, offer to help and make visitors feel most welcome in their school. Playtimes are boisterous and happy occasions, where pupils take full advantage of the varied and stimulating playground equipment that has recently been provided for them. Pupils have the confidence that comes from knowing that bullying is not tolerated and that when it occurs it will be dealt with promptly. The sanction of exclusion is rarely used. Within the last year

there have been no permanent exclusions, but on five occasions boys have been excluded for short periods when they have engaged in challenging and violent behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the support given and apply effort and concentration even when the work is challenging.

14. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and members of staff are mostly good and there is a clear sense of community in the school. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They take much responsibility for classroom routines, delivering registers, distributing books and tidying up after lessons. They carry out these tasks effectively and very willingly. However, there are limited opportunities for them to exercise whole school responsibilities. The school council organises a mid-morning 'tuck shop' and has established a link with a school in Gambia. Nevertheless, the council has very little impact on school improvement, mainly because council members do not have enough opportunity to take responsibility and make a difference. The lunchtime 'buddy' system is used effectively to develop a sense of responsibility amongst older pupils. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not contribute in any structured way to the day-to-day organisation of the school and their independent learning skills are underdeveloped.
15. Pupils' overall rate of attendance is below the national average and, although it has improved recently, it is still unsatisfactory. There is some lateness, but the great majority of pupils arrive in good time and a prompt start is made to the day and to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching remains satisfactory overall. A number of outstanding lessons were seen, mainly in the nursery, and there were a few unsatisfactory lessons. The proportion of teaching that is good or better has improved since the last inspection in 1997. There have been a substantial number of changes in teaching staff since that time. Overall, teachers work well together as a team and have begun the task of raising standards. The school has recently improved procedures for monitoring lessons, planning and pupils' work by introducing school self-evaluation. Some of this work has been done in partnership with the local literacy and numeracy support team. Procedures for performance management have also provided staff with information about the quality of their teaching, mainly in literacy and numeracy lessons. This has been done supportively so that all staff continue to work together as a strong team. Good quality staff development and training linked to whole school priorities are part of the support that teachers have received.
17. Teaching is good or better in 55 per cent of lessons seen, with 16 per cent being very good and 5 per cent excellent. Six per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The best teaching was seen in the nursery where 50 per cent is outstanding and all is at least very good. The high quality of teaching in the nursery has a significant impact on children's achievement. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory overall, because teachers' expectations are lower in the reception classes where a small minority of lessons are unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall, with 64 per cent of lessons being good or better. A substantial proportion are very good and some outstanding teaching was seen. In Years 3 to 6, the overall figures are distorted by a substantial proportion of unsatisfactory teaching which was observed in one class or in music where teachers lack subject knowledge. Nevertheless, 53 per cent of lessons seen were good or better. The main weakness in teaching is in the use of assessment to inform daily planning. Consequently, although teaching methods are often very good, the overall quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory.
18. The quality of teaching is consistently very good or better in the nursery. However, this very good model is not built upon effectively in the reception classes. Teaching of personal and social skills in the nursery is particularly strong and the nursery nurses mirror the very high expectations of the teacher. The whole team ensures that every moment of time is packed with learning through play. Children's planning of their own school day is remarkably effective. Children choose from a range of very well thought out activities with a clear purpose for learning. They make plans of the activities they want to do that day and follow the plan diligently. Some activities are led by staff in small groups, often using outstanding questioning techniques that consistently challenge children to make further gains in learning. This is very effective. Children learn to work independently using the interesting resources prepared for them with care and are challenged to extend their learning

regularly by the nursery team. In the nursery, every single part of the day has a clear purpose to improve children's learning through play. This practice does not continue in the reception classes, where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory. Too often in these classes children work at activities that are not as challenging as those provided in the nursery. The independent activities that are chosen by children in these classes often have no clear purpose. When children work with adults they make sound progress, but for too much time learning is limited because it is not clear precisely what children are intended to learn in the independent activities.

19. From Year 1 to Year 6 the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught appropriately, but teachers' planning in these lessons does not spell out how each group of pupils will be supported or challenged to achieve the next steps in learning. In too many lessons, work is not sufficiently challenging for pupils that are more able. Organising pupils from Years 3 to 6 into groups of similar ability in single year classes for literacy, numeracy and science recently has been very effective in raising standards. This is because teachers have planned work that is more suited to the needs of each group of pupils. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not making enough progress in reading and writing because teachers have not set out how each group will make progress from one week to the next. When teaching is most effective:
- teachers manage pupils well and involve them in the lessons. In the very best lessons there is a high level of pupil participation;
 - teachers plan activities that will be interesting and motivate pupils and use resources well;
 - teachers work well in partnership with support staff to help pupils who find learning more difficult;
 - lessons move at a brisk pace, keeping pupils interested;
 - teachers ask questions that make pupils think and extend their learning.

Aspects of teaching that could be improved are:

- teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve are too low in many lessons;
 - teachers do not consistently use assessment information effectively to inform their daily or weekly planning. They do not spell out what different groups of pupils are intended to learn in all lessons;
 - teachers' marking of pupils work does not consistently tell pupils how to improve or focus on the learning objective for the lesson;
 - teachers do not routinely set pupils individual targets for learning in key skills;
 - teachers do not consistently share appropriate learning intentions with pupils at the beginning of lessons and review these at the end, so that pupils do not always know what they are expected to learn;
 - the management of behaviour and relationships with pupils are unsatisfactory in one class and affects the standards achieved in lessons.
20. These characteristics are reflected in other subjects of the curriculum where teaching is satisfactory overall. The management of pupils is good, except in one class where the teacher finds it difficult to maintain control of more challenging pupils. This is mainly because they are not fully involved in lessons, which are not planned well enough to meet their needs. Teachers use resources well to promote interest and good teaching methods often ensure that lessons move at a good pace, with plenty of opportunities for pupils to take part in lessons. Consequently, pupils are interested in the work; many work purposefully at the activities and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They want to please their teachers and present their work neatly in most books. Good use is made of specialist teaching in swimming, where an instructor teaches each class. Teachers' subject knowledge in most subjects is good and most are confident in teaching all subjects, with the exception of music. Teachers need more support from the music co-ordinator in planning and teaching music at an appropriate level for their classes.
21. Longer-term curriculum planning does not have enough detail about the levels of attainment different groups of pupils are expected to achieve in each unit of work. Teachers' daily planning reflects this weakness. Improving day-to-day planning was a key issue in the last inspection. Since then a good daily planning format has been introduced that should be completed with the learning objectives for each lesson and a brief evaluation. There is a wide variation in the quality of information in these books that monitoring of planning has not addressed. Overall, teachers are not planning lessons in enough detail, some write only very brief details, sometimes of activities rather than setting out what pupils are expected to learn that day. Too often, the plans have the same

objective for the whole class in each subject. Since most classes are made up of two year groups and a wide range of ability this does not ensure that work is planned at the right level to meet pupils' needs. Some teachers make thorough or brief evaluations of pupils' achievements, while others make no comments. Teachers make and keep a range of assessments of pupils' achievements. In English and mathematics, work is assessed every half term. In other subjects, notes are made on each plan to show which pupils did not achieve the objectives for the unit of work and those who exceeded them. However, the information from all this assessment is not used to inform planning for the term or for the day. Consequently, not enough improvement has been made in day-to-day planning and the use of assessment. These remain key areas for school improvement. This weakness also affects the quality of teachers' marking. Too often, the objectives for the lesson have not been shared or reviewed with pupils. Marking of pupils' work does not consistently tell pupils how well they have achieved the objective and what they need to do next in order to improve their standards. An exception is seen in the good quality marking of pupils' writing.

22. Teaching assistants, who work in close partnership with teachers, support pupils with special educational needs well in lessons. They work together to ensure that pupils are fully involved in lessons. Pupils' progress towards the targets on their individual education plans is reviewed regularly. A very small minority of pupils speaks English as an additional language and almost all are fluent in speaking English. Appropriate advice has been sought from the local education authority to ensure that pupils are supported appropriately. Very occasionally, staff lack awareness of the needs of pupils from ethnic minorities.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to children and pupils are satisfactory overall with some clear strengths and areas for development. The school provides all pupils with a wide range of experiences that enrich their learning. Many lessons are enjoyable for pupils because they are based on interesting activities. For example, pupils in Year 1 were completely absorbed in a science lesson looking at plants and learning about leaf structure. However, there are considerable weaknesses in the way the curriculum is structured to meet pupils' needs. This is a similar picture to the last inspection.
24. In the nursery and reception classes the quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall, but lack consistency. The nursery curriculum is very good and a strength of the school. It provides very stimulating, challenging learning experiences for all children. The curriculum for reception children is satisfactory and provides a balanced range of activities across the different areas of learning, including an improved range of planned outdoor activities in the secure play area. A high priority is given to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and to extending their speaking and listening skills. In reception classes, activities that children select themselves are not clearly planned to improve children's skills as they play. This means children's learning does not always build sufficiently on the skills, knowledge and understanding they achieve in the nursery.
25. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school is proud of its commitment to sport and music. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to take part in residential, outdoor pursuits visits and to try activities such as rock climbing and canoeing to enhance their physical and social education. This is exceptional and develops pupils' confidence and self esteem very well. In addition, pupils benefit from the expertise of swimming coaches. Outside sports organisations, for instance, Shrewsbury Town Football Club and a judo club are invited to run activities in school for the pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to have instrumental tuition for violin, cello, drum, guitar piano and clarinet and to play in concerts. Other lunchtime and after-school clubs offer choir, recorder, art, girls' football and gardening clubs. A popular homework club, funded by the Education Action Zone, supports learning effectively outside the school day. Plenty of educational visits and visitors broaden pupils' learning experiences, such as a visiting puppet theatre group, music recitals and festivals, the local town area, Quarry Bank Mill, Cadbury World, a farm at Park Hall and a visit to the theatre at Birmingham to see a performance of the work of the author Roald Dahl. Several local artists contributed to a successful Arts week, when pupils extended their creative skills in pottery, story telling, sculpture and dance.
26. Despite the wealth of opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences, an appropriate statutory curriculum is not in place from Years 1 to 6. The school's development plan correctly identifies the

need to improve curriculum planning to meet the needs of all pupils, including the more and less able. Currently, inadequate monitoring of curriculum plans and pupils' work means that subject leaders lack sufficient awareness of weaknesses in overall curriculum planning and the impact this has on pupils' standards in each subject. Planning for teaching literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory overall. Literacy planning has been effective in Years 3 to 6 where good improvements have recently been made in pupils' standards. In Years 1 and 2 planning for teaching literacy is less effective because there is insufficient detail to show how lessons will meet the needs of all pupils. Year 1 pupils in the mixed reception and Year 1 class do not receive a full literacy or numeracy hour as recommended. In numeracy, teaching strategies are good, but the curriculum is not always balanced across the full range of mathematics because there are too few opportunities to use and apply mathematics. In science, religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music, subjects are currently planned in topic units of work. Two different year groups, such as Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6, follow the same topics on a two-year cycle. The units are appropriately planned to include the content outlined in the national guidance for each subject. However, the same learning outcomes are planned for both year groups and so they are not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils as they move through the school. Often there is insufficient challenge for pupils that are more able. The policy for religious education identifies different religions for study than those now followed and the time spent on teaching the subject is sometimes less than recommended and affects the depth of study. In physical education, the large amount of time devoted to swimming results in very little time for dance. Nonetheless, standards in swimming are above average. In addition, the provision of outdoor and adventurous activities for all pupils from Years 3 to 6 is exceptional and a strength of the school. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and now meets statutory requirements.

27. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, which has improved since the previous inspection. All the required policies, including drug awareness, are now in place. New initiatives have been effective, such as employing a pastoral teaching assistant to support pupils' personal development. The health, sex and drug education programme is comprehensive. Skilled visitors provide good support, such as the school nurse for sex education and the police who jointly run the Stop, Think, Act and Reflect scheme with the class teacher. Other initiatives that have improved provision include training for staff. For example, teachers skilfully manage the regularly planned class discussions when pupils sit in a circle to talk over issues in every day life such as bullying and keeping healthy and safe. Pupils discuss the skills needed to develop successful relationships. Developing pupils' self-esteem is a priority that is promoted through the positive way that behaviour is managed in most classes. Pupils begin to understand the responsibilities of citizenship through electing a school council to represent their views.
28. There are good, constructive links with partner institutions. Most nursery children have attended the Ducklings' Playgroup that is on site and made pre-school visits to ensure that they happily settle into the nursery. The school works closely with teachers in the secondary school to enable pupils to have a smooth transfer there. Pupils use the secondary school's sports hall facilities. Older secondary pupils visit the school for work experience and events such as music concerts. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to play competitive sports matches against teams from local schools.
29. Good links with the community make a useful contribution to pupils' learning. The school has close links with two local churches that are used for Christmas and harvest festival services. Local ministers regularly lead acts of worship and are invited in to give talks about Christian celebrations such as baptism. An organisation provides reading volunteers. The school council used the Internet to form links with a Ghanaian school. Links with businesses in the town make a valuable contribution by sponsoring equipment and funding events such as the 'Buggy Challenge' as part of a design and technology week. A number of local organisations such as the Round Table, Probus, the Rotary Club and the British Legion support the school and widen pupils' experiences. The school increases pupils' understanding of the wider world by giving performances to senior citizens.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers to plan work that will help pupils to achieve the targets on their individual plans. Pupils are well supported, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. A pastoral support assistant provides especially well for pupils who find it difficult to work effectively in class. The

school has only four pupils for whom English is an additional language. Only one pupil is at comparatively early stage of language development. The school has liaised appropriately with staff from the local authority's multicultural service and makes satisfactory provision for this pupil. There is a strong commitment to providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. A new policy has been written to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils that will be implemented from September. However, as yet the performance of the small group of ethnic minority pupils is not monitored.

31. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall, and has improved since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. The present good provision makes an effective contribution to forming pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and relationships, particularly in the nursery where each aspect is strong.
32. There is good provision for promoting pupils' spiritual development that permeates the school. In the nursery, almost all lessons have an element of joy and delight for the children. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to develop an enquiring mind. This helps them to seek answers to questions that fulfil their human curiosity and to know about people, places and wildlife. It is not uncommon in science lessons for pupils to be amazed by the diversity, beauty and complexity of life processes and living things. For example, pupils in Year 1 were fascinated by the shape and structure of different plants. School assemblies and religious education give them good experiences and help pupils to understand and respect the values and beliefs of other people. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the lives of other people. They develop an appreciation of the value of hard work and human endeavour. Opportunities are provided to explore feelings and emotions through talks about issues and events, such as friendship, birth and death. The school celebrates effort and achievement. Music is used effectively to create an environment for thought and reflection.
33. Pupils' moral development has a high priority and is good. Most teachers act as good role models, valuing pupils' contributions and treating them with courtesy and respect. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Moral issues are explored; for example, teachers talk about issues such as vandalism. Circle time (when pupils sit in a circle and take turns to talk to one another) is beginning to be used effectively to discuss these issues, but is not yet used consistently well because there is no whole school approach and not all pupils understand the need to listen carefully. The attractive school environment encourages respect for property and its upkeep. Hard work is valued, expected, rewarded and celebrated. The school's moral framework is based on consideration of principles such as self-respect, self-discipline, fairness, truthfulness, honesty, consideration and tolerance.
34. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory overall. It is outstanding in the nursery. The exceptionally high expectations of the nursery staff, combined with their gentle and persuasive approach, give children confidence and high self-esteem. Throughout the school, pupils are taken on plenty of visits. They participate in games, matches and tournaments, such as those for swimming and football, and develop a sound understanding of competition, rules and fairness. There is a good facility at lunch times for pupils to talk about their experiences and issues. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively, for example, in science investigations, when using computers and doing design and technology projects. Pupils participate in fund-raising activities, which help them develop an understanding of other people's needs. For example, the school council runs a tuck shop each break time and sends the profits to charity. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop independence because pupils have few responsibilities. With the exception of the tuck shop, the school councils' work is routine and underdeveloped because pupils have too little influence and do not take responsibility for running the council.

35. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and promoted through inviting artists and storytellers to enrich pupils' experiences. Visiting theatres, such as the puppet theatre, encourage pupils to participate in productions. Pupils have the opportunity to explore aspects of local and world history and geography in their lessons. In Years 5 and 6, pupils enthusiastically find out about the countries whose football teams took part in the World Cup. They learn about other cultures through religious education, visits and using the Internet for research. The school also visits places of worship of other religions and invites visitors from other cultural traditions to widen pupils' experiences. Nonetheless, opportunities to experience the rich diversity of cultural life in Great Britain are underdeveloped and, as a result, pupils' understanding of our multicultural heritage is limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. This is a very caring school. The headteacher and governors have been successful in developing a good sense of community with shared values and a commitment to the well-being of pupils. Teachers and other members of staff know pupils very well and provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils grow in confidence. The weaknesses in behaviour management that were identified in the previous inspection report have been effectively resolved, except in one class. Progress has been made in improving the procedures for assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress, but the school has yet to make effective use of the information to inform planning.
37. The good relationships between pupils and most staff create an environment of mutual trust and understanding. Pupils are treated with respect and understanding and know that their contributions in lessons are fully valued. This enables them to share their concerns, confident that teachers and other staff will listen. Particular sensitivity is shown for the needs of the more vulnerable. Parents, carers and other responsible agencies are fully involved to ensure that individual needs are met. Health and safety procedures are good. Governors have very recently reviewed their policy, which is comprehensive and makes provision for regular, formal risk assessments of premises and practice in the school. It has not yet been fully implemented because the school's procedures for recording day-to-day concerns are verbal and, consequently, cannot be monitored rigorously by the headteacher or the governors. Currently, there is no member of staff with responsibility for reporting health and safety issues.
38. The school gives high priority to encouraging good behaviour and eliminating bullying. All members of staff have been involved in the development of the behaviour policy, along with parents, pupils and outside agencies. The close involvement of staff with parents of children in the nursery is a strength, from pre-school home visits to daily contact and ongoing support and guidance. Most teachers ensure that pupils have a clear idea of the standards expected of them. Pupils know that bullying or any form of harassment is not tolerated. When misbehaviour occurs it is usually dealt with promptly and effectively. The recently appointed pastoral support assistant plays a most valuable role in this regard. However, in one class, pupils are not managed well and this has an impact on the standards they achieve in lessons. The school complies fully with locally agreed child protection procedures. The designated person is very experienced and the headteacher ensures that the latest guidance in this area is made available to all members of staff.
39. The headteacher monitors attendance closely, recognising that repeated absence is having a damaging effect on the attainment of some pupils. He makes good use of technology to identify patterns of absence and seeks the support of all parents in implementing the new attendance policy. Although the overall attendance rate remains below the national average, the school has been effective in improving the attendance of several pupils whose attendance was poor.
40. Since the previous inspection, the school has put much effort into reviewing assessment policy and procedures and developing a whole school approach. This was a key issue in the last report. A sound range of procedures is now in place that provides clear information about the attainment of individuals in literacy and numeracy. In other subjects, manageable assessments are made each half term indicating those pupils who achieved well in each topic and those who did not understand. However, this wealth of information is not used effectively to inform planning. Consequently, pupils are not making enough progress in many subjects. For example, in the reception class, children do

not build on the very high level of independence they develop in the nursery so that by the end of the reception year they do not work as independently. In Years 1 and 2, it is not clear how Year 2 pupils, particularly the more able, will increase the skills they learned in science in Year 1. As a result, they are not making enough progress. In Years 3 to 6, while pupils study a different history unit each term, there is no clear plan to show how pupils will improve the history skills they learned the year before. There is clear evidence that assessment has recently been used more effectively in setting pupils from Years 3 to 6 in literacy, numeracy and science. Pupils' work shows that there has been a rapid improvement in the standards achieved because work has been well matched to their needs.

41. Procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good. Their needs are clearly identified in accordance with the Code of Practice¹ and individual education plans are carefully monitored and reviewed. External agencies such as the psychological and health services are involved on a regular basis.
42. The procedures for providing personal support and guidance to raise achievement are sound but not yet fully effective, mainly because there is no consistent whole school approach. Some teachers provide good support, giving good personal feedback to pupils through marking that explains why the work is good and how it could be improved. This is particularly so for pupils' writing. However, the good marking policy is not implemented consistently; too often pupils do not know what they are expected to learn in lessons and so they have no effective means of monitoring their own progress. Some teachers have begun to set targets for pupils, but these are not yet focused specifically on the improvements that individuals or groups need to make. Pupils are largely unaware of how well they are making progress. Although a great deal of information about pupils progress from Years 3 to 6 is now available on a database, the information from this database is not yet being used to track the progress of specific groups of pupils as they move through the school, such as those from ethnic minorities. Information about the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not readily accessible. The deputy headteacher has taken a strong lead in implementing more rigorous procedures for planning and assessment and has a clear view of what needs to improve. The school development plan identifies this as a priority. As a result, the school is well placed to make rapid improvement in this area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents continue to show strong support for the school. At meetings before and during the inspection, and through the questionnaire, parents expressed a near unanimous view that their children like school, are well taught by teachers with high expectations and are helped to become mature and responsible. They find the school very approachable and helpful with problems and have a high regard for the leadership and management. Inspectors mainly agree with these positive views, but teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve could be higher. A few parents expressed reservations about the homework policy. The school has recently reviewed its practice on homework so that appropriate use is made of homework throughout the school. It is used well in lessons in Years 3 to 6. The quality of their children's annual progress reports were also a concern as well as the range of extra-curricular activities, particularly competitive sport. The format of annual reports has improved since the previous inspection; they give parents a clear idea of their children's attainment in literacy and numeracy over the last two years. The school provides a good range of sporting and extra curricular activities. A further concern was raised related to the safety of pedestrians in the school grounds at the beginning and end of the school day. This problem is the subject of meetings between the school, the local education authority and other interested parties. It is clear that the governors have taken advice and acted responsibly in seeking a resolution, although as yet none has been found.
44. The school's documentation is good and there are some very good features in the way information is presented to parents. The parents' handbook, for example, is a comprehensive and valuable source of information for parents throughout the year. The curriculum information provided by each class teacher ensures that all parents are kept abreast of the topics their children are tackling in lessons. The supplements to annual reports enable parents to judge the progress their children are making in literacy and numeracy. Parents have access to several well presented notice boards

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

around the school building and to copies of the school's policies, which are neatly displayed for their benefit at the main entrance to the school.

45. Efforts to involve parents more fully in the education of their children have continued since the previous inspection. Of particular note are the home visits made by the nursery teacher and staff before children start their formal education, the welcoming environment throughout the school, the daily accessibility of teachers after school, including the headteacher, and the opportunities offered each term to attend a briefing on the school's curriculum and policies. Parents generally respond well to being treated as partners in their children's education and the majority co-operate effectively with the teachers in implementing the home school agreement. They support their children with their homework, contribute artefacts to enrich teaching resources, complete questionnaires and attend meetings to share in the preparation and review of policies. Several come into school to work with teachers, helping with readers, giving classroom support with activities and assisting with extra curricular clubs and sporting events. A few work very hard through the parent teacher association to organise fundraising occasions. Their efforts are well supported by parents and the wider community. The partnership between school and home makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. Parents and governors rightly have confidence in the headteacher. Since the last inspection he has continued to provide clear leadership and direction for the school. Improvements to the school building have continued, ensuring that there is sufficient space. In addition, an information and technology suite has been opened and, more recently, a new library area for Years 3 to 6. These improvements have provided a good environment for learning. High staff turnover in the last two years has limited the development of the roles of subject managers. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are similar to that which was reported at the last inspection. At that time, the headteacher had been in post for one year and many developments were new. The deputy headteacher and other enthusiastic senior staff have been appointed in the last two years. The headteacher and the senior management team have worked in partnership with other staff to bring about recent rapid improvements in the standards achieved in Year 6. Changes to the organisation of lessons in Years 5 and 6 and improvements in planning for these lessons have halted the decline in standards since the last inspection. The leadership provided by the deputy headteacher is particularly effective. He has been responsible for a number of initiatives in assessment, curriculum planning and mathematics that have contributed significantly to raising standards during the past year. The influence of the literacy manager in helping to reorganise the teaching groups in Year 6 for English and mathematics before the national tests can also be identified as a contributing factor to raising standards. Subject leaders in English and science have led their subjects effectively during the past 15 months. They have monitored teachers' plans, analysed pupils' work and observed teaching in these subjects. This is good practice and has identified strengths and weaknesses. Management of mathematics has not been effective until very recently when the deputy headteacher took responsibility for the subject and began to implement rigorous monitoring procedures. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics from Years 3 to 6 has been poor. There is evidence from the recent national tests that standards in all these subjects are now beginning to rise.
47. Provision for special educational needs is well managed. A senior member of staff, who is well qualified and experienced, takes responsibility for the achievement and progress of these pupils. She ensures that other staff are appropriately trained and guided. Records are well maintained and a specific grant is spent wisely to give pupils good support in their learning. The provision of a teaching assistant to work with pupils with emotional or behavioural needs is particularly effective in aiding these pupils to integrate well into the classroom and have a happy learning experience.
48. The early years manager, Key Stage 1 manager and other subject leaders are not yet fully effective in raising standards in the areas for which they are responsible. For instance, the early years manager does not influence the teaching in the reception classes enough to ensure that children make the same good rate of progress in the reception classes as they do in the nursery. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not making enough progress from the standards they reached when they were assessed at the beginning of the reception year. Coordinators of subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not analyse pupils' work nor observe teachers teaching and few know the strengths and weaknesses of the whole school in the subjects for which they are responsible.

The headteacher delegates responsibilities appropriately to most teachers. However, the deputy headteacher holds too many responsibilities in addition to his class teaching. Other subject managers have not yet received enough training in carrying out their roles and responsibilities, especially those relating to monitoring and evaluation. This is necessary if they are to help raise standards and teaching in their subjects or areas of responsibility. Subject managers are not allocated enough non-contact time in order to carry out their roles effectively.

49. Although monitoring procedures provide suitable information, overall, the school does not evaluate its work well enough. The headteacher has introduced a school self-evaluation system that provides governors and the senior management team with a great deal of information through a range of good monitoring activities. The headteacher and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators monitor lessons. All subject managers monitor teachers' planning in their subjects. A cycle of sampling pupils' work to look at the standards achieved has been established, but is at an early stage. Data from a wide range of assessments in Years 3 to 6 has been collated onto a special computer programme. The focus of monitoring has been to check standards in English and mathematics. Currently, there has not been a rigorous analysis of the information collected. The lack of evaluation has limited the impact of the school plans to bring about change and improvement. For example, the school action plan following the last inspection clearly identified a list of actions required against each key issue. However, the plan did not allocate responsibility for ensuring that these actions made a difference. No information was included to show how success would be measured. As a result, the school has not made enough improvement in key areas since the last inspection and this has limited pupils' progress. Standards are beginning to rise now following the recent changes, but the school targets set in English and mathematics in 2001 and 2002 were not met. The much more detailed new school development plan is likely to be an effective document and is already beginning to have an impact. The introduction of daily planning books in all classes is the first part of this plan. It sets clear priorities for raising standards in English, mathematics and science by improving the use of assessment and the quality of teachers' planning. Consequently, the school is well placed to evaluate its work more efficiently and ensure that the actions taken to raise standards continue to be effective.
50. The governing body is keen, committed to its work and active in support of the school. The governors spent a whole professional development day working together with school staff to identify areas for improvement. This was extremely successful in forging even stronger bonds between governors and staff and in providing governors with essential information. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and know the standards being achieved in the school. They have confidence and work well in partnership with him. They provide good support by ensuring that all aspects of issues are considered before decisions are taken. They take an active part in working out the school development plan and have a sound grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are successful in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities, including their annual report to parents. However, governors do not have enough information about the impact of their decisions on teaching and learning. For example, governors know that changes have been made to the way that teachers plan their lessons, but they have no information about how effective this change has been. This limits their ability to set clear priorities for future development. Occasionally, major decisions are made without sufficient forethought.
51. The school uses its resources appropriately. Specific grants for school improvement, special educational needs and increasing teachers' expertise are allocated suitably and have made a sound contribution to raising standards. Costs are included for each priority in the school development plan. However, the time needed by staff to implement the priorities in this plan has not been worked out. Therefore, the school does not know how much extra work is being asked of teachers leading priorities in this plan. The school adopts the principles of best value appropriately, ensuring that competitive quotes are obtained for purchases, consulting parents to gauge their opinions, comparing school performance and challenging itself to raise standards higher. Systems for financial control and the day-to-day administration of the school are good, mainly due to the diligent work of the office staff.
52. All teachers are fully qualified to teach in this age range. There is a good range of experience. There are sufficient staff to provide leadership in all the areas of the curriculum and these responsibilities have been appropriately allocated. Nearly all subject leaders have been allocated their roles during the past 18 months. However, few staff have received training for this role. There is a need in some cases, for example in physical education and design and technology, for subject

leaders to receive subject specific training. In addition, all teachers need to receive training in carrying out their roles effectively, especially the monitoring and evaluation aspect. The strong team of support staff is well trained and adds to the expertise available among the teaching staff. They are particularly effective in supporting pupils who are experiencing difficulties with learning or who have special needs. The work of this team is well co-ordinated. The school helps to train nursery nurses, learning support assistants and student teachers. Senior staff act as mentors and extend their professional development by studying for further qualifications to improve their skills.

53. The accommodation is bright, spacious and well cared for. It is enhanced by the quality of displays in the building, which include children's work from across the curriculum. Recent additions, such as the new classroom and library space for Years 1 and 2 are of good quality. A new library for Years 3 to 6 has been constructed, but is yet to be resourced. This forms part of the school's plans for development. Temporary classrooms accommodating the nursery and one other class are in good condition with easy access from the main school building. There are spaces for small groups to work for instrumental tuition and for individual learning support. The swimming pool, shared with the community, adds to the good facilities the school offers. Recent playground improvements give good provision for pupils' active play.
54. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory. Improvements have been made since the last inspection in resources for information and communication technology, which are of good quality. Good quality books are available in the classrooms, but the number available in the libraries is currently inadequate. Usually, pupils respect the resources and help to maintain them in a good condition.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The governors, headteacher and staff should ensure that the key issues from the previous inspection are fully addressed as a matter of urgency, to rapidly improve the rate of pupils' progress throughout the school, raising standards in English, mathematics, science, history and geography by building on the models of good practice that already exist in the school and:

(1) improve the quality of long, medium and short term curriculum planning so that:

- planning sets out clearly how pupils of all ages and abilities - particularly the more able - will make progress in all subjects, improving their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school, and ensures that pupils in mixed age classes make sufficient progress; (paragraphs 3, 5, 7-8, 10, 19, 21, 26, 82, 91, 94 and 115)
- the activities that are planned are suitable for pupils to achieve the stated objectives for learning; (paragraphs 3, 7, 42, 92, 99 and 116)
- the quality of teachers' day-to-day planning improves and it is clear precisely what each group of pupils is intended to learn in lessons and that this is shared with pupils; (paragraphs 17, 19, 21, 82, 98, 102, 109 and 124)
- the information available from assessment is used consistently to plan the next steps in learning in all subjects and that all pupils, particularly the more able, are working at suitably challenging activities and all pupils are more involved in monitoring their own learning; (paragraphs 17, 19, 21, 40, 42, 91, 121 and 132)

(2) improve procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school so that:

- subject managers regularly monitor pupils' work to ensure that the aims of curriculum planning are achieved; (paragraphs 7, 46, 48, 84, 93, 105, 114, 118 and 139)
- effective action is taken to address areas for improvement that are identified through monitoring teaching and learning; (paragraphs 49, 52 and 118)
- senior managers and subject leaders have sufficient time to carry out their duties and provide regular reports to the headteacher and governors about the standards achieved in each subject; (paragraph 48)

- the Foundation Stage leader ensures that the very good practice and high expectations seen in the nursery continue in the reception classes and other senior managers ensure that these high expectations characterise teaching and learning consistently from Years 1 to 6; (paragraphs 10, 18, 24, 40, 48, 57, 84, 126 and 139)

(3) improve the rate of pupils' attendance (paragraphs 15 and 39).

