

INSPECTION REPORT

LUDLOW JUNIOR SCHOOL

LUDLOW

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123426

Headteacher: Mrs Ella Bolt

Reporting inspector: Mrs Pat King - 7853

Dates of inspection: 1st July – 4th July, 2002

Inspection number: 244441

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Junior
Age range of pupils:	7-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clee View, Ludlow, Shropshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Stephens
Date of previous inspection:	29 September – 2 October, 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7853	Mrs Pat King	Registered inspector	English as an additional language; Religious education; Science; Physical education.	What sort of school it is? The school's results and achievements; How well are the pupils taught?
9744	Mr Peter Brown	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school cares for its pupils? How well does the school works in partnership with parents?
8798	Mr Dennis Maxwell	Team inspector	Design and technology; Geography; Information and communication technology; Mathematics.	How well is the school led and managed?
2728	Mr Rod Passant	Team inspector	Art and design; English; Equal opportunities; History; Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
2700	Mr Peter Sudworth	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

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REPORT CONTENTS

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

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ludlow Junior is of average size for a junior school. The number of pupils on roll, currently 221, has continued to fall since the last inspection due to the building of a primary school locally but is now becoming more stable. Most pupils come from the immediate area of mixed rented and privately-owned housing. Some pupils travel from surrounding areas. At the time of the previous inspection, the school had a designated unit for pupils with special educational needs but these pupils have now been integrated into the mainstream classes. Ninety-four pupils have special educational needs, a percentage well above the national average and many of these pupils require intensive support with their learning. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Two pupils have English as an additional language and they are not at an early stage in the acquisition of English. Most pupils who enter the school have previously attended the local infant school but a significant proportion, who mainly have special educational needs, joins the school in Year 3 from other schools. For example, 25 per cent of the current Year 6 pupils came from outside of the immediate area in Year 3. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The fall in the number of pupils on roll means that the school has had to manage reductions in teaching staff over the last few years. However, it has benefited from being involved in a partnership of local schools and this has provided, for example, a breakfast club funded by National Opportunity Funding. The Family and Friends Project provides a Family Support Worker for Ludlow schools and the Single Regeneration Budget enables the school to undertake a good range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The leadership of the headteacher, governors and staff ensures that all pupils have access to the good quality learning experiences available. The good quality teaching means that pupils have very good relationships with each other, behave well, work hard and show a good sense of responsibility towards others and the environment. Standards have risen over the last five years and a significantly higher percentage of pupils now reach the expected levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities do well but the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the below average percentage of high attainers on entry to the school means that standards are below the national average by the age of eleven. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good;
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning and are keen to participate in lessons;
- Good quality teaching and good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants enable pupils of all abilities to do well;
- The school offers a rich and well balanced curriculum that enhances pupils' learning;
- The school has well considered initiatives to work in close partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Pupils' understanding and use of vocabulary to help them to improve their writing and reading;
- Pupils' independence in learning;

- Assessment to support teachers in matching work more effectively to pupils' needs in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1997, pupils' levels of attainment have improved in English, mathematics and science. Teaching has shown good improvement; and is now much more consistently good across the school. All the areas for improvement identified in the last report have been addressed effectively. The curriculum in art and design, design and technology, music and information and communication technology now meets statutory requirements. Curriculum planning and organisation are better and, as a result, teachers provide work more regularly that builds effectively on pupils' skills from year to year. The school has made very good improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, which were unsatisfactory and are now good and very good respectively. Handwriting, which was unsatisfactory, is taught systematically and is of an overall satisfactory standard. Financial planning is good and is linked closely to priorities in the school improvement plan. The governors and headteacher monitor the progress of the targets set for school improvement and these are sharply focused on raising standards. The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures a clear sense of direction for the work of the school, and there are well-defined roles for members of the senior management team and governors.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	D	C
mathematics	D	C	D	C
science	D	D	D	B

Key

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

Pupils' attainment by the age of eleven at the end of Year 6 is below what is expected overall for the pupils' age in English, mathematics and science. Standards have risen in these subjects in the national tests in line with the national trend over the last five years although the improvement has been more marked in science. The school exceeded the targets, which they set for the pupils to reach in the national tests in 2001 in English and mathematics. Good improvements have been made in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in the national tests. However, the low percentage of pupils reaching the higher level has the effect of lowering the overall standards in English and mathematics. The below average attainment by eleven reflects the nature of the cohort as the school has a well above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in Year 6 entered the school from a range of infant schools with an above average percentage of pupils attaining below the national average in the national tests and a below average percentage attaining the higher level. These pupils have made the expected progress through the National Curriculum during their time in the school and pupils of all abilities have achieved well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in the basic skills of spelling and handwriting. Some pupils' limited knowledge of and

understanding of vocabulary restricts their attainment within reading and writing across the curriculum. By the age of eleven pupils attain above the national expectation in art and design and in line with what is expected for their age in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are well motivated, interested in their work and keen to learn. A few pupils in Year 3 find listening difficult but respond to the class teachers' very good approach to behaviour management.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and at break-times. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's expectations and of the importance of working and playing together positively.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils show initiative and a good sense of responsibility within the life of the school. They are sometimes too dependent on adults in their work. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is good and pupils arrive punctually at the beginning of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. In eight out of ten lessons it is good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In literacy and numeracy lessons teachers teach the basic skills effectively and also provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills within all subjects of the curriculum. However, they do not all develop the pupils' speaking skills enough in preparation for writing and to support understanding more fully in reading. Teachers place a good emphasis on investigative approaches to work but do not always allow pupils to use their own findings sufficiently. Teachers manage pupils very well and have very good relationships with them with the result that pupils work hard in lessons and are well motivated to learn. They plan and prepare lessons carefully so that work is matched well to pupils' individual learning needs and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to provide regular support for pupils during lessons so that pupils know what they are expected to do and work at a good pace

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good in quality and range and meets statutory requirements fully. It is enriched by good links with the community, local visits and extra-curricular activities. It includes a good programme for pupils' personal, social

	and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils' needs are met effectively within classrooms because of the very good support that they receive from teachers and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language ensures that they have equality of access to the same curriculum as the other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and that for pupils' cultural development is very good. The good quality provision overall for pupils' personal development stems from the fact that it is planned carefully as part of the school's rich curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures are in place to provide a safe and healthy environment for learning. All members of staff know pupils well and use this information to provide effectively for their social and emotional needs. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. They are not developed enough in other subjects to give teachers a clear overview of standards and pupils' progress.

The school strives very actively to establish a partnership with parents but few parents were seen working in the school. Many parents attend the open evening meetings and parent partnership meetings. Generally parents have a very positive view of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She is well supported by two assistant head teachers and is very successful in combining a very strong ethos of caring for and supporting all pupils with a sharp focus on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are influential in shaping the direction of the school and they fulfil their responsibilities well. They are very well informed about the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses and have a strong commitment to providing high quality learning experiences for pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of the school by the headteacher are good and the information gained is used effectively to improve teaching and raise standards. The governors have a well developed role in monitoring the work of the school and work closely with curriculum co-ordinators who are becoming increasingly active in checking the provision and pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans the use of its money well and monitors its expenditure regularly and systematically. The school is well staffed to meet the wide range of pupil needs. Accommodation is good and learning resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school is led and managed; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality teaching that pupils receive; • The good progress that pupils make because they are expected to work hard and do their best; • The pupils' good behaviour ; • The approachability of the staff; • The opportunities that pupils have to show positive attitudes towards others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information given to parents about how their children are getting on; • The range of activities that take place outside of lessons.
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The inspection team has given full consideration to the views of parents and agreed with all the positive views expressed. The inspection evidence shows that the amount of homework given is satisfactory but inconsistent. The information given to parents about their children's progress and the range of activities available to pupils outside of lessons are found to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment by the age of eleven is below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 have made the nationally expected rate of progress through the National Curriculum levels during their time in the school and have achieved well in English, mathematics and science relative to their attainment on entry. At the time of the last inspection pupils' progress across the school was inconsistent and now it is similar in all year groups, which is an improvement.

2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in mathematics, science and English. Pupils who transfer into the school from other schools at the beginning of Year 3 and during the key stage because of Ludlow Junior school's good reputation for teaching pupils who have special educational needs settle well. They make similar rates of progress to those pupils who enter from the local infant school in Year 3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans, which are of very good quality and help teachers to provide appropriate work for them.

3. Higher attaining pupils achieve well overall and this is because teachers plan work that meets their needs. Often they provide separate tasks and worksheets that enable these pupils to write more independently and to reflect, reason and enquire in more depth. Good examples of this were seen in a range of subjects and particularly in geography, religious education and science. Pupils with English as an additional language or from different cultural heritages make the same progress as the other pupils. Girls have done better than boys in the national tests over the last three years but there was no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls observed during the inspection.

4. Pupils' attainment is below the national expectation in speaking, reading and writing because of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils develop their listening skills well during their time in the school and are able to use these to acquire knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. They also make good progress in acquiring spelling and handwriting skills and reach satisfactory standards in these aspects of writing by Year 6. They are able to apply these skills well when writing for a range of purposes. However, pupils often have difficulty in using and understanding a varied and rich vocabulary or speaking in more formal English. This affects their ability to express their ideas fully in writing and their understanding of texts when reading. The approach to promoting pupils' language skills through extended answers to questions, drama, role-play and planned presentations is not yet consistent enough to raise pupils' attainment further in writing and reading.

5. In mathematics and science pupils make good progress in lessons in acquiring knowledge and understanding because of the good level of support provided by adults within well organised tasks. They apply their numeracy skills satisfactorily within other subjects. However, they often have difficulty in organising their ideas to make generalisations from their results in mathematics. In science they cannot always explain a prediction or conclusion and apply their knowledge and understanding within investigational work. Their ability to use their own ideas to plan investigations and to enquire is below what is expected nationally for their age in mathematics and science.