In addition to these key issues, the governors may also wish to consider how to promote high achievement for pupils from ethnic minorities (paragraphs 9, 22, 30, 35 and 105).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	104
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	17	35	41	6	0	0
Percentage	5	16	34	39	6	0	0

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

Very short lessons were not graded.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	362
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	49

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	24	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	20	23	23
	Total	38	42	41
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (86)	93 (88)	91 (83)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	19	23	22
	Total	36	41	41
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80 (83)	91 (83)	91 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	27	17	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	22
	Girls	14	9	16
	Total	30	24	38
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (55)	55 (65)	86 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	23	22
	Girls	14	15	16
	Total	30	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (63)	86 (68)	86 (75)
	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	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	308
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	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)	14.15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	30.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	766,796
Total expenditure	767,674
Expenditure per pupil	2,103
Balance brought forward from previous year	-878
Balance carried forward to next year	1,842

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 17.6%

Number of questionnaires sent out

386

Number of questionnaires returned

68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	3	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	59	4	1	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	53	10	4	4
The teaching is good.	44	50	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	53	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	21	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	25	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	50	9	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	38	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	51	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	40	13	1	9

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were concerned about the safety of pedestrians entering the school site at the beginning and end of the school day. Traffic is very heavy in the school grounds and much dangerous parking takes place. This problem is the subject of meetings between the school, the local education authority and other interested parties. It is clear that the governors have taken advice and acted responsibly in seeking a resolution, although as yet none has been found.

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

56. The Foundation Stage consists of a part-time nursery with 32 full-time places and two reception classes. It is larger than it was at the time of the previous inspection. There are currently 30 children on roll in the morning nursery class and 17 in the afternoon. Children enter the nursery and reception classes three times a year according to their age. They join a full-time reception class at the beginning of the term in which they become five and the nursery a year earlier. The 21 reception children who started school last September joined a combined reception and Year 1 class. A second reception class opened in January and there are now 29 children in that class. Children's standards on entry to nursery and reception are broadly average.
57. The quality of education provided in the nursery is consistently very good with excellent features. The excellent way that all the nursery staff inspire and challenge children, expecting the most of them and encouraging them to think for themselves, means that they make very good progress. They are excited and motivated to learn and get off to a flying start. However, this rapid progress is not maintained and slows in reception because the curriculum there is not planned well enough to meet pupils' needs. In these classes when children are choosing their own activities, teachers have not ensured that each activity has a clear purpose or will help them to improve their skills as they play. This is in sharp contrast to the activities planned in the nursery, which are challenging and have a clear purpose. Although teachers' expectations of what children are able to achieve in the reception are not as high as those seen in the nursery, the quality of education provided in the reception classes is satisfactory overall and children make satisfactory progress over time. By the end of the reception year, most children reach the early learning goals recommended nationally for children aged five in each area of learning².

Personal, social and emotional development

58. Teaching and learning in the nursery are excellent. From the moment that children enter the nursery class for the 'Hello time' they feel secure in the very welcoming atmosphere that staff create. The activities are very well organised so that children know exactly what to do. They quickly and happily settle at the start of their day. No learning time is wasted. Children obviously enjoy school and quickly gain confidence because staff have very good relationships with them. They guide and manage children effectively so that they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. As a result, children learn and play happily together, sharing toys and equipment. They know how to negotiate with others and use talk to resolve disagreements. Staff set high expectations for behaviour from the start so that it is consistently very good.
59. A particular strength is the outstanding opportunities that nursery staff create for children to choose, think about and plan their indoor and outdoor activities. Nursery children exceed the set goals and show above average independence for their age. These skills are not built on at such a high level in reception, except in the afternoon when a group of reception children work in the nursery. Then with support they record their plans independently in a book before starting group work.
60. The reception teachers' expectations are less consistent and this is reflected in children's attitudes and behaviour. For example, children react differently in the way they treat resources according to whether they are working in their own class or the nursery. While nursery staff develop the children's caring attitudes and responsibility very effectively so

² [Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.](#)

they take care of equipment and tidy up very efficiently at the end of sessions, the reception children's attitudes are not as caring. They choose and use resources independently, but on occasions reception children play too noisily and boisterously, disturbing the learning of quieter activities. They show less responsibility and sometimes less involvement and pride in their activities because staff do not take enough interest in what they are doing.

61. Staff in both years provide good role models for the children. They always treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to understand each other's points of view. For example, in a reception discussion time, children responded well and showed that they understood that people, such as the old shoemaker with failing eyesight, have different needs. They show good independence in dressing and in personal hygiene.

Communication, language and literacy

62. The high priority that staff place on developing oracy skills means children are increasingly self-confident about talking to others and asking questions. By the end of nursery, they interact with others, negotiating plans and activities. For example, when a girl said that she could not have a turn on a bicycle, the teacher provided excellent support to help resolve the issue. The girl asked the other child again, without success, then found an effective solution by using a large timer to show when it was her turn.
63. By the end of reception, children talk clearly and audibly and listen carefully. All staff clearly show children that they value their opinions, so that they are eager to offer ideas. An effective method to develop pupils' confidence in talking in front of a large group was in reception. Children take it in turns to tell the rest of the class what they did with the class puppet on his overnight visit to their home. The class listened very attentively and enthusiastically asked sensible questions to further their knowledge.
64. Teachers have good knowledge of teaching phonics. Children receive a structured approach to learning the letter sounds. They link sounds and letters of the alphabet and use their phonic knowledge effectively. For instance, reception children confidently try to write simple and more complex words, such as '*scrumshus sweetes*', and they try to sound out unknown words when reading. They write their own names and, with support, they attempt to write independently. The more able children in reception are beginning to form simple sentences. However, some children are not given enough guidance about leaving spaces between words. In all classes, staff encourage children to try writing for a specific purpose by making supplies of paper, envelopes, pens and pencils readily available. Children in both years enjoy going to the writing corner. They know that writing is used for different forms, such as stories, recipes, cards, letters and lists.
65. All children enjoy listening to stories and handle books carefully. Their teachers select attractive books that appeal to children, such as the story about 'The Elves and the Shoemaker'. They enthusiastically joined in with the elves' 'tap, tap, tap' rhyme. Teachers use pictures and questions effectively to improve children's interest and understanding, for instance to predict what will happen next in the story. In the nursery, the teacher's very expressive reading of a story, 'Two Feet', totally captured children's attention. They showed awe and wonder as the story developed, delightedly trying out new vocabulary such as 'soggy' and 'squidgy'. Children know that print carries meaning, goes from left to right and top to bottom. In reception, they recall stories accurately and have a good knowledge of fairy stories, offering opinions about the characters and the plot. They read simple words from their reading scheme books that they take home occasionally. The more able read well with fluency and expression. Parents promote their children's reading progress effectively through library books being taken home twice a week for children to

share with their parents. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to borrow class library books to take home.

Mathematical development

66. Very good planning in the nursery ensures that children have very good opportunities throughout the day to develop and use their mathematical knowledge. For instance, children spot and count the page numbers in their class storybook. The teacher develops their understanding of space and measure effectively by using their hands to show a small baby shoe and to get bigger for a child's shoe and very big for a man's boot. Children measure and match their shoe size to rectangular shoeboxes in the 'shoe shop'. They cut round pictures of different sized shoes and shoe boxes and match them up. In their model making, they constantly talk about different shapes of materials, such as circle and triangle, and asked what were the oval shapes in a story illustration. This practical approach enables children to make good progress and very effectively raises their interest and enthusiasm in mathematics.
67. By the end of reception, children count confidently forwards and backwards up to 10 and many count well beyond 20. They count in twos to 20 and tens to 100. When calculating they use language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers. Teachers continue to link mathematics effectively to other areas of the curriculum, such as comparing the giant's weight and size to lighter and smaller things in Jack and the Beanstalk. However, reception teachers' expectations are not high enough so that the rate of children's learning slows. This is because their planning does not always build sufficiently on children's previous knowledge and understanding. For instance, there was not enough difference in the work on creating simple patterns in the nursery and reception classes. Too many reception children were still making two-colour patterns using cubes and beads.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. The nursery staff plan and organise a wonderfully exciting range of activities that inspire and challenge children's learning so that they make good progress in exploring and investigating. Children show much curiosity when investigating and examining features of things they observe. For example, a child reasoned that the wick of a candle was black because candles are lit in the night. A more able child knew that the candle went out when a jar was placed over it because it had used up the air. Teachers supply a good range of materials for children to build and construct. They select the tools and techniques they need to assemble and join materials they are using, such as glue, nails or sticky paper. Children in both year groups keep daily weather records. They develop a sense of time satisfactorily by talking about past and present events, such as shoemakers used to sew shoes by hand in the past.
69. In the reception classes, children confidently use a computer mouse to support their learning and operate a tape recorder. Teachers give them good opportunities to find out about their environment. For example, all children visited a local farm to see the animals. They confidently talk and record the features of their town that they like and dislike, such as feeding the geese and swans in the lake.

Physical development

70. Since the previous inspection the Foundation Stage leader has significantly improved the provision for outdoor play for children in both years. The addition of a good quality range of new resources, such as a permanent climbing frame on a safety surface, new wheeled toys, a gravel pit and a choosing shed with an easily accessible, well organised range of resources, means that all children receive increased opportunities to develop the full range of their physical skills. Teachers have effectively reorganised the timetable so that

reception children spend one afternoon a week using them as well as daily lunchtime access. Children in both year groups move with enjoyment, safety, control and co-ordination in large spaces such as the playground or hall. They confidently use a full range of small and large equipment. For instance, they pedal and steer wheeled toys safely and move over, through and slide down climbing equipment with increasing confidence.

71. Children in both years use a range of tools and equipment such as scissors and play dough with increasing control. For instance, they tried very hard, with support, to sew a felt slipper and decorated it with a range of beads and sequins, showing greater skill in reception.

Creative development

72. The nursery staff, in particular, provide a stimulating range of media and materials for children to explore, which very effectively fuels an imaginative response. For example, children independently dressed up as decorators and 'repainted' (with water in the paint can!) the outside step area. Children confidently try all new learning experiences. They expressed delight as they put their bare feet in trays of paint and described how it felt using words such as slippery. They eagerly explored different ways of making footprints, communicating their ideas by saying, 'I'm jumping like a kangaroo'. Teachers change the themes of the role-play areas regularly to ensure that children's imagination is very successfully developed. For instance, children tried on different items in the hat and shoe shop and then pretended to be characters such as a bride or a farmer. Nursery children independently fill the water tank from the tap, while staff add blue colouring or bubbles with different small equipment to make it exciting and different to use each day. Less effective was when children's free play in reception lacked a sense of purpose so that children broke up their models at the end, showing no pride in their creations.
73. Children in both years explore a wide range of art techniques and different materials. They paint and sew, print carefully with shapes to make patterns, model with play dough and make models and collages with scrap materials. They respond to comments and questions about their creations offering suggestions about how they could be improved. For example, a boy in the nursery wanted to nail wooden shapes to copy a sailing boat model his teacher had made. After trying independently for some time, he sought help from his teacher to make two triangular sails. Following very skilful questioning, he suddenly worked out how to do it and realised that he could improve his picture by putting in the sun and the sky.
74. Teachers provide many opportunities during the day for children to sing songs, such as when reception children wait in line. They confidently sing a range of simple songs from memory, adding appropriate actions. They respond imaginatively to music, showing a growing skill in matching their dance movements to different moods. Reception children co-operate well together in small groups to compose a rhythm using percussion instruments.

ENGLISH

75. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national standards and similar to those found at the last inspection. This is an improvement on the last published results in 2001, when standards were below average. Preliminary results for 2002 show a marked improvement. The work seen in classrooms and around the school confirms this improvement and indicates the success of new initiatives in the teaching and organisation of the subject, especially in Year 6.
76. There is much satisfactory reading in Years 3 to 6. Many pupils in Year 6 are engaged in challenging work with good quality literature and are capable of analysing character and the use of language to achieve effect. They know how to look for evidence within a text and to compare and contrast the work of different authors. Pupils throughout the junior stage read a range of good literature with enjoyment. They talk about it in a lively way, recommend favourite authors and evaluate the use of language. A pupil in Year 4 talked about how he had read the poetry of Roger McGough for the first time and found it different from poetry he had read before. 'I didn't expect to like it, but it made me look at things in a different way.' Pupils in Year 6 compared the opening passages from two texts by Michael Morpurgo and explored the devices used by the author to introduce the main characters. They were able to describe how the author achieved certain effects and how his use of particular vocabulary set the scene for what was to come. This is work they will take with them to secondary school and continue there, providing good continuity.
77. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 write for a variety of purposes and for different audiences, both in their English lessons and in subjects such as science, religious education and geography. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the range of writing was judged inadequate. Pupils are now engaged in writing at length. The majority of pupils are able to organise and structure their work using language appropriate to their audience. They have written letters to various authorities using persuasive language; they write book reviews for other pupils and make non-fiction books for each other to read based on facts they have discovered about animals or inventions. A small number of pupils at the end of the junior stage produce narrative writing of a very high standard with lively and imaginative vocabulary. There is also a significant group of pupils for whom extended writing is difficult and a chore. Their writing lacks quality and problems with spelling and grammatical construction hinder their progress. Spelling is less than satisfactory for too many pupils, but standards of handwriting and presentation are generally sound throughout Years 3 to 6. In all classes, pupils with special educational needs are able to take part in the lessons, with support, and achieve satisfactory standards.
78. In Years 1 and 2 standards in reading and writing are too low. Evidence from this year's national tests (2002) and from the work seen in classrooms indicates that there are too many pupils, about 25 per cent, who are not attaining the levels expected of pupils their age. Most pupils enjoy reading and show a real enthusiasm and love of books. This is a positive sign for future attainment. However, many pupils struggle to read new words and are not confident in using phonic clues (when pupils sound out words) to tackle unknown vocabulary. The school is now tackling this through frequent and concentrated teaching of phonics so that pupils know the sound of each letter combination, but the teaching has not yet led to improvement in the standards all pupils achieve. There is now a proportion of pupils, about 15 per cent, who are reading at a level which is above average for their age. The majority of pupils are making sound progress, but there is a significant group who do not make the expected progress in Years 1 and 2 from the sound foundation laid in the nursery and reception classes. Currently, the management of the school is not analysing this information in enough detail to make the necessary changes to practice and improve standards.

79. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write willingly and happily. They produce simple stories and understand how to create interesting beginnings. Many of them use exciting vocabulary and introduce a range of characters. In one class, pupils took the characters from a book about a tiger who wouldn't go to bed and acted them out in order to find exciting vocabulary to use in their own writing. In another class, pupils sequenced pictures from the story 'A Quiet Night In' and hung them on a washing line to show how each part of the story led on to the next. There are many children, however, who are not able to structure their own stories well with clear organisation and logical conclusions. Few pupils write independently with fluency and clarity. Some non-narrative writing is well produced. Leaflets for other pupils warning them to keep out of the sun make a cheerful display. Diaries charting the growth of beans show a clear understanding of how a non-fiction text is organised and produced. Spelling is generally weak throughout the infant stage, but handwriting is beginning to develop well. There is clear evidence of progress made in developing handwriting skills through Years 1 and 2.
80. Pupils throughout the school speak clearly and listen well. They enjoy listening to their teachers and to each other and are encouraged to develop good listening behaviour. Younger pupils are confident enough to speak in front of the class and older pupils enter into cheerful and self-assured conversations with adults. They have many good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
81. All teaching seen in English is satisfactory or better throughout the school. Much of the teaching is good or very good. Teachers use a range of lively strategies to stimulate and interest the pupils. They have very good relationships with the children and in almost all classes they create an atmosphere of confidence and respect. Feedback to pupils, both verbally and through marking, is positive in outlining where pupils have succeeded. In Years 5 and 6, there are examples of very thoughtful and constructive marking of written work. Teachers use resources well. They have access to good literature and books are in good condition. Where they use worksheets, these are carefully designed and provide good frames for writing or response to reading. Lessons are well structured and generally move on with a good pace, introducing a variety of activities and expecting pupils to concentrate and work efficiently. The structure of the Literacy Hour has been helpful to teachers in organising their lessons. Teachers are well prepared for each lesson and do not waste time.
82. Where there are areas of weakness in the teaching they relate to the provision for pupils who are capable of making greater progress. Questioning is sometimes not probing or challenging enough. Individual or group work is not pitched at a demanding enough level, particularly in the mixed age classes in Years 1 and 2. Too often, pupils of all levels of attainment and from two different year groups are given the same level of demand. Standards are not high enough for some pupils because the day-to-day planning does not take enough notice of previous levels of attainment and does not clearly define the next steps needed in order to make progress. There are encouraging signs, particularly in Year 6, that accurate target setting and the involvement of pupils in self-assessment are having a good effect on attainment. In all year groups, classroom support from teaching assistants is of good quality and is beginning to be very effective in raising standards for some pupils.
83. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in English through a range of additional support activities. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are all fluent in speaking English and make suitable progress in developing the skills to read and write in a second language. The achievement of boys and girls in the subject is similar as the factors that are limiting progress affect all pupils equally. Information and communication technology is used appropriately. Most pupils use a word processing package capably to write and edit stories and poems. Literacy skills are developed appropriately in most other subjects. However, there are missed opportunities

to develop writing skills in history and geography, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This is because pupils record only a very limited amount of work in these subjects.

84. The management and leadership of English have recently changed and there is now a clear view of the needs of pupils in order to raise standards throughout the school. There is a sense of purpose, allied with a sound grasp of the nature of progress in English, which looks very positive for the future. Changes in organisation in order to ensure that lessons are pitched accurately have proved successful in Years 3 to 6. There are positive plans for the near future, but effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not yet in place. Consequently, the school is not able to account in detail for the unsatisfactory rate of progress from the nursery through to Year 6. There remains a need for close evaluation of attainment and action, which is based on sound evidence of what works.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average when compared with schools and with schools in similar contexts. The proportion attaining the higher level was also well below the national average when compared with schools in similar contexts. Over the past three years, the girls have attained higher standards in mathematics than the boys. Comparison of the same year group of pupils' results at the ages of 7 and 11 shows the progress they made during Years 3 to 6 was poor. The school's targets for attainment in mathematics in 2001 and 2002 have not been met. These results are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection.
86. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 6 are higher now than they were last year. An early indication from the 2002 national test results supports this view. Standards attained by Year 2 in 2002 are likely to be broadly average and similar to those attained last year. Observations from lessons and from pupils' books indicate that standards attained by the current Year 6 pupils have improved and are now average overall. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in mathematics is also average. The reason for this is that pupils in Year 6 have been taught effectively during the past six months with an appropriate focus to enable them to raise their standards in mathematics. This has been very successful. However, in spite of this, the progress made by this group of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very poor. When they were in Year 2, in 1998, these pupils attained results comparable to the top 5 per cent of schools.
87. By the end of Year 2, most pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics and achieve nationally expected standards. Some pupils attain higher levels than this. Many solve simple problems using one and two digit numbers and solve problems using their knowledge of time. They count forwards and backwards in twos, arrange numbers in order, round up numbers to the nearest 10 and understand odd and even numbers. They add and subtract two-digit numbers from each other and know their 2, 5 and 10 times tables. They know the names and understand the properties of simple shapes. For example, they recognise squares, triangles, rectangles, cubes and cuboids and know how many sides and vertices each has. They work out problems using centimetres and millimetres, add and subtract money and tell the time in half hours and quarter hours. They draw block graphs and can interpret the data it contains. Higher attaining pupils also know their 3 and 4 times tables and often work in hundreds, tens and units.
88. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have developed ways of solving number problems using a variety of methods and some of them use mental methods. They add and subtract using thousands, hundreds, tens and units, multiply and divide by 100 and 1,000 and know their tables well overall. They work successfully with proper and improper fractions and calculate percentages of numbers mentally and by using calculators. They understand rotational symmetry and work out the area of irregular shapes. They know how to calculate the mean, median and mode of a set of numbers. Higher attaining pupils can work with negative numbers comfortably, solve problems by interpreting data from charts and draw angles accurately.
89. The quality of teaching in mathematics throughout the school has improved since the last inspection and is now often good. However, there is evidence from the school's own monitoring of mathematics that much of this improvement has occurred during the past 15 months. It was around this time that the school began monitoring the teaching of mathematics and identifying which aspects needed to be improved. New systems for recording the progress pupils are making have recently been devised and an agreed format for school planning has been adopted. The

appointment of two senior teachers and other staff in Year 6 have also had a significant impact on the rising standards. The low results in mathematics since the last inspection indicate that the teaching in mathematics has been unsatisfactory as the standards have been declining during this period of time.