6. Pupils' attainment in art and design, design and technology and in information and communication technology has improved from the time of the last inspection when it was below the national expectation by the age of eleven. In Year 6 pupils now reach standards that are above the

national expectation in art and design and in line with national expectations in the other two subjects. Pupils are able to adopt a problem-solving approach. In art and design and design and technology, they make choices of materials and decisions about designing and are able to evaluate their work. In information and communication technology pupils have a good understanding of the basic skills and are able to apply these skills across the curriculum. They have gained a good range of skills in word-processing, data handling, searching for information and early steps of control. By Year 6 they have used word-processing to write up accounts for history as well as English.

7. In the other subjects pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected nationally and in religious education meets the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils generally make good progress in lessons because of the good structured teaching that they receive. They are often stretched to reason and reflect, although the responses of many of the lower attaining pupils are brief in discussions and they have difficulty in structuring ideas in writing. The teachers manage this well in terms of enabling pupils to complete the task through carefully devised work sheets. The higher attaining pupils develop their subject skills appropriately, particularly when they are given scope to write in their own style or plan an investigation within a group.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are interested, well motivated and work hard. They appreciate the strong pastoral support provided by teachers and other members of staff, which makes them feel secure and valued.

9. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their learning and this is as a result of the good quality guidance and support that they are given across the school. They are often confident to answer questions and to share their work because they know that adults and their peers respect their contributions. They get on well with the other pupils.

10. Behaviour in school is good and is a consequence of appropriate behaviour management strategies being effectively and consistently operated throughout the school. In the classroom pupils are attentive, well mannered and considerate towards others. At break-times pupils play well together, collaborating effectively within a wide range of games and activities. They display a good level of social skills, relating well both to other pupils and to adults. Although play activities can sometimes be somewhat lively, no incidences of oppressive behaviour were either observed or reported. Regard for property is good, and the incidence of pupil generated vandalism is low.

11. Pupils are sensitive to the needs and feelings of other people, including those of a different ethnic origin, and this provides a firm foundation on which very good personal relationships are established. The strength of these relationships, both with fellow pupils and members of staff, makes a positive contribution to the quality of learning because a purposeful and positive working atmosphere is evident in all classrooms.

12. The level of initiative and responsibility displayed by pupils generally is good. The school promotes these qualities effectively in many respects by providing appropriate opportunities such as the involvement of pupils in helping to organise assemblies and awards. An additional opportunity to exercise responsibility is provided by the chance to undertake administrative responsibilities in the school office. Within the work of the classrooms, the approach to this is more variable and pupils are often too dependent on adults to make progress in their work.

13. Levels of attendance are good and slightly exceed national averages. The incidence of

unauthorised absence falls significantly below national averages. Punctuality of pupils arriving at school is good, and registrations are conducted with brisk efficiency and in accordance with statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good overall. In eight out of ten lessons it is good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This shows good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was more inconsistent across the school, with some teaching being unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved in design and technology, information and communication technology and music due to the introduction and good use of schemes of work.

15. In literacy and numeracy teachers teach the basic skills effectively so that pupils of all abilities achieve well. In subjects like art and design and design and technology teachers give pupils good opportunities to explore and problem solve, which involve pupils in making decisions and evaluations. In mathematics and science, teachers place a positive emphasis on practical and investigative work but often they give too much direction and do not allow pupils to use their own findings.

16. They provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum but the use of speaking to promote pupils' writing and reading is not given consistent emphasis.

17. Some strong features are evident in almost all lessons. Teachers and other adults in the classroom have very good relationships with pupils, manage them very well and have clear expectations that they will behave and work hard. Pupils respond to this approach and lessons are generally very purposeful. Teachers make very good use of teaching assistants to support individual and groups of pupils. They ensure that the teaching assistants are well informed about the purpose of the lesson and the needs of the pupils. As a result, these members of staff make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress because they help them to understand the tasks and to concentrate. Occasionally, better use could be made of them during the whole-class introduction to lessons. Teachers plan lessons carefully and give the pupils clear explanations with the result that pupils understand what they are expected to do and make very good use of time. In the best teaching, teachers share the learning intentions with the pupils from the outset of the lesson so that they know what they are striving to improve and are more sharply focused. All adults work alongside individual pupils or groups to build on their understanding as the lesson progresses and to deal with pupils' misconceptions effectively. This helps all pupils, including those with English as an additional language to achieve well.

18. Whilst there are many strengths in teaching, some aspects need more consideration. Teachers often question pupils well to check their understanding and to extend their thinking but sometimes they accept answers that are too brief or do not ask sufficient supplementary questions to promote reflection further. In the best teaching teachers vary their questions to target individual pupils at their own level of understanding and this helps all pupils to participate and gain fully from the lesson. In some lessons teachers only ask those pupils who raise their hands and other pupils are left without the opportunity to develop their speaking skills. On other occasions teachers ask questions to which they have the expected answer and pupils anticipate that response and do not develop their own ideas enough. In a science lesson in Year 4 where teaching was excellent, pupils were asked to work within groups to plan an investigation that involved them in applying past knowledge about habitats gained from a local visit. They were given an open-ended question to challenge their thinking and were expected to discuss, plan and draw up a design to test mini-beasts' preferred habitats. Pupils responded well to this and many pupils worked with a high level of collaboration and good exchange of

ideas. Teachers often provide pupils with opportunities to share their findings and ideas in the final part of lessons but often this time is too short and generally pupils have too few opportunities to plan, rehearse and perform presentations.

19. In the very good or excellent lessons teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and this is reflected in the nature of the work given. Teachers expect pupils to show appropriate independence as learners for example to make evaluations of their work in art in Year 3, to make choices and decisions in Year 6 when exploring control equipment in information and communication technology and to devise role-play as a group in religious education. The pupils respond well and show a high level of motivation and commitment. They feel secure in meeting the teachers' demands because the task builds systematically on previously acquired skills.

20. Where teaching was satisfactory it was mainly due to the pace being too slow because too much time was spent in pupil management or to insufficient emphasis being placed on the teaching of skills in some physical education lessons.

21. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few pupils with English as an additional language are taught in class alongside the other pupils and receive the same good quality teaching as the rest of the class. Good arrangements are made to match the work to the pupils' needs and the pupils receive good support from the class teachers and teaching assistants.

22. Teachers plan work that is based on what the pupils have learned in previous lessons and the work is generally well matched to a wide range of pupils' needs. Often groups of pupils have different tasks or different ways of recording their ideas to reflect their stage of understanding. In some lessons, such as art and design and physical education teachers ask pupils to evaluate their work or that of others and this is useful for teacher assessment. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and they often provide written comments that help pupils to know how to improve their work. Some teachers use marking as a means of assessment by clearly addressing the learning intentions of the lesson or the targets set for pupils.

23. Teachers make some good use of homework to support pupils' learning, particularly in spelling and reading. Tasks set are related to the work of the classroom and become increasingly demanding as pupils move through the school. Homework is marked regularly and conscientiously. Apart from daily spellings and reading, the amount of homework is left to each teacher and this leads to some inconsistency in approach.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school for all pupils are good. Pupils' good attitudes to learning stem from the fact that the school has considered carefully the statutory requirements for the curriculum, which it meets, but also presents the curriculum in a rich and stimulating manner. The school achieves coverage of the National Curriculum but also increasingly is finding ways of making connections between the various elements to ensure that pupils have the time to work in the depth required to achieve well. The work is planned carefully, for the most part, so that what is taught builds on what has gone before. A broad range of carefully structured experiences provides the necessary challenge and support to pupils. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in all subjects. The personal, social and health education programme is good. It is planned well, essentially based on a 'stop, think and assess' process and includes

appropriate sex and drugs education elements. A good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and planned additional experiences and events within school extends the learning opportunities.

25. The previous report identified a number of specific areas for improvement relating to the curriculum, particularly noting the lack of progression between the year groups of the mixed age classes. There has been good improvement in the curriculum issues since the last inspection. The move from mixed-age classes and the introduction of schemes of work and detailed planning mean that weaknesses relating to progression have been addressed well. There are still some minor examples of repetition of content without sufficient changes in the pitch of work, particularly in science and religious education. Because of joint planning between teachers of parallel classes, all pupils in a particular year group get a common curriculum, although individual teachers may interpret aspects according to their individual strengths. For example, one teacher might use lino printing whilst the other uses collage to explore a particular theme.

26. The school places an appropriately high priority in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been adopted well. In literacy, teachers have begun to develop an element of flexibility within the strategy to give greater focus to the development of writing skills. The school has resisted the temptation to narrow the curriculum to concentrate mainly on the teaching of basics skills, recognising that it is within the breadth of the curriculum that pupils develop a reservoir of ideas.

27. The school makes good use of the immediate community as an additional resource. The move to the secondary school is eased by a well-developed induction visit and through the use of joint English work. Good links with the infant school, ensure that the pupils' transition into the junior school is made smoothly. A good partnership with other schools means that the school acts as host to a breakfast and 'kids club' for the area.

28. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and shows a full commitment to the provision of equal opportunities. The school is very inclusive and has a higher than average number of pupils who have a statement of educational needs, including a significant number with moderate learning difficulties. Teachers work closely and effectively with learning support assistants to ensure that these pupils are given a curriculum appropriate to their needs. In numeracy and literacy the work is modified and is appropriately challenging for their individual needs. It is matched well to pupils' individual education plans. The school has a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. These pupils are bi-lingual and are not at an early stage of learning English. The school, however, values pupils' language skills and, for example, in an assembly that focused on language a pupil made a contribution in French and in a music lesson there was a brief exploration of the Italian language contribution to musical terms. Some work in Years 5 and 6 in English and mathematics is taught to classes that are grouped in terms of pupils' attainment so that the specific needs of pupils are met more easily. In general, higher attaining pupils are challenged and achieve well, although the school does not have a specific policy that outlines specific strategies to challenge the abler pupils.