90. There are a number of strengths in the teaching of mathematics. A number of teachers encourage pupils to think like mathematicians by teaching them to work out a number of different ways of solving problems. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on refining methods of subtraction, the teacher asked pupils to work out answers in any way they wished and then checked the answer using one method. Lessons are well structured with an introduction that stimulates pupils' thinking, clear focused teaching that has a sharp focus during the main part of the lesson and a conclusion that draws together the learning that has taken place. The tasks set help pupils to develop their thinking and do not ask them to repeat learning at the same level. For example, in one lesson, pupils had to complete only five questions at one level before they had to answer questions that were more advanced. Relationships in class are very positive; behaviour is managed well and pupils are well behaved. Teachers check pupils' progress during lessons and to ensure that they all make the progress of which they are capable. This occurred in a Year 6 lesson with higher attaining pupils where the teacher set challenging tasks for pupils of all levels of ability in the class, including the more able. Good aspects of the teaching make lessons more interesting for pupils and help them to learn effectively and make good progress.
91. However, the teaching is not always as good as this. A general weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not assess carefully enough the progress being made by all groups of pupils. They are often asked to complete tasks and the teacher does not check often enough how well they are tackling them. When this occurs, pupils do not know how well they are doing in their lessons and they do not make the progress they should. This occurred in a lesson about fractions, where a number of Year 3 pupils had not fully understood what they had to do. These pupils continued to make the same mistakes throughout the lesson without being corrected. Pupils' work in a number of classes illustrates that many pupils are asked to complete too many tasks at the same level before moving on to the next stage in their learning. Some tasks are not challenging enough for a number of pupils because they are capable of tackling harder work than they are asked to complete. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils who are often set tasks that are too easy for them. With a few exceptions, especially in Year 6, these pupils often complete their work without putting in much effort. A particular weakness in teaching higher ability groups in Year 5 is the way in which pupils' behaviour is managed. During one lesson, a few boys interrupted the teaching significantly and this affected the learning of all the pupils, who did not make the progress they should.
92. The school has developed a sound foundation for teaching mathematics. The policy has been recently revised and national guidance is now followed systematically. Pupils' progress is now assessed appropriately each half term and information from these assessments is starting to be used in teachers' planning. Teachers now use the same format for planning consistently in all classes. This is good practice and is helping to raise standards, including those for pupils who have special educational needs. However, in spite of this, pupils' work indicates that pupils throughout the school are not taught enough how to solve problems and to carry out mathematical investigations. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not taught enough about shapes, length, weight and capacity. They do not analyse or interpret information enough. Overall, computers are not being used enough in mathematics lessons. In other subjects there are appropriate opportunities to develop numeracy skills; for example, in art lessons pupils in Year 1 create a repeating pattern.
93. Mathematics is being co-ordinated effectively by the deputy head teacher, who recently took over this responsibility. He has a clear vision of the future developments that need to occur in mathematics in order to raise standards consistently across the school. This represents a significant improvement in the leadership of the subject to that shown previously, when standards were declining without being checked.

SCIENCE

94. Pupils' achievement in Year 2 is below average and has declined since the last inspection. This is mainly due to weaknesses in the planning and organisation of the curriculum. Planning follows a topic approach that does not systematically build upon pupils' previous skills, knowledge and

understanding of science. Teachers' plans do not usually match pupils' diverse needs according to age and ability in mixed age classes. As a result, not enough pupils reach the nationally expected levels and higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. Achievement in Year 6 is broadly average and similar to the last inspection. Nevertheless, pupils' progress from Years 3 to 6 has been too slow. A change in the organisation of teaching science has had a significant impact on raising standards this year. From the end of February until the middle of June, the four Years 5 and 6 mixed age classes were taught separately, with Year 6 being taught in three ability-based sets. Following a good analysis of the weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding, intensive revision was provided and one additional lesson every week. Pupils with special educational needs have specifically benefited from this approach and shown better progress than expected. Other pupils made rapid progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding. However, their skills in scientific enquiry remain below average.

95. In Year 2, pupils achieve well in some elements of materials and their properties and life processes and living things. For example, they know that the speed with which ice melts depends upon the material in which it is wrapped. They make observations and comparisons of characteristics of common plants, such as colour, size and shape of petals, shape, colour, length and the shape of edges of leaves and the observable features of stems and roots. Standards are below average in physical processes and recording of science, especially scientific enquiry. In these aspects, pupils are not covering work in sufficient depth or at a high enough level to achieve the national expectations.
96. In Year 6, pupils achieve well in knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things and materials and their properties. For example, they know that exercise causes the heart to beat faster. They know that they can measure this by taking the pulse rate. They explain that pulse rate and breathing are faster because the body needs more air, or oxygen. They understand how a circuit is used to test materials, whether or not these are conductors or insulators. They know that iron, copper and steel are conductors and plastic is an insulator which can be used to insulate the conductors. Pupils that are more able clearly draw circuit diagrams, other pupils are less confident at this. The less able pupils have partial understanding of the electrical conductivity of plastic, copper, metal and cork, but cannot classify these as conductors and insulators correctly. The analysis of pupils' written work shows that standards in scientific enquiry are below average in Year 6. This includes areas such as planning of investigations, making comparisons and tests fair, recording of evidence in different forms, skills and language for making predictions and conclusions, interpreting patterns and explaining conclusions. Pupils' skills in each of these are underdeveloped because they have too few opportunities to work in this way.
97. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. When teaching is most effective, teachers have secure knowledge of the subject. They effectively teach knowledge and understanding of scientific principles. There are good examples where the topic vocabulary is shared with pupils and ticked off as and when the teacher feels pupils have grasped it. Some lessons have clear objectives and teachers require pupils to record these in their books at the start of lessons. Teachers' explanations and demonstrations are good, as is the use of questioning. These stimulate pupils' interest and contribute to effective learning. Management of pupils is a strength and, as a result, pupils are engaged in learning. In a Year 1 lesson, excellent class management and high expectations of pupils developed a very productive work ethic. In a very stimulating lesson, pupils made substantial gains in their understanding of how plants are similar to and different from each other because they were provided with a very careful selection of fresh plants to investigate. The teacher constantly gauged how well pupils were learning and continued to adjust teaching for maximum impact. In Years 5 and 6, a teacher discussed how different ways of cooking resulted in irreversible change when understanding of this idea was causing difficulties for several pupils. Pupils in most classes show good interest in learning science. They behave and relate well to each other and to the teachers. They work together well and share resources. These factors contribute to a good learning atmosphere for all the pupils in most classes.
98. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that the curriculum and learning are better organised in some classes. Standards are higher where each piece of work has a clear learning objective. The work is clearly dated and pupils' progress can be followed easily. Investigations are recorded in a structured way and elements of enquiry skills are attended to as expected. There are well presented tables and diagrams that link ideas of science. Pupils' work is marked with clear remarks for development and spelling is corrected.

99. Where teaching and learning are not as effective, the curriculum is less well organised and the teacher's expectations are too low. As a result, pupils' progress is uneven. There is not enough focus in developing pupils' enquiry skills. Some worksheets are not constructed well enough to challenge pupils to explain their ideas, for example, of reversible and irreversible changes. Development of pupils' scientific vocabulary is inconsistent because teachers do not insist that pupils use scientific vocabulary and language when talking or writing about science. Consequently, their predictions become a short piece of narrative rather than a specific sharp piece of scientific thought. Teachers do not clearly and consistently share learning objectives with pupils. As a result, pupils are not clear about their learning. Too often teachers do not match tasks to pupils needs because the useful assessment information is not referred to when planning tasks. As a result, pupils that are more able are not challenged to achieve higher standards and their progress is too slow. This is seen in the low standards achieved in Years 1 and 2 and inconsistent progress over time in Years 3 to 6. Learning in some aspects of physical processes such as the Earth and beyond is weaker because the work does not match the different needs of the age and ability range in the class. Pupils are clear about how day and night are caused. However, they are less secure in their knowledge of how seasons are caused.
100. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has a clear view of what needs to improve and has drawn up and begun to implement an effective action plan. For example, there is a planned programme of in-service training for teachers to improve teaching and learning of scientific enquiry and to introduce targets for pupils. Pupils' work has been sampled and issues have been identified for development, for example a whole school common format for investigations. Rigorous analysis of national test papers identified areas of weaknesses. This led to intensive teaching in Year 6. As a result, pupils made rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of science. Assessment at the end of each topic is based on the nationally recommended science modules. This is manageable and teachers have a better idea of pupils' learning of science. Realistic targets for Year 6 have been set and effective strategies put in place to achieve them. Nevertheless, the curriculum is not cohesive and does not systematically build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The use of information and communication technology is also not developed as well as it could be.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Standards in art and design are as expected throughout the school. These standards have been maintained in Year 6, but are not as high in Year 2 as they were at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, there are some good examples of pupils' work in art throughout the school, showing the potential for higher attainment. Displays all around the school are of particularly good quality. The main reception area is filled with colourful and imaginative work that was completed with professional artists during an exciting Art Week.
102. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 complete pieces of art to complement the topic work they do in other subjects. In Year 1, pupils create a wallpaper design by drawing a repeating pattern onto a squared grid. Each pattern has been photocopied so that every pupil can experiment with a range of techniques and colours before deciding on the final design. The resulting patterns are of high quality, showing that pupils have good skills in using oil and chalk pastels. In Year 2, pupils find out about the work of Picasso. They create imaginative collage faces in the style of Picasso and draw high quality self-portraits in the cubist style. Working with artists in residence during the Art Week, pupils produce good sculptures using metals or natural materials. All of this work shows that pupils have the potential to achieve high standards. However, the range of work available is limited and teachers' planning shows that there is no clear system to ensure that pupils cover the required range of work to increase their skills as they move from Year 1 to Year 2.
103. Work is of a similar high quality in Years 3 to 6, but the range is also limited due to weaknesses in planning that are the same as in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, there is some good work on display and pupils mainly work confidently in art lessons. In Years 3 and 4, pupils carry out a study of printing techniques and have completed a range of work

using poly print, string print and lino prints, based on the theme of living things that is being covered in science. Some of the designs are particularly effective and pupils will have opportunities to improve them the following week. In Years 5 and 6, pupils create containers using a range of techniques from clay to card. The quality of work is variable with some being of very high quality and some giving limited opportunities for pupils to use their creative talents. Sketchbooks are not used well enough in any of these classes to prepare and design artwork. The range of work in sketchbooks is limited to pencil drawings.