29. The overall social provision is good. The school, through its class, year and whole-school assemblies fosters a strong community spirit as well as providing an act of collective worship. Pupils are given responsibility within the school and classroom but more could usefully be done to encourage them in taking more initiative for their own learning and developing their independent skills as learners. Pupils sometimes lack the confidence and skills to achieve when there is little adult support. There are

some good opportunities for co-operative group work particularly in science, design and technology and physical education but open-ended investigative work generally is not a consistently strong feature. The school very successfully promotes pupils' sense of self-respect through positive rewards and praise.

30. The provision for moral development is good and this is reflected in the overall quality of relationships throughout the school. Pupils are taught about issues relating to right and wrong. There is a clear code of expectations within the school relating to behaviour and how others should be treated. Members of staff are good role models and they treat pupils with respect and courtesy. Pupils are taught to recognise and respect individual differences. This means that the more able pupils do not feel constrained to show their skills. Other pupils who need much support with their learning are accepted fully in all aspects of the school.

31. The provision for spiritual development is good. As with cultural provision there has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There are good opportunities to explore other values and religious beliefs. The school successfully creates an ethos in which making mistakes is seen as being part of the learning process and, as a consequence, pupils increase in confidence. Developing pupils' sense of self-esteem through the way that pupils' contributions are valued consistently is an important part of the school's success. Because the curriculum is rich, pupils are able to make links and connections and comparisons with their own lives. They can, for example, through their reading of 'Journey to Jo'burg' reflect upon the impact of apartheid.

32. The provision for cultural development of pupils is very good. A great deal of thought has been given to how the school can prepare pupils for an ethnically diverse society and the work, for example, in geography is planned particularly carefully to foster this awareness as well as geography skills. Religious education, assemblies and indeed the Internet are used effectively to show how different people live. The school meals service, with its world-wide menu also supports pupils' developing cultural awareness. In art and design, there is very good use made of artists from different cultures or traditions. Pupils can talk about 'expressionism' or 'impressionist' painters with confidence. Aboriginal art is studied with sensitivity to its unique nature. Pupils have good opportunities to listen to a range of music from different traditions, for example; in one class pupils were composing their own Chinese music using the pentatonic scale.

33. The inter-related strands of pupils' personal development are 'plaited' together effectively. Study of the rain forest, for example, is moral, social and cultural in its implications. Just as, work on specific texts take pupils into reflecting on their own lives and well as developing their cultural awareness. The good quality of the overall social provision stems from the fact that it is planned carefully as part of the school's curriculum and not as an adjunct to it.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school's provision for the care of pupils is good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Arrangements for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the member of staff with designated responsibility and she is supported in this role by an assistant headteacher. Both have been fully trained, and the educational welfare officer has provided additional training to both teaching and non-teaching staff. The school has adopted the County Child Protection Policy, and the details and implications of this document are fully understood by all members of staff.

35. Other health and safety procedures are very good and conform totally to statutory requirements. A specific governor has been designated with specific responsibility for health and safety matters, and all procedures and practices are subjected to close monitoring. Fire prevention and control procedures are effective, as are those for first aid. Risk assessments have been completed which cover potential hazards both internal to the school and also in relation to external visits. Health and safety factors are incorporated effectively into lesson plans.

36. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and make a major contribution to the good levels of attendance that are currently being achieved. Data is quickly and accurately analysed using an Optical Mark Reader, which also produces the appropriate letter to parents. An educational welfare officer provides effective support and follows up problem cases, both by letter and personal visit. The school is pro-active in discouraging holidays during term-time by reference in the school prospectus and encourages good attendance by the provision of awards to individual pupils and classes as a whole.

37. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. A whole-school behaviour policy has been issued which provides comprehensive information as to how good behaviour should be rewarded and as to the sanctions that should be applied in the event of inappropriate behaviour. Emphasis is placed on the need for good behaviour to be recognised and celebrated and, consequently, a wide range of rewards is available, including stickers, merit certificates and the opportunity to earn extra playtime. Sanctions are based on a discipline spiral system, which effectively ensures that responses to inappropriate behaviour are proportionate to the misdemeanour and applied consistently.

38. Procedures for combating oppressive behaviour are very effective. Detailed procedures are in place, which form part of the behaviour policy, and these are fully understood by all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Bullying as an issue is fully discussed in class and, consequently, pupils are fully aware of its negative effects and of the action to be taken should they be the victim of bullying or any other form of oppressive behaviour.

39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers provide effective counselling to pupils, and additional support is available through a Family Support Worker who not only visits homes but promotes personal development through the medium of circle time. Teachers have a good understanding of individual pupils' personal needs and respond effectively with sensitivity and skill. They invariably display a high level of commitment to the personal development of pupils for whom they are responsible.

40. At the time of the last inspection assessment arrangements had just been introduced. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now used consistently and are satisfactory overall. However, they are in need of further development in the non-core subjects. The school is aware of this and assessment is a priority in the current school improvement plan. In English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, teachers assess pupils' attainment thoroughly at the end of a module of work and this helps them to identify clearly pupils' individual needs. Nationally produced optional tests are given annually in English and mathematics and the information gained from these is used to place pupils in sets in Year 6 and to set targets for pupils to achieve at the end of the following year. The school also analyses the national test results in relation to the attainment and progress of the different gender and ability groups. This approach has enabled the teachers to monitor how they are meeting the pupils' needs and also to devise strategies to improve the performance of boys in reading and writing. Assessment in the non-core subjects mainly consists of marking pupils' books. Whilst this helps teachers to plan work for the next lesson, it does

not provide a concise overview of skills, knowledge and understanding to enable teachers to identify gaps in learning or to complete the end of year reports for parents.

41. All teachers set targets for pupils to reach each year in English and mathematics and these are used when planning work for groups of pupils with similar needs. The progress that pupils make in meeting these targets is monitored regularly by members of the senior management team. Good use is made of information and communication technology for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers also make effective use of reading and spelling tests and assess pupils' writing at regular intervals. They use the outcomes of these assessments to prepare group targets for pupils in spelling and writing. One of the strengths of this approach is that these targets are shared with parents at a Parent Partnership meeting each term with the result that parents are invited to support their children at home. The impact of the assessment procedures has been very good in spelling because pupils are given regular homework based on the results of the tests. The effect of the targets in writing is not as marked because not all pupils use them to support their work in lessons. Teachers assess pupils carefully in lessons and use their evaluations to plan an appropriate match of work for the next session. They often use marking well to let pupils know how to improve their work through good quality comments and some pupils are very clear what they need to do, for example to use more complex sentences or punctuate using capital letters more consistently. However, overall teachers do not involve pupils fully in assessing their attainment and progress, for example opportunities are missed in subjects like physical education for pupils to evaluate their work and pupils are not always informed enough about the next steps in their learning to bring about improvement.

42. The school tracks the progress of pupils with special educational needs very well through monitoring their individual education plans, which are reviewed at least half-yearly but mostly termly. Statements of special educational needs are reviewed annually in accordance with requirements and these pupils receive appropriate support as a consequence.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents hold the school in very high regard as they did at the time of the last inspection. They believe that it provides a good quality education within a safe and secure environment. The quality of leadership within the school is thought to be of a high standard and parents consider that their children are taught well. Behaviour of pupils is believed to be good, and attitudes to work are seen as positive. In general, parents consider themselves to be well informed as to their children's progress at school, and teachers are seen as helpful and approachable.

44. A few parents in response to the questionnaire have some concerns about the amount of homework given, the information given to parents about how their children are getting on and the range of activities available to pupils outside of lessons. The inspection team considers that homework is satisfactory overall and good in respect of reading and spelling. However, there are some inconsistencies in the amount given. It judges the information given to parents about their children's progress and the range of clubs provided to be good.

45. The school has established good links with parents and these make a positive contribution to the academic and personal development of pupils. Liaison with parents is formalised through the Parent Partnership which involves an afternoon meeting each half-term during which views can be shared and consultation carried out. Informal contact, both before and after school, takes place between teachers and parents, providing an effective opportunity for any concerns to be discussed quickly and on a one-to-one basis. Teachers, in their day-to-day contact with parents, are approachable, helpful and well informed.

46. The impact made by the parents on the overall work of the school is satisfactory. A few parents help in classrooms and more with outside visits. An active Parent Teachers Association raises approximately £3,000.00 per annum, of which £2,000.00 is designated to improved equipment for information and communication technology equipment. Parents make a positive contribution to school life through their involvement in the Breakfast Club and Kids Club.

47. The quality of information provided to parents is good. Newsletters are issued each month and contain useful information concerning current and future events. They are attractively presented and contain recent examples of pupils' work.

48. The school prospectus is very detailed and provides a wide range of information concerning all aspects of school life. Although reader-friendly in language, the document is somewhat lacking in visual impact.

49. The governors' annual report to parents summarises school achievements and accomplishments during the previous academic year effectively. All relevant information is included and the report complies fully with statutory requirements.

50. Parents receive an annual written progress report, which satisfactorily details progress of pupils subject-by-subject. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science clear information is provided as to what pupils have actually achieved but, in some foundation subjects, comments are too limited in the reporting on pupils' achievements. Parents are provided with satisfactory information relating to pupils' personal development within the overall comments of the class teacher. Targets for future progress are included within the reports but, in a minority of cases, they are too generalised. Parents are provided with further effective information about their children's progress by means of the Parent Evenings held in October and July.

51. Pupils' learning at home generally receives sound support from parents. Assistance is given with homework and particularly with reading where parents are invited to write their comments in a reading record book. Recognition of the home-school partnership is formalised through a written agreement, which details the particular responsibilities of the school, parents and pupils. The partnership agreement has been drafted on the basis of full discussion with parents and pupils.

52. Good links are maintained with the parents who have children with special educational needs. The school shares the individual education plans with them and each parent is sent a copy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher provides very good personal leadership for the educational direction of the school and in the promotion of standards. She is giving the school a very clear sense of purpose based on a combination of clear vision and thorough evaluation. She has acted determinedly upon the hard messages of the last inspection by clarifying her role and establishing well-defined priorities for her time and responsibility. She has built a very good team spirit amongst the staff that encourages them to tackle areas for improvement in a positive and managed way. She has a particularly good insight for the current priorities combined with good interpersonal skills and understanding of how to support change, that takes careful account of individual development for each member of staff. With the governing body she has made decisions that are having a clear, positive impact on the quality of work

and standards since the pupils are achieving well overall. The school has rightly identified staff professional development, agreeing a well-structured curriculum and improving the learning conditions for the children as amongst priorities tackled in recent years. The headteacher and senior management team provide good leadership and support. They discuss and plan for matters affecting the whole staff thoroughly, such as monitoring pupils' work or arranging training in information and communication technology. The procedures and support arrangements made by the headteacher are encouraging the whole staff to work together and to share a clear vision for the school. The school's aims for pupils' personal and social development and their attitudes to learning are met very well in practice. The headteacher's leadership and management show good improvement since the last inspection.

54. The school has also made good improvements in the key issues for action as well as tackling other identified matters. The curriculum meets requirements and national guidance is in place to provide structure and progression in all subjects. Opportunities for pupils' personal development have improved, including some for their spiritual and cultural understanding, as required. The school's financial planning is now good. The headteacher has also established very good formal assessment procedures to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and these, together with improving teacher assessments, are being used for further planning. Performance management procedures are good, the headteacher having introduced development interviews some years ago, and individual targets are used effectively to help improve teaching and provide support where weaknesses are identified. The performance management places a clear expectation and accountability on all teachers related to their levels of responsibility. This, together with the arrangements to monitor teaching, is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and hence on standards.

55. The headteacher has established very good evaluation arrangements, with the support of the governing body, which take all members of staff fully into account and are used constructively to prepare a school improvement plan. This plan consolidates and builds well upon the work and improvements of previous years. Targets are met in practice but the format of the plan and some targets are not sufficiently clear in showing the commitments required by staff or in providing a simple outline structure of what is intended. The current priorities identified by the head teacher through her very good evaluation procedures of strengths and weaknesses match closely the views of the inspection team. The school has a good understanding of the need to include evaluation as an integral part of school life and development and is beginning to involve subject co-ordinators more fully in this monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and attainment through scrutiny of pupils' work.

56. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and very well informed about the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses. They have a strong commitment to providing the conditions for high quality learning experiences for pupils. To this end, they have established very good procedures to visit the school, with a clear focus. For example, the arrangement to join their link subject co-ordinator in monitoring pupils' work is excellent and enables them to gain useful information across a broad spectrum of the school's work. The governors are influential in shaping the direction of the school and they fulfil their responsibilities well. They make good use of training opportunities to become familiar with their responsibilities, such as for the curriculum or health and safety, and apply their knowledge effectively in making decisions. They have a good, shared view of financial priorities, having for example increased the number of classroom assistants and kept funds to maintain the present number of teachers as the school roll goes through a dip and then recovers.

57. The identified developments have been budgeted for carefully with a clear time-scale. The school's financial planning takes good account of identified needs, indicating a good improvement since the last inspection. The governors' committee responsible for finance sets a balanced budget based on priorities, with a prudent carry-forward figure to meet contingencies. The headteacher and school secretary have very good oversight of the finances and budget, monitoring any variance from planned expenditure carefully. The governors see out-turn statements once each term in conjunction with their formal meetings, but do not maintain sufficiently regular on-going checks on expenditure. They are aware of the need to obtain good value when considering improvements and efficiency. Overall, the financial control is very good since the school secretary and headteacher maintain thorough checks. The recent auditor's report found only minor matters of concern, which have been addressed.

58. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The specific grant for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately and the school finances further well targeted support from its own budget. The governors ensure that provision for special educational needs is fully in place. The very knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator manages the provision and classroom support assistants well, which enhances the pupils' learning. She has trained the staff in the use of the computer to write individual education plans and this has improved their quality. Learning resources are good. The school makes good use of external specialist support, although distances prevent good liaison with the speech therapy service.

59. Other specific grants are used very effectively for the designated purposes. For example, a grant to support extra-curricular activities helps to provide pupils with good opportunities for personal interests. A further grant to build the relationship with the local community centre is effective in supporting pupils through times of need. The school is a centre for initial teacher training and provides excellent management of the arrangements and support, with very good mentoring for the students.

60. There is a good level of teachers and support staff to provide for the pupils' learning. The teachers have been deployed well to ensure that their expertise is used in the best way to promote standards. The classroom assistants, who are very well trained, make a significant contribution in supporting teaching and learning. The administrative staff provides a very efficient, friendly and reliable service. The site manager and cleaning staff ensure that the school is cleaned and maintained to a high standard.

61. The accommodation is good, having been the focus of improvements over several years. The information and communication technology room and other specialist spaces are used well and this shows improvement since the last inspection when insufficient use was made of rooms which were not required for class teaching. Many bright, attractive displays add to the overall sense of purpose and recognition of pupils' work around the school, and include positive multi-cultural images to promote empathy and understanding. The playgrounds provide playing space that is appropriate for the number of pupils and the grassed field provides plenty of additional space in an attractive setting. The school has made good improvements to the resources for learning, which were barely satisfactory overall and poor in a significant number of subjects at the time of the last inspection. They are now at least satisfactory in all subjects and are good for art and design and information and communication technology for which further resources are planned to improve flexible use in classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to raise standards further and particularly in English, mathematics and science, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and use of spoken English and as a result their writing and reading by;

- providing more opportunities for them to discuss, plan, rehearse and develop their presentation skills within a range of groupings;
- giving the pupils more opportunities to appreciate and discuss a rich range of texts;
- giving greater direction to and enrichment in pupils' personal reading by intervention and example.

(Paragraphs 4,5,18,67,68,71,75,95,130,136,137)

2. improve pupils' independence in learning by:

- giving pupils more opportunities to make decisions and choices in investigative work;
- extending teachers' questioning so that pupils are expected more frequently to give their opinions and to reason in greater depth;
- providing a wider range of strategies for helping pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work.

(Paragraphs 7,12,29,41,77,84,86,89,94,136,138)

3. improve teachers' knowledge of pupils' progress and standards and as a consequence the match of work to pupils' learning needs by putting in place whole-school procedures for assessment in the non-core subjects.

(Paragraphs 41,93,97,107,112,123,129,130,134)

63. **In addition to the key issues above, the school should consider for inclusion in the action plan:**

- the annual reports for parents to ensure that they focus consistently on what pupils have achieved.

(Paragraph 50)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	28	11	0	0	0
Percentage	4	18	58	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	223
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	94

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	N/A

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	32	44	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	22	26
	Girls	34	35	41
	Total	55	57	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (71)	75 (78)	88 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	18
	Girls	30	25	23
	Total	44	42	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (48)	55 (49)	54 (58)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	220
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.00
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.55
Average class size	27.62

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197.0

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0
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

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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	523,033
Total expenditure	529,206
Expenditure per pupil	2,151
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,491
Balance carried forward to next year	17,318

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	42	10	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	58	2	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	20	2	0
The teaching is good.	54	39	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	46	10	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	31	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	32	54	8	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	42	0	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	41	10	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	44	12	2	3

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

ENGLISH

64. Standards in all aspects of English at the end of Year 6 are below average in the work seen. Results in the national tests have shown good improvement since the previous inspection in the percentage of pupils who reach the expected standard. However, the low percentage of pupils gaining the higher level has the effect of lowering the overall standard in English. In 2001 pupils' attainment was below average when compared to all schools nationally but average when compared to similar schools. The trend in standards has been in line with the national trend nationally.

65. Overall, pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress in lessons relative to their prior attainment. Over time, pupils' progress through the National Curriculum levels, is close to the expected rate of progress. Although the results in National Curriculum tests indicate that boys performed less well than girls in English, there was no clear evidence of this in lessons seen. There is a significantly larger number of boys than girls on the register of special educational needs and this fact is reflected in the overall results.

66. Pupils' listening skills are good across the school. They listen well to their teachers and to the points made by their classmates. Careful annunciation by teachers and learning support assistants means that pupils can hear the sounds that make up words. When asked, pupils can hear the differences and can sound out the phonemes in, for example 'bunk', 'buck', 'bung'. Phonics teaching is effective and pupils can sound out unfamiliar words as a consequence, although older pupils can occasionally stumble. For example, 'materialised' became 'matterlised'

67. Speaking skills are below expectations for the pupils' age. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary, find difficulty in structuring their ideas when speaking and are not confident in the use of more formal English. However, pupils are often keen to answer questions in class. In some cases they are encouraged to give extended replies. In general, pupils are confident too in talking informally about their work to an interested adult. However, a number of pupils speak very quietly which means that the teacher has to 'echo' the points made by the pupils so that the rest of the class can hear. Teachers use questioning for a variety of reasons, to check for instance that pupils have understood a point, or to check on a factual answer. The ethos of the school is such that pupils' mistakes are used as a positive aid to learning. Pupils are not made to feel inadequate because they get an answer wrong. This creates an atmosphere where pupils are prepared to attempt an answer.