104. Very few art lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching in these was variable, with some very good lessons and some unsatisfactory teaching seen. Overall, teachers' planning and pupils' work show that teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers model techniques and use pupils' creative ideas to inspire others in the class. They teach techniques carefully so that pupils are confident in experimenting. These very good lessons include opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and other pupils' artwork and to make suggestions for improvement. Pupils in lessons such as these respond very well, using resources with care and happily discussing and sharing ideas with one another. Teaching that is less effective is characterised by low expectations, very few opportunities for pupils to use creative ideas and over prescription. In these lessons, pupils take little interest in the work.
105. Until recently, one teacher taught all art lessons in Years 3 to 6. Although this teacher was experienced and knowledgeable, this was not effective as pupils did not make enough progress in developing skills from one year to the next. There are very few examples of work from other cultures that would promote higher achievement for pupils from ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, all groups of pupils make similar progress. The art co-ordinator has not had opportunities to look at pupils' work throughout the school and is currently unaware that pupils are not covering enough work in each aspect of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Only one design and technology lesson was observed and so judgements about the standards achieved and the quality of teaching have been made from an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning over the last year. Pupils mainly take home their finished models, but the quality of their planning and preparation during the design process shows that standards are as expected and similar to the last inspection. Information and communication technology is not used well enough in this subject. However, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils from ethnic minorities, make equally sound progress.
107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 design and make models that are linked to the topic they cover in other subjects. In the autumn term they make models of people, using levers to make arms go up and down. In the spring they study the materials that are sensible for making shoes before designing a shoe and list all the things they might need for a French breakfast. This term's work is linked to the 'playground and parks' topic and pupils are busy designing and making models of playground equipment. They competently use the tools, for example, to cut lengths of dowel. They have drawn and labelled clear plans for their designs and modify these plans to ensure that the swings and slides meet their exacting requirements.
108. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use good quality exercise books to design and plan their work. In Years 3 and 4, pupils design and make a range of sandwiches, evaluating the quality of the bread they use and considering basic hygiene rules. In other terms they design and make photo frames or buggies. These designs are more limited and are not evaluated. In Years 5 and 6, pupils continue the work on buggies, including simple switches and gears in their models. They evaluate moving toys before designing a moving toy themselves and

make biscuits planning the ingredients and evaluating the results. Some plans are very detailed and show that a few pupils work at a higher level than expected.

109. Teachers mark pupils' work well in some Years 5 and 6 classes, telling pupils why they have done well and how to improve. However, not all teachers follow this system of marking. Teachers' plans do not make it clear how more able pupils will extend their skills as they move through the school or show how more able pupils in mixed age classes will be challenged in the second year of each two year planning cycle. Some useful assessments are made each term indicating which pupils need more help and those who exceed expectations. However, this information is not used to inform the next term's plan. The lesson seen was characterised by high expectations. Pupils were working well, independently following their designs and solving problems. Good attention was given to health and safety considerations.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards that are similar to those achieved at the last inspection. In Year 6, standards have declined and are now below those expected. This is mainly because not enough time is made available to teach the subject. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of geography and their skills are not improving quickly enough. In lessons, boys and girls learn equally well and make similar progress, as do the very few pupils for whom English is as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
111. In Year 2, pupils show awareness of places beyond their locality in their work, for example Shrewsbury. They compare the British climate with that of Africa. They observe and record important landmarks such as the petrol station, town hall and roundabout on their sketch map of the local area and describe how the use of land has changed the local environment. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 carry out surveys of different cars and use information and communication technology to present their data in pictograms. They draw sketch maps to develop understanding of the geography of the local area and use printed maps to trace their journey from home to school. Maps are studied to describe changes in the local environment. They follow Barnaby Bear's journey around the world and develop knowledge and understanding of other places, for example Brittany. They also develop an understanding of different ways of travelling to these places.
112. In Year 6, pupils use a range of sources of evidence, such as maps, atlases and the Internet, in their investigations. They collect and record geographical information about the countries that took part in the World Cup, using the Internet to find facts about flags. They identify the continents and oceans. Their knowledge and understanding of other areas of geography are patchy and do not reach the standard expected. For example, pupils do not recognise or describe geographical patterns in their understanding of place. They have little understanding of the impact of physical and human processes and of how these affect people's lives. There are too few opportunities for them to suggest geographical questions in their study of places and environments and their experience in using both primary and secondary source material is limited. This is because curriculum planning is weak and does not show how pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding will develop and improve each year. There are some good examples of geographical enquiry and of skills being used well to promote greater understanding. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to ask and respond to geographical questions and use sources of information such as globes, maps, atlases and the Internet to collect, record and analyse evidence on weather in different parts of the world.
113. Very little teaching was observed in geography. The work that pupils have completed and the quality of teachers' planning have contributed to the judgement that teaching is satisfactory overall. The organisation of lessons in Years 3 to 6 until February this year - where all classes were taught geography by the same teacher - has not been effective because standards have declined in these years. This arrangement has been changed so that teachers now take responsibility for teaching their own class. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is secure. They use effective methods and make good use of resources in the limited amount of work covered. Matching tasks to pupils' needs is not consistent. Teachers do not routinely spell out in their daily planning books precisely what pupils of different abilities will be expected to learn in each geography lesson. Too often, pupils of all abilities in two year groups complete the same activities. As a result, pupils of different abilities do not make as much progress as they could. However, the major factor in underachievement in this subject is the lack of curriculum time and the limited range of work covered.
114. The subject co-ordinator has not completed a rigorous analysis of pupils' work to gauge the standards that are achieved. Consequently, there is no effective action plan in place to address the weaknesses that lead to underachievement.

HISTORY

115. Standards in history throughout the school are below those expected. Raising standards in this subject was a key issue in the last report. Standards have fallen in Years 1 and 2 and have not improved in Years 3 to 6. Some improvements have been made. Teachers

now make better use of artefacts to teach lessons and there are now very few worksheets used in Years 3 to 6, although most work in Years 1 and 2 is still completed using worksheets of varying quality. Since the last inspection a new curriculum has been introduced nationally and this is used appropriately to plan the content of history topics. As with many other subjects, there is not enough detail in curriculum planning to show how pupils of mixed ability in the mixed age classes will make progress, building on their previously learned skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Work is planned over a two-year cycle to ensure that pupils don't repeat the same topic. Although the content of each topic is different in the second year, the level of work expected is broadly the same so that pupils are not developing their skills quickly enough. However, the major factor behind pupils' underachievement is that they do not cover enough work in the subject to achieve the national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Neither do pupils carry out sufficient investigations in history. Both of these aspects were part of the key issue in 1997 and have contributed to low standards and insufficient progress since the last inspection. This underachievement affects all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and the very few pupils who are speak English as an additional language. The curriculum review has not considered how history could be used to promote high achievement for pupils from ethnic minorities.

116. In Year 2, history forms part of a broad overall topic and worksheets are bound together in a general topic book. This makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to check the amount of work that is being covered and the levels that are achieved in each year group. Staff chose Picasso when selecting which famous person pupils would study. Pupils have clearly been fascinated with his life and work. However, the quality of artwork produced in topic files is much better than the quality of history work, which is rather undemanding. For example, pupils cut up and sequenced a range of pictures depicting the life of Picasso. The quality of the copies is poor and the historical skills needed to complete this work are at a low level. Recorded work from a topic looking at the history of toys does not reflect pupils' skills in writing and again is undemanding, particularly for more able pupils in Year 2. Overall, the range of work that is covered in the two-year cycle is insufficient to enable pupils to achieve the expected level.
117. In Year 6, pupils use a range of writing styles in their neat books. They write some lists for information, instructions and summarise research. They design posters and brainstorm all the facts they know about each topic. They make comparisons, for example looking at a range of Victorian artefacts and modern equivalents. None of the work is at a sufficiently challenging level for pupils to achieve the expected skills in Year 6. The Aztec topic has very few pieces of work completed. Pupils do not give reasons for, or the results of, the main events and changes in each era. They have few opportunities to combine information from different sources. Structured pieces of work are very limited and do not reflect pupils' ability in other subjects, particularly writing. In discussion, pupils cannot describe the main events and changes that took place in either the Victorian or Aztec era. Overall, their knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and the wider world are inadequate.
118. Very little teaching was observed during the inspection. However, pupils' work shows that they have not had enough opportunities to work at suitable history topics or to use computers in their history work. As a result, standards are not high enough and teaching is unsatisfactory in this subject overall. Until February this year one teacher taught history to all seven classes from Years 3 to 6. This was not successful as standards have not improved. Although an action plan to improve history standards was drawn up after the last inspection, it has not been effective because pupils' work has not been evaluated. The subject leader has not monitored pupils' work to check the standards achieved in each year group and the rate of progress through the school. As a result, underachievement in the subject has not been identified. Some aspects of the action plan have been implemented, but these have not led to an improvement because there has not been effective evaluation of the impact of changes on the standards achieved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now average in Year 2 and Year 6. These standards show a marked improvement since the last inspection, when raising standards in the subject was a key issue. At that time, standards were below the expected levels. Standards

have risen because of improvement in the leadership and management of the subject, in resources and in teachers' subject expertise. The curriculum has also improved and there is now more time available for teaching the subject. An effective link with the North Shropshire Education Action Zone has had a significant impact on improving resources, software, hardware and the quality of advice. In lessons, boys and girls work with equal interest, ease and confidence. As a result, they make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few pupils who have English as an additional language develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT equally well and make sound progress.