68. There were particularly good examples where the teacher questioned individuals or the class to extend their thinking. For example, talking about a novel, one teacher used a range of open-ended questions that were designed to encourage pupils to express an opinion or point of view. 'How do you think their relationship was developing?' 'What made you think that?' 'What is the tension which is developing between them?' The teacher also gave the pupils time to think for example by waiting as a pupil put her thoughts together and starting an extended response by saying, 'The way they were bonding together showed that...'. This led to the pupil putting her thoughts together and responding in a more formal manner. In contrast, occasionally teachers' questioning was slightly 'loaded'; 'Did you feel intimidated?' As a consequence, when this happened, pupils gave the expected answer briefly. Pupils have some opportunities to present their ideas to the whole class and sometimes in assembly to the whole school. In one lesson some pupils in Year 6 who presented ideas on behalf of the group they were working with, were not confident to speak in a more formal manner. Pupils in

discussion said that they found learning easier when they worked within groups and shared ideas. Some group work was seen in science, physical education and design and technology but pupils were not particularly skilled in seeking and building on each other's views in order to develop a group consensus. In general, little use was made of group work to allow pupils to develop and rehearse their ideas prior to writing. The inter-relationship between speaking and listening, and reading and writing requires further development. Teachers occasionally use drama techniques, for example a role-play activity was planned in religious education for the week following the inspection, and teachers sometimes use hot-seating, a technique where a pupil assumes a character and has to answer question in role. However, the uses of drama and other oral work in order to rehearse ideas, explore alternatives, understand character and motivation and other viewpoints is not yet strong in the school.

69. The processes of reading are taught well. A reading scheme is used initially. A high proportion of pupils starts on the scheme but moves on quickly to intermediate graded books and then free readers. The school has invested significant time in building the parent-school reading partnership and sessions are conducted that stress how parents can support pupils in their reading. The reading diary has been recently redesigned to encourage this effective partnership. Weaker readers are supported well in younger classes. All pupils take home reading books home on a daily basis. The majority of pupils are able to read independently by Year 6 and are confident and for the most part accurate. They are able to use their library skills to find out information, an aspect criticised in the previous inspection and in the process show that they know how to use a contents page or index and can 'skim' and 'scan' to find out what they require.

70. Pupils are given opportunities to read aloud and whilst they read with satisfactory accuracy, some pupils lack expression in the way they read. In discussion some pupils said that they found the book they were reading for personal pleasure 'boring'. In some cases pupils' records in their reading diary indicate that they read at a very slow pace, spending a long time on a book. For example, one higher attaining pupil was still reading a particular novel after six weeks. Another pupil's diary indicated that she had read a number of books but the majority were 'safe' and relatively undemanding, although it did include a number of Roald Dahl and 'Harry Potter' books which she had enjoyed. A discussion with another pupil indicated that although she had started a number of books since September she had not managed to complete one.

71. All classes have a fiction library but the books in the majority of classes are not displayed well. Strategies such as 'author of the week' and ways of bringing books to the attention of pupils are undeveloped with the results that pupils' personal reading is, at its best, for the majority of pupils, an area which the school needs to develop further. Pupils in Year 5 had been very involved in a novel they had read in class -*Journey to Jo'burg*' and this was clearly evidenced in the improved quality of their writing and their understanding of the issues explored within the book. Whilst classes engage with suitable and appropriate material to provide a specific literacy objective teaching point, class texts are not used sufficiently with older pupils to develop the more advanced reading skills. As a consequence older pupils are not being helped to engage in literature that is more demanding than their personal reading and ideas that provide them with challenge.

72. Aspects of writing are taught well. Handwriting, which was a weakness in the previous report, is now taught carefully and pupils are given opportunities to practise. The majority of pupils have a conventional pen grip although one or two tilt their books excessively. Teachers model cursive handwriting carefully. The result is that pupils by Year 6 have developed a legible joined style of writing. Standards of presentation are generally good and show an improvement since the previous inspection.

73. Pupils show satisfactory accuracy in their spelling and punctuation. Teachers give appropriate attention to spelling and pupils are expected to learn targeted words, which are tested weekly. They are also encouraged to proof read their work and correct their own spellings. Punctuation is taught carefully and by Year 6, some pupils can use complex punctuation effectively. Teachers seek to improve the range of pupils' vocabulary in a consistent manner. Technical vocabulary is developed well in some subjects. Displays such as *'Words to use instead of said'* encourage pupils to seek a more precise choice of word. Pupils are also encouraged to create more complex sentences through the use of conjunctions other than *'and'* and *'then'*.

74. Pupils are given good opportunities to write in an extended fashion for a wide range of audiences and purposes both within English and in other subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the range was too narrow. They write letters of complaint, autobiographies, interviews of famous people and play scripts and use a variety of journalistic styles with persuasive language. They describe experiments in science and write accounts and reports in other subjects. The school has made adjustments to the National Literacy Strategy to allow more time for the development of writing. Teachers make effective links between subjects so that, for example, the results of the traffic survey of Ludlow in geography fuelled their writing of a letter to the council in an English lesson. Pupils use information and communication technology well both for research and writing. For example one piece of work involved the production of a three-fold leaflet, which incorporated images and varieties of font and colour to catch the reader's attention.

75. Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils' order their thoughts but pupils' ability to express their ideas in writing, with an interesting range of vocabulary, is below expectations for their age. Teachers use prompt sheets and a variety of aids to story planning and brainstorming techniques. Pupils are given opportunities to practise the openings of stories, or explore various narrative styles. Teacher modelling writing is also used effectively. The influence of poetry and writers can be seen in examples of the pupils' writing, with the result that by Year 6 pupils know how to write. However, many pupils do not have a large reservoir of ideas on which to base their writing, so that what they write often lacks richness. This remains the challenge for the school and is why the sustained work with text, development of a richer personal reading programme and an exciting reading culture in the school is particularly important. Older pupils' work generally relies heavily on a colloquial style, relatively simple sentence construction, often set in a domestic setting with over-use of chatty dialogue. Where there has been the influence of a sustained contact with a text to which all pupils have had access then there is more exploration of characters' feelings and more evidence of establishing a mood or providing details of where the events are taking place.

76. Pupils have good attitudes to English. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they make good efforts to improve their work. In class they generally concentrate and persevere to complete tasks. They respond particularly well when the teacher has worked hard to engage them emotionally in the issue through writing about a real or an apparently real problem directed to a real audience for example, as was the case over the traffic survey or closure of the local leisure centre.

77. Teaching is good. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and work hard to create an ethos in which pupils feel secure. They model courtesy and respect in the way they talk to pupils and listen carefully to what they have to say. Praise is used well to bolster and support pupils' confidence. Marking of English work is usually both supportive and diagnostic in that it informs pupils what they need to do in order to improve. Classroom management of pupils is very good. Overall, homework is satisfactory and more is demanded of Year 6 pupils. Work is planned well, tasks are explained clearly

and the purpose of the lesson is outlined and pupils know what it is they are trying to achieve. Learning support assistants are managed well and they make a significant contribution to pupils'

learning. Work is matched carefully to the needs of particular groups of pupils and as a consequence higher, middle and lower attaining pupils make good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and the overall provision and support given to these pupils are a significant strength in the school. Pupils with English as an additional language are bi-lingual and achieve well. Some pupils are withdrawn from class to provide additional effective support in small groups. However, pupils' achievement is sometimes too dependent on adult support and independence in learning is not always promoted sufficiently.

78. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken up the post but has the expertise and experience to develop the subject well. Assessment is good and good evaluation of data aids developments in the subject. The non-fiction library is attractive but some texts and reference materials are very old and convey stereotypical information and attitudes inadvertently, particularly for example, in the portrayal of other countries. There are insufficient class texts and the fiction books to promote literature fully.

MATHEMATICS

79. Pupils' attainment by the age of eleven during the inspection was below average due to a higher percentage of pupils having special educational needs in that year group, most of whom have learning difficulties. The standard of pupils' numeracy skills is below average by age eleven. At the time of the last inspection standards just reached the national expectation. Pupils in Year 6 have made the expected progress overall through the National Curriculum levels since entry to the school in Year 3 despite the nature of the intake. Pupils of all abilities have achieved well due to the good support that they receive in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against their targets. There is no noticeable difference between the progress of boys and girls.

80. In the national tests the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level or above has increased from 45 per cent in 1996 to 75 per cent in 2001, which is nearly a doubling of the results, while national figures increased from 53 per cent to 71 per cent. However, the low percentage of pupils gaining the higher level has the effect of lowering the overall standard in mathematics. Standards overall were below the national average in the 2001 national tests while in comparison with similar schools, having between 20 and 35 per cent free school meals, standards are average. The trend in standards has been a little above the national trend over the past four years

81. Pupils in Year 3, as they enter the school, have below average skills and understanding. Most pupils count reliably to 100 and know several number facts to 10. They have an early understanding of place value. Their numeracy skills are below average, although the higher-attaining pupils are mostly quick and accurate. Pupils recognise and know simple fraction values and are beginning to understand how to form families of equivalent fractions. Teachers plan to give simple but challenging activities as the first mental warm-up tasks to reinforce numeracy skills. For example, in a well prepared lesson in Year 4, pupils were challenged to make up as many numbers as they could up to 36 using just the numerals 2, 3 and 6 and any number operation. Most pupils enjoyed the challenge with good attitudes, and found the values to 9 confidently, applying their skills well. The higher attaining pupils and a few others found numbers such as $2 \times (6 + 3)$, showing greater understanding of multiplication. There is a positive emphasis on practical and investigational mathematics in the school that is illustrated well by a task for pupils in Year 4. The teacher helped pupils to recall how to read a calendar. The great majority found missing days but were less confident in working out the date before 1st May for example. The higher attaining pupils investigated patterns of numbers within a 2X2 square on calendars, demonstrating very good attitudes and behaviour as they found that diagonal totals were the same. However, there is a tendency to give too much direction at an early stage rather than using

pupils' own findings to teach and consolidate the significant results.

82. The good approach to learning through a mixture of problem solving and reinforcement is continued in Years 5 and 6, creating good interest amongst the pupils. For example, in Year 5 pupils were given the problem of placing numbers 1 to 9 in three columns that each add up to 15. The well planned lesson focused good support on the least able pupils through providing each with a white board to record their trials. This encouraged them very well to have a go without fear of failure, the teaching assistant offering sensitive support in building up number knowledge. Other tasks encouraged pupils to recognise and explain patterns using mental calculation. Few pupils in this lower set class demonstrated easy fluency with number bonds to 20, although by the end of the lesson they had made good progress as they picked out multiples of 9 when counting to 90. Overall standards in the set were well below average. In the upper set the teacher had recognised that pupils found solving word problems difficult and selected suitable questions from previous national papers to provide good challenge and motivation. The pupils demonstrated average skills and understanding, the high attaining pupils tackling questions with good grasp of number operations applied to everyday problems. Whilst the teacher provided good individual support as pupils worked, the plenary session gave too little attention to drawing out general steps to follow or errors to avoid.

83. By age eleven most pupils have the skills to carry out additions and subtractions with two and three digit numbers using standard layout, and answers are usually correct. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place value. They understand the effects of multiplying by 10 and 100 and know many multiplication number facts, although few pupils are confident and several continue to use their fingers. The higher-attaining pupils usually show quick and accurate recall of number facts by age eleven.

84. Good planning and choice of tasks in the Year 6 lessons provided good challenge and extension for the pupils. The teachers used this period constructively to broaden pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas since the pupils had recently taken the national tests. In one lesson the teacher used the good facilities of the information and communication technology suite to give pupils experience of reflecting a simple shape in a horizontal or vertical line; or in a diagonal line for the higher attaining pupils. Most pupils used suitable methods, such as counting on the square grid and were successful in reflecting in a horizontal line. Few of the higher attaining pupils initially made correct reflections in the diagonal line, although they enjoyed the challenge and improved their methods in later attempts. In the other lesson, after some revision of percentage and decimal values, the teacher presented a challenging task: to form shapes from 6 equilateral triangles joined along their sides. The pupils worked hard to find fresh examples, most pupils understanding that a rotation or reflection of a shape was not a different one. Pupils were highly motivated, taking the task to find others for homework. The pupils' overall standards in investigational work are below average since most pupils are not systematic in their approach and recording, and do not have the understanding to generalise from their results.

85. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good through the school. They are attentive and quickly become interested in the tasks. Most children sustain concentration well and are keen to give answers.

86. The teachers plan from and use the numeracy materials carefully so that numeracy is taught well. They also plan for a good variety of investigational activities, although these are not always integrated into and informing the learning of general mathematical ideas. Teachers prepare learning objectives carefully and usually share these with the pupils. Most teachers have a good interactive teaching style, which captures pupils' interest well and promotes their understanding, for example a very clear exposition on how to set about solving problems was noted, with the result that most pupils achieved well and understood how to extract relevant information. Previous work indicates a good

emphasis on number through the school with appropriate attention to measure, shape and data handling. There are regular good examples of investigational work, although this aspect of mathematics tends to be over-directed in approach by the teachers. Pupils have good selected opportunities to use information and communication technology linked to mathematics, which provide suitable consolidation of skills. The arrangement to teach the pupils in ability sets is having a positive effect, since tasks are matched well to their stage of learning and the lively presentation and challenge promote progress. Pupils are expected to use their mathematical skills to support work in several other subjects, such as science. There is a growing use of literacy and information communication technology skills within mathematics, for example in solving word problems or using geometrical programs.

87. A few pupils require constant help, and they make appropriate progress through the carefully targeted support by the classroom assistants. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support so that they maintain their interest and effort.

88. The quality of teaching for mathematics is good. Teachers' shared year group planning leads to a thorough approach and strategies in most lessons, particularly in promoting number and consolidating mental methods of calculation. The teachers' management of the pupils is good, establishing a good working atmosphere with high expectations for work and behaviour. They use effective behaviour strategies that keep pupils on task well. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils, and listen carefully to their answers to respond and make assessments of their understanding. The teachers are observant of the pupils, and make on-going assessments of them. The written records of attainment are good, with formal assessment procedures fully in place. The school uses record sheets well to track pupils' progress and to set individual targets year by year.

89. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the numeracy materials are used well. Problem solving and investigational work are evident in lessons and pupils' previous work, although this could be developed further to relate the skills required for using and applying mathematics consistently in all mathematical topics. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and supports colleagues well. Monitoring procedures are good overall, since lesson observations are made regularly by the headteacher and the co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and children's work to monitor standards. However, the use of current procedures for monitoring does not give the co-ordinator a clear enough view of standards and teaching and learning. The range of resources is satisfactory for mathematics and supports pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

90. Standards have risen significantly in the national tests in science since the last inspection. In 1996, pupils' attainment was well below the national average when compared to all schools and in 2001 it was average. In relation to similar schools in that year, the school's results were above average at the expected level and average at the higher level. Over the last five years, there has been a marked increase in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected and the higher level. The trend in standards has been a little above the national trend over the past 4 years. These improved standards are due to more consistently good teaching in the subject and better curriculum planning.

91. Pupils' attainment by the age of eleven during the inspection was below average due to a higher percentage of pupils having special educational needs in that year group, most of whom have learning difficulties. Pupils in Year 6 have made the expected progress overall since entry to the school in Year 3 despite the nature of the intake. Pupils of all abilities have achieved well due to the good support that they receive in their learning. Girls have done better than boys in the national tests

for the last five years but no significant difference was observed in their achievements during the inspection

92. In the lesson seen in Year 6 most pupils were able to identify plants found in various quadrants in the school grounds and to use a key to record their findings. Some pupils could explain the habitats in which the plants were found. From scrutiny of pupils' past work, there are indications that most pupils have satisfactory knowledge of plant parts, life cycles, food chains and the functions of the parts of the human body. Their knowledge and understanding of electricity is below average and there is little evidence of pupils extending their work to constructing series circuits. When studying changing materials, the higher attaining pupils use vocabulary appropriately, such as insoluble, evaporation, vapour, reversible and irreversible. When carrying out investigations on forces, pupils can predict, for example 'the more paper clips I put on the object, the longer it will take to reach the ground.' They can pose their own questions like 'If I add more batteries, will the light be brighter?' They are beginning to understand how to conduct a fair test when controlling the amount of water and time when dissolving but changing the amount of stirring. Few pupils devise their own investigations.

93. The quality of teaching is mainly good, with a little excellent teaching. No teaching was unsatisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the middle part of the school. In all lessons teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well so that they concentrate and work hard. They prepare activities carefully so that a good range of resources is available to promote pupils' thinking at a variety of levels such as in Year 3 when pupils were enabled to consider transparent, opaque and translucent materials. Teachers mainly have secure subject knowledge and use this and scientific vocabulary carefully to take pupils forward in a structured way to help their understanding. A strong feature of this well organised approach is the way that worksheets are planned to provide appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. These often provide the higher attaining pupils with opportunities to explain their thinking more independently. Teachers often build on pupils' learning from lesson to lesson, such as when teachers in Year 4 were using information gained about habitats on a visit to Wyre Forest to help pupils in planning an investigation. However, there are a few instances when pupils are repeating work at a similar level across the school such as when studying electricity and plants and on these occasions pupils are not challenged enough. All teachers make good use of teaching assistants to work alongside groups of pupils who benefit from the discussion and explanation related to their particular needs

94. The school has placed emphasis in the last year on its approach to scientific investigational work and this is generally taught well. Where teaching was excellent in this aspect of science, the teacher gave the pupils opportunities to collaborate in groups and plan their own investigations based on very carefully posed questions to allow for a wide range of challenge, for example 'Which conditions do the mini-beats prefer?' or 'Do mini-beats prefer wet or dry?'. Pupils of all abilities worked well together within small groups discussing how best to prepare a test to answer the question posed. The higher attaining pupils achieved well and were able to incorporate light, dark, dry and damp conditions and to control one variable. They could decide on methods of presentation. Teachers generally question pupils carefully and encourage pupils to respond but many have a pre-determined outcome that does not allow enough scope for pupils to plan and make decisions.

95. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills within science. Pupils often apply their skills confidently but have difficulty in structuring their ideas in writing. They cannot always explain why they made a prediction or came to a conclusion and have difficulties in using their knowledge and understanding within investigations. Teachers use the final part of lessons for pupils to share their ideas but seldom are pupils given time to plan and rehearse their ideas sufficiently. In one lesson in Year 4, a teacher worked with a group of low attaining pupils in the preparation of a presentation on the food chain and pupils were confident and keen to share their findings to the whole class. In the

other class in that year group, pupils gave a detailed report on their group investigations relating to the habitats preferred by mini-beasts because they had been responsible for devising the investigation and therefore had a good understanding of what they had achieved.

96. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They present their work carefully and concentrate and persevere to complete tasks. Pupils in Year 3 gave much consideration to which category to place net and lace when investigating shadows and pupils in Year 4 were highly motivated to find out which items were taken by different mini-beasts when placing pots of a range of food in the school grounds. Pupils are enthusiastic to undertake work set and to report to the class as a whole because teachers value the contributions that all pupils make.

97. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and in the best marking teachers pose questions to develop pupils' reasoning in relation to predictions and conclusions. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of each half-term's module of work and teachers often use this in planning future work. There are some inconsistencies in the use of the recently introduced procedure for assessment of pupils' investigative skills. The school is aware of this and is taking the necessary steps to ensure that all teachers are clear what needs to be done. The school uses a published scheme of work for science, which has helped teachers to plan for progression in skills across the school. This has had a good impact on standards as teachers have reached an understanding of what is required in each year group within the different modules. The headteacher has monitored teaching and learning and used the information gained to make improvements in the subject. The subject co-ordinator works closely alongside the headteacher and staff in monitoring pupils' work and analysing the national test results. Monitoring standards through work sampling is being developed but is not yet sharp enough to give the co-ordinator a clear picture of pupils' attainment within each year group. Resources are satisfactory and the school makes good use of local visits and the school grounds to provide pupils with appropriate practical experiences.