120. Pupils in Year 2 use ICT to organise and classify information. For example, they undertake a survey of car colours and present their findings in pictograms. They compose stories and poems and word-process them for presentation, using text, pictures and sound to develop their ideas. They enter, save and retrieve work and use branching database to identify animals. In Year 6, pupils use a variety of databases and the Internet to find information, for example, about the geography of countries that took part in the World Cup. They use technology for controlling events, for example traffic lights, but do not use devices to sense physical data. Most pupils use graphical modelling for creating repeated patterns, but do not yet use modelling to explore patterns and relationships. They add pictures to their writing and show awareness of the need for quality for their presentations. They are familiar with using a spreadsheet, enter and analyse data and produce graphs.
121. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. The good management of pupils and teachers' use of questioning and explanations are common strengths of most lessons. However, teachers do not always make full use of assessment information to ensure that work is tailored to pupils' needs. Demonstrations are not accessible to pupils sitting at the back of the classroom as the icons on the screen are too small for them to see. As a result, pupils do not benefit as much as they could in handling instructions. Pupils make very good progress in lessons where teachers have set high expectations of work habits and relationships are good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop basic ICT skills for word processing. They learn to use a digital camera to take pictures of their artwork, such as sculptures. They create pictures and creative writing. Older pupils are given appropriate opportunities to compose stories and poems. The pace of learning is increased when work is presented in ways that rouse pupils' curiosity. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn to sort shapes according to a given criterion. They measure the daily growth of their plants, enter data and draw a line graph to develop understanding of pattern of plant growth. Teachers effectively support learning, helping pupils to use databases to research information, for example, about igneous rocks. They learn to follow a straightforward line of enquiry when exploring a branching database. Pupils' keen interest in developing their skills to use ICT motivates them to learn well.
122. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Clear short and long-term action plans are guiding improvement. All teachers are well supported and provision of hardware and software is good. However, the school's multimedia projector was not always used and this hinders learning because not all pupils can see the icons on the computer screen in demonstrations. ICT is used appropriately in English and geography. More use could be made of ICT in other subjects. All teachers have completed the nationally recommended training. This has equipped them with secure subject knowledge that they are using effectively.

MUSIC

123. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are in line with those achieved nationally. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Across the school, from the nursery through to Year 6, pupils enjoy music and see it as relevant and important in their lives. In music lessons, the majority listen well, show enthusiasm about playing musical instruments and put forward ideas and responses willingly. A significant number of pupils participate in individual or group instrumental lessons taught by specialist teachers from outside the school. These pupils make good progress and their skills and understanding contribute a great deal to the overall achievement of satisfactory standards in the mainstream classes. Alongside this core of pupils who achieve well many others could attain more highly if the provision made for them in the class music lessons was of a higher quality.

124. The teaching of music varies too much across the school. While some teachers have good knowledge of the subject, others are much less confident. They use effective strategies in managing pupils and in presenting lively activities, but are not planning lessons that enable pupils to build on their previous experiences. Teachers do not extend activities with probing questions or develop them with the introduction of specialist terms. Sometimes pupils are left confused, as they were, for instance, over the definition of pitch and tempo, because the teacher has not enabled them to distinguish these terms.
125. In Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoyed representing musical sounds in a graphic way. Weather words were used to give meaning to the activity and they succeeded in sustaining a short rhythmic piece based on cloud, raindrops, sun and thunder. They used voices and simple instruments in a round. This was challenging and moved their learning forward while being great fun. In Years 3 to 4, pupils listened to Moussorgsky's 'Night on a Bare Mountain' and gave personal responses to it in graphic form. They were not enabled to discuss this response in musical terms or to extend their understanding of the composer's work because the level of demand was pitched too low for them. They did not move forward in their learning. This lesson was carried out with pupils from two year groups in the same way. Pupils do not make gains in learning from one key stage to another or from one year to another and opportunities are wasted.
126. The leadership and management in the subject are failing to provide class teachers with the support and guidance they need to implement the music curriculum in class lessons. There is no school guidance, sample lessons or help in planning for progression available for teachers to draw upon. Evaluation of pupils' progress is lacking and there has been no monitoring or evaluation of attainment in the subject. The organisation of arrangements for peripatetic teaching is good and those teachers feel well supported.
127. Information and communication technology is not used well enough in the subject. Boys and girls make equally sound progress, including pupils with special educational needs and the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The music curriculum is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities, including performances in events outside school. Many pupils benefit from the opportunity to play in ensembles, take part in music festivals and perform before audiences. A recorder club takes place at lunchtimes and is valuable in helping pupils to read music and perform together. This boosts the standing of music in the school and contributes to the sense of enthusiasm that pupils feel.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Most pupils make good progress and attain above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 in the skills needed for games and athletics. Standards in swimming in these year groups are also above average and pupils make good progress in this activity. A significant proportion of pupils in Year 2 and nearly all in Year 6 can swim 25 metres. This is the nationally accepted standard for pupils at the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in physical education were average in Years 2 and 6. With the exception of dance, no lessons were observed in the other aspects of physical education – that is gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activity. Only six pupils in Year 1 were observed in dance. No judgements can be made about the standards in each of these aspects.
129. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to improve their physical co-ordination and control. They practised throwing and catching beanbags, balls of different sizes and quoits. They improved with varying degrees of success their skills of dribbling balls of various sizes around obstacles and along a line. Most improved their skills in these areas and increased their co-ordination and control at above average levels. Pupils in Year 3

practised with increasing accuracy throwing beanbags, quoits and foam javelins at a target ball. Pupils in Year 5 developed their techniques of swimming the crawl, backstroke and breast-stroke. Year 6 pupils achieved above average success in their triple jump skills. They controlled their take off and landings with considerable skill as they practised their technique in this activity.

130. The quality of teaching is often good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Some teaching was very good, for example, in Year 6. When teaching is most effective, teachers plan their lessons well and include clear learning objectives that help steer the learning. Lessons are structured appropriately and allow pupils to warm up their muscles before they engage in vigorous activity and cool down afterwards. A range of interesting activities is planned and all the equipment needed for them is to hand. Teachers have enough expertise to help pupils improve the skills they are practising. In some cases, teachers demonstrate to pupils themselves what they are teaching. This helps the pupils learn effectively because teachers point out how to achieve the best movements as they are demonstrating them.
131. These strengths in the teaching help pupils make good progress and achieve high standards in physical education. Most pupils are keen to take part in lessons and enjoy the activities prepared for them. They try hard to achieve a good standard and are pleased with themselves when they do so. Good direct teaching of skills helps pupils understand how to achieve success and most pupils concentrate eagerly until they do so.
132. In spite of this positive picture, standards in physical education could be higher. To achieve this, teachers need to assess pupils' progress in lessons more systematically and provide activities that are more geared to the higher and lower attaining pupils. In a few cases, the immature behaviour of a minority of boys needs to be corrected more quickly so that the flow of learning is not interrupted unduly. Overall, boys and girls and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make the same good progress in physical education.
133. In addition to statutory requirements, swimming is provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2. A strength of the school's provision is in its outdoor and adventurous activities. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities to take part in one, two or four night visits to nearby residential centres. Many pupils take part in these visits. During these stays, pupils take part in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities such as walking, canoeing and abseiling. Specialist instructors help the school to provide these activities. The school is aware that the provision of dance is a weakness within the physical education curriculum. Long term planning for the different elements of physical education is an area for the school to review. At present, there is not an appropriate coverage of the curriculum for physical education due to the inclusion of swimming throughout the school.
134. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision and plan for the future development of physical education. She has produced an appropriate plan of action for the subject and has set about improving provision with vigour and energy. There are a number of after school clubs in physical education. For example, there is a club each week for girls' football, boys' football run by Shrewsbury Town Football Club and cross-country.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Standards for pupils aged 7 and 11 are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They have been maintained since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few who speak English as an additional language, show satisfactory achievement.

136. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know about Christian celebrations such as Christmas. They understand that the Bible is a special book and they enjoy hearing Bible stories, for instance the story of Noah. Teachers bring these stories to life and relate them well to pupils' own experiences. For example, a Year 1 teacher effectively recapped the story of Jesus' baptism with the use of skilful questioning and related it well to pupils' knowledge of christenings they have seen. They understand that the sign of the cross is a special Christian symbol. Parents had supported pupils' learning very effectively by sending in the children's own christening outfits and gifts to extend their knowledge. This increases pupils' interest. They treated special christening artefacts with great care. Pupils know that Christians worship in a church, but they do not know about any other places of worship.
137. In Year 6, pupils show satisfactory knowledge of special celebrations of different religions, such as the Christian celebration of Easter and the Hindu celebration of Diwali. They understand that what we know about Jesus comes mainly from the Bible and they understand the importance of other holy books. Pupils are very interested in learning about religions such as Islam and Sikhism. They respect different beliefs and customs such as Muslim ritual washing and they are curious to find out more. Teachers ask pupils to record their work in an interesting variety of ways, such as writing about Islamic beliefs from the point of view of a pilgrim travelling to Mecca. Pupils increasingly start to question and offer their own opinions about religious teachings. They consider ways in which religions attempt to provide answers to questions of life and to influence relationships. For example, they linked the Bible story of the Good Samaritan to modern Samaritan organisations that help others.
138. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with good features. The good relationships between teachers and pupils are reflected in pupils' open, positive attitudes. Teachers use questions effectively to explore pupils' beliefs and understanding. For instance, younger pupils answered a question about the role of godparents by saying that they were like child minders because they looked after you when your parents were not there. Teachers make learning interesting and relevant to pupils' lives by using a good range of resources, such as videos. Years 1 and 2 pupils clearly remembered the visit of the minister to enact a baptism. They successfully promote the development of literacy skills by providing good speaking and listening, reading and writing opportunities. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 research facts about the Bible to discover different genres of writing, such as poetry in the Psalms. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' written work and, as a result, it is neatly presented. A less effective feature of teaching is that there is insufficient difference in planning for pupils in mixed-age classes to fully meet their different needs. Pupils' learning was unsatisfactory when they copied work that was too difficult for them to understand: for example, '...the influence of individual perspective leading to some of the contradictions in the Bible'.
139. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and no clear plan to ensure that teachers know what to do to improve standards. The school has not identified that pupils' achievement is affected because the time spent on religious education is sometimes less than recommended. The recent adoption of plans following national guidance offers teachers more guidance. However, the school has not yet adapted them to meet either the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, the school's policy statement or pupils' different needs in mixed-age classes.