ART AND DESIGN

98. By the time pupils leave the school they have received a rich art experience and reach standards, which are, overall, above expectations for their age. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress in lessons and over time. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were reported as being below national expectations and pupils' progress being unsatisfactory in most year groups because work lacked structure and focus.

99. Pupils are given the skills to explore and develop their ideas. They make direct observations of flowers and plants and use them as a starting point for creating large three-dimensional flower heads or huge detailed images of a tiny part of the plant. They are given specific opportunities to investigate a range of materials such as pencil, crayon, chalk and watercolours and other paints as well as card and paper-mâché and collage materials. Work on Lowry results in large cardboard figures at the winning line in a sculpture of 'The closely Fought Race.' They develop the skills of evaluating and refashioning their work well. Throughout the school the work of established artists is used very effectively to inform pupils' work at a level which goes beyond copying an image in the style of a painter. It allows Klee's or Matisse's work to really inform the pupils' choice of colour palette or their way of viewing their subject. Pupils come to some understanding of 'expressionism' and 'impressionism' and pupils' large collages reflect Picasso's blue period or the way they paint 'The Supermarket' is informed by Lowry's paintings. The work of Aboriginal artists is studied carefully and the teacher, sensitively observing the cultural copyright which exists, leads pupils carefully to explore the nature of symbols and in their own way to use cotton buds and a defined palette of colours to decorate their own mask. Often the work displayed around the school shows that the pupils have

undertaken extensive preparatory work to achieve the end results. For example, to produce the African masks displayed the pupils had been involved in a wide range of research involving the detailing of human expressions, animal faces and camouflage markings in sketchbooks. Art makes a very good contribution to the provision of pupils' cultural development in the school.

100. It was possible to see only a small number of art lessons because of the way the timetable was arranged for the week. Teaching seen was very good. Overall, across the school the quality of teaching over time is good. Joint planning between parallel classes, using a scheme of work, ensures that pupils get a common art entitlement, although in some classes there is a degree of variation because of different levels of teacher confidence in use of a material or technique. Teachers in the lessons seen had very good subject knowledge and in one lesson with pupils in Year 6 using lino printing there was very good stress on safety. In this lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to 'be brave, be confident'. There was good demonstration, using work produced by other pupils last year as a resource and a helpful discussion on how the work had developed from a realistic portrayal of a landscape to a more modern sharper impressionistic design. In this lesson the quiet and calm manner of the teacher, the genuine wish for pupils to work in an open-ended manner and not explore routes that the teacher had set up, the valuing of their efforts along with high expectations meant that pupils approached the work with creative maturity.

101. Pupils' attitudes to the subject as reflected in the work around the school are at least good. They take pride in what they have done and clearly enjoy the sense of success that they get from the subject. Year 6 pupils worked with mature concentration and care. In one class, however the teacher had to use all her considerable skills to manage a group who tended to become over-excited and whose behaviour, in that session, slowed learning because they tended to disrupt one another.

102. The subject is very well led by the subject co-ordinator. She has very good subject knowledge and has established a clear scheme of work that ensures that pupils have a broad range of artistic experiences but at a sufficient depth to develop work of rigour and quality. She monitors the subject informally and as part of a bi-annual formal evaluation. She does not however have the opportunity of seeing other teachers teach the subject to provide more support and extend the range of teachers' skills and confidence and reduce some of the differences in the quality of experience between classes. The work that has been carried out in developing a portfolio of work that has been moderated and given National Curriculum levels is particularly useful to members of staff as are the class portfolios of work. Resources are good and pupils use information and communication equipment well to support their learning in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards in the work seen in design and technology meet the national expectation by Year 6, indicating good improvement overall since the last inspection when standards were below the expectation in Years 3 and 4. The pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well and make the expected progress across the key stage. They have a good range of opportunities to develop their design and making skills by tackling a good selection of tasks. In a lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher gave good emphasis to design and technology processes as pupils designed and made a prototype for a torch. Having examined several torches and listed the materials, the pupils demonstrated both ingenuity and satisfactory skills in making their first trials. The teaching approach encouraged pupils to develop their own choice for the design and operation of a switch. The pupils were fully engaged and included in the task; all focused and concentrated well so that their learning and application of skills were good. The teacher's good relationships and methods were demonstrated by her evaluative questioning of two

examples, bringing out aspects of the decisions and designs pupils had made, such as an accurately measured octagonal case. The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour were promoted well through the purpose of the task and the adults' support.

104. A class assembly in Year 5 provided a good spiritual link with the class design and technology project. When two friends fall out, it was suggested, they may need another friend to act as a bridge to rejoin the friendship across the two sides. The pupils understood the significance of this message and were challenged to design and make their own bridge using a choice of materials. Earlier related work demonstrated good preparation by the teacher since the pupils had not only researched the Internet for information but had accepted the challenge of making a bridge using just eight pieces of A4 paper. The teacher used this task well to confront pupils with a variety of construction problems, including how to make paper stronger or form joints. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, were actively involved and challenged, the teaching assistant providing focused support where it was most needed. Each pupil has a work folder where previous work shows a good design, make and evaluate process, shown for example in biscuit making and supported by digital photographs of the various stages.

105. By Year 6 pupils have tackled tasks that cover the requirements for the subject well, with a good choice of activities to motivate pupils. Strong links are made with information and communication technology, English and mathematics during the design and technology processes as pupils carry out research using the Internet, measure and lay out their plans, and discuss and write up their evaluations. The pupils' knowledge and skills are built up progressively to reach the expectation, and the higher attaining pupils demonstrate a level of understanding that exceeds it. In two lessons in Year 6 the teacher's good approach ensured that pupils gave careful attention to the evaluation stage of their work on the Sumerians. Groups of pupils explained how they had simulated wealthy Sumerians' clothes, for example, in leaving the left shoulder bare; they explained how water was transported, how a fort might be built to resist attack, and how jewels might be designed. The quality of their work demonstrated satisfactory knowledge and skills, the pupils having used a wide range of materials that included textiles. The other pupils maintained a good level of interest and asked relevant questions. However, the teachers gave only a little comment, for example in opening up the concept of how wealth might be understood then as having access to plentiful clean water and not just demonstrated through gold or jewels.

106. The pupils have good interest and attitudes towards their tasks, most becoming very involved in the processes. They are keen to produce a finished product that is attractive, with a good finish and take much care over each stage. The teachers have very good relationships with the children that encourage effort and care on their part, promoting a good, busy working atmosphere. The good quality of teaching, based on secure planning, ensures that pupils have relevant and challenging learning as they attempt to resolve problems. The teachers' good questioning encourages pupils to talk about their experience and to evaluate their work, although several pupils are not confident in speaking to the class.

107. The subject makes a good contribution to aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example in the thoughtful evaluations or the work on the Sumerian culture. The co-ordinator gives a good lead for the subject and understands the role. She provides support to ensure that there is satisfactory coverage through the school. Procedures to assess and record pupils' attainment are under-developed. The subject is suitably resourced and the use of information and communication technology to support activities is good.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Whilst no lessons were observed in Year 6 due to time-tabling arrangements, previous work in Year 6 and that in Years 3 to 5 indicate that standards meet national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in skills and understanding by the end of Year 6 and there are no significant differences in achievement of boys and girls. The higher attaining pupils complete work that exceeds the expectation, with good reasoning and presentation.

109. In a well-prepared lesson about Australia for pupils in Year 3, the class teacher reassured pupils about the subject by inviting them to share what they knew already. Most pupils had gained an early knowledge of some features, such as that there are deserts and that the country is around twenty times larger than the United Kingdom. A few pupils took a close interest and offered the information that there are around 2000 species of snake, and many 'are highly venomous.' The teacher's good focus of the lesson was on helping the pupils to formulate questions that they could research about Australia. She prepared them well for the task by modelling how they might write their ideas and questions, and by showing them how to sharpen up a question to be more precise. Pupils used reference books and resources sensibly to support their searches. Most pupils worked well collaboratively and shared ideas, showing good social development, although only a few pupils recorded their questions fully with good concentration. The clear expectations for behaviour and positive reinforcement ensured that each pair of pupils made sufficient progress to have decided on their question. The questions ranged from issues about endangered animals and drawings by Aboriginal people to a study of venomous snakes and the beaches. The quality and range of questions raised by the pupils demonstrated their good interest as well as satisfactory understanding of relevant issues.

110. In similarly purposeful lessons in Year 5, the teachers provided a good introduction and focus on local studies through comparisons between two towns. Their good subject knowledge was expressed well through clear questions that encouraged pupils to identify similarities and differences between their home town of Ludlow and Barmouth, on the coast of Wales. Pupils demonstrated good interest and satisfactory skills in locating features such as a leisure centre, although several did not understand how to give the co-ordinate positions on the map. The teachers set high expectations for behaviour so that most pupils concentrated on the task. They completed a reasonable amount of work in the time available and most explained clearly why features varied between the two towns. The teachers led useful discussions that helped to reinforce pupils' understanding, for example they recognised that several features are common to both towns and understand that some facilities such as a hospital or shops are always needed. Pupils have carried out surveys of parking problems in their town as a part of a considerable study, and have set out the results correctly. Pupils are developing good interpretation skills from a range of evidence by Year 6. This was clearly seen in the interesting work they were doing on comparing and contrasting facilities between their own town and Barmouth. The study provided some good geographical investigation, looking at different types of evidence. Higher attaining pupils write some quite sophisticated work using a range of sources of information.

111. Previous work in Years 3 to 6 shows satisfactory coverage of the subject, with work on contrasting countries, local studies and issues such as energy use and change. Pupils represent their findings from surveys about their home use of energy in tables and graphs, making good use of information and communication technology, when appropriate. They are beginning to reason about the differences they notice and to pose their own questions, reflecting a good emphasis in the teaching. Many pupils find writing difficult and only record a few sentences. Pupils are able to use maps and plans of various types and show satisfactory development of mapping and drawing skills. They have a satisfactory geographical vocabulary and can name different features as well as distinguishing between physical and human features. Pupils make good use of basic graphs and the subject has

positive links with information and communication technology, English and mathematics.

112. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and use positive discipline so that behaviour and attitudes are good. A minority of pupils find concentration difficult. The scheme of work provides good progression over each year. Assessment procedures are just satisfactory since teachers make thoughtful observations of pupils during lessons but a formal recording arrangement is under-developed. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and the role and has worked very hard since the last inspection to provide curriculum coverage and progression within good quality tasks. She has actively promoted worthwhile links with information and communication technology, using web-sites with the pupils to collect information. She monitors pupils' work with the link subject governor and matches it to subject planning. This is good practice but she does not yet take part in formal monitoring of teaching since arrangements are still being developed.

HISTORY

113. Standards in history by the end of Year 6 meet national expectations. Progress over time is satisfactory and in aspects of the work pupils achieve well. Because of the way the subject is organised no history was timetabled during the inspection and judgements are made on the basis of the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and the headteacher.

114. Year 6 pupils are able to write an account that demonstrates factual knowledge and understanding of an aspect of history. For example they can write a letter home as if they were an evacuee where they describe life in their new home and detail aspects of life in wartime Britain and compare their life in the country to the experiences in London. They also show that they understand the differences in the way a view can be presented. For example, pupils in discussion indicated how a newspaper which was very royalist in its views might present the abdication of Edward V11 compared to a newspaper with a more republican viewpoint. In their current work on Sumerian culture linked with their design and technology work, they show good understanding of how individuals might demonstrate for example, wealth.

115. Overall pupils' work shows satisfactory historical knowledge because they study a good range of historical units about British history, including work on the Romans, Vikings and Tudors and the 1930's and what it was like for children in World War 2. Year 5 look at an aspect of European history, 'How do we use Greek ideas today' and Year 6 in their study of Sumerian civilisation develop a view of world history. They are able, within the work to describe some of the changes that resulted from the various events and their work shows some understanding of the way societies were organised.

116. Year 3 make a visit to Blist Hill as part of their history work using the experience to come to an understanding of how the people lived. For example, they knew that the Squatters' Cottages were poorer than the tollhouse and that mats were made out of old clothes stitched to a sack. In a letter to his mum, a Viking warrior gives several reasons why he has to go on an expedition. In their work on ancient Greece, pupils in Year 5 identify differences between Athenian and Spartan culture and the origins of democracy. One pupil wrote *'Only the grown up men who were not slaves were allowed to vote. I don't think this is fair because everyone should have the right to vote.'*

117. The work scrutiny suggests that teaching is often good. Work is marked supportively and helpfully and often the teacher writes a question about the work, following up on a point made by the pupil. How the pupils follow up the teachers' questions is not clear. There are good opportunities to write formal answers to questions and opportunities for extended writing. Information and

communication technology is used well. Worksheets are used appropriately and do not over-dominate the work. Pupils seem to have a clear understanding of what they are expected to achieve

in lessons, which indicates that teachers have clear objectives and that the work builds logically on prior learning, indicating good planning so that the full range of work is covered. The good quality of teacher planning is also indicated by the fact that time is managed well with the result that pupils work at an appropriate depth. Teachers target work appropriately and lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Because some of the work is planned to promote enquiry and reasoning, higher attaining pupils are also able to demonstrate their skills, in for example, their extended writing and accounts.

118. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good and are reflected in the care and good presentation seen in most books. Good progress has been made in developing the curriculum in the subject since the last inspection; the scheme of work is now in place and ensures clearly planned progression across all year groups. Resources to support each unit have been and continue to be developed. The school makes good use of the 'Museum on the Move', topic collections from the county library and artefacts brought in by staff and pupils. A local historian also makes regular visits to the school. The subject is evaluated formally by the co-ordinator, the subject governor and the headteacher and points arising from the evaluation are fed back to the staff to support improvements in teaching and subject provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. The school has addressed well the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Standards have improved and now meet national expectations. The curriculum is planned well to give both coverage of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum each year and careful progression of skills through the school. The pupils make good progress in lessons overall while progress over time is satisfactory. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate good understanding and skills that exceed expectations. Amongst the reasons for the improvement in the subject are the positive roles of the headteacher and subject co-ordinator in giving very clear educational direction and the positive effect of staff training on teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. These are having a direct positive impact on the quality of teaching, which is now good overall, and on standards. The good facilities of the computer suite are also a considerable factor in the improved quality of education for the pupils. The use of information and communication technology is growing in other subjects, such as science and geography, which encourages pupils to apply their knowledge and develop a good understanding of basic skills. The co-ordinator provides excellent support and has a very well considered action plan for continued improvement.

120. By Years 3 and 4 most pupils have developed satisfactory early mouse control and keyboard skills. They understand how to use several different features to enter, save and retrieve their work. Pupils have suitable opportunities to use a range of equipment such as a digital camera, tape recorders and electronic key-boards to support work in other areas of the curriculum. The teacher's very clear presentation in a Year 4 class based on good subject knowledge led to rapid and secure learning by pupils of how to operate a branching data-base. The pupils interpreted the criteria and questions correctly - 'You have to use their features in order to separate them!' declared one child, bringing together their common understanding. The high attaining pupils worked well independently with high motivation during the ensuing group work, while the other pupils maintained very good attitudes overall through well placed support. Most children responded successfully to the challenge to select four animals and to pose questions that discriminated them: such as badger, owl, caterpillar and butterfly selected by one pupil. The very good learning in this lesson was enhanced by very good relationships between the teacher and pupils. Also in Year 4, pupils using the information and communication suite were given the task of entering the commands to draw a hexagon, for example, using the Logo program. The task reinforced the steps for a repeat command but did not prepare the

pupils sufficiently to solve the problem of drawing a staircase of four steps so that success was mostly limited to the high attaining pupils. By Year 5 pupils have had good experience in accessing information using the Internet, and are beginning to understand how to refine a search by entering 'and' and 'or' to search the data.

121. In a lesson in Year 6 the teacher made good allowance for an investigational stage as pupils explored the control commands needed to put a light on for 5 seconds, or to flash 10 times. The pupils were highly motivated, taking on the challenge well and learning the effects of differing commands quickly, demonstrating their very good attitudes. Most pupils co-operated together well, taking turns and contributing to solving the problem. The teacher's very good relationships, subject knowledge and approach allowed the pupils freedom to experiment so that their learning of new skills was very good. Previous work from Years 3 to 6, and lesson observations, indicate that the majority of pupils have gained a good range of skills in word-processing, data handling, searching for information and early steps of control. By Year 6 pupils have used word-processing to write up accounts for history as well as English. There is a wide range of understanding and skill amongst the pupils. However, the good facilities, effective training and very good support from the co-ordinator is set to continue to lead to improving standards as the tasks reinforce pupils' skills.

122. Generally teachers manage children well so that they know what is expected and behave appropriately. They plan carefully to a good scheme, making a good choice of tasks that interest pupils. Examples of successful teaching were observed that set high expectations, provided for the extension of skills and had good application to further tasks, such as in Year 4 in the branching database. Similarly in Year 6 for example, the teacher promoted pupils' understanding of control commands and encouraged the pupils to use a problem solving approach so that their learning was secure and well grounded in first-hand experience. This helped to extend pupils' skills and encouraged them to work hard and enthusiastically. The use of the computer suite is effective in enabling teachers to develop a wide range of skills with the pupils. It is making a significant impact on the approach to the subject and is used well to raise standards. The tasks given to pupils in the suite are becoming increasingly linked to other classroom activities, thereby becoming part of the daily learning process. A computer club helps to extend pupils' skills.

123. The co-ordinator manages the role very well, working hard to support colleagues and to make a significant contribution to the development of the subject. This has helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge considerably since the previous inspection. Very carefully monitored, clear planning ensures that pupils build securely on work that has gone before. This ensures that the school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Significant improvements in resourcing have also been made and the subject is now well resourced. The school has very good assessment procedures for information and communication technology, although not all teachers are up-to-date in completing the class records. Careful financial management and thorough development planning ensure that the school is well positioned to make further improvements in order to raise standards.

MUSIC

124. Because of the way the timetable was organised, it was only possible to see two music lessons and it is not possible to make a clear judgement about standards at the end of the key stage. On the basis of lessons seen, the limited written work available, the quality of extra-curricular activities, the various recorder groups and drum group, overall standards in are in line with expectations. There has been improvement since the last inspection in the overall quality of teaching because the school has invested in a commercial scheme. This ensures progression and coverage and, in one lesson seen,

provided effective support to the teacher who used the cassette well as a supportive resource.

125. Year 4 pupils in one class composed Chinese music using a pentatonic scale with annotated 'notation' whilst in the parallel class pupils explored rhythms, coming to an understanding of 'ostinato' as a musical term. Pupils are given opportunities to listen to music in assemblies and in lessons, for example listening to 'Mars' by Holst and briefly discussing it. Standards in singing are good because of the skills of the teacher. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 took part in a singing assembly, practising a variety of songs and picking up a new song, 'Shalom' very quickly, which they sang in a four part round. Prior to the actual singing another teacher led a brief vocal fun warm-up using improvised nonsense. Pupils showed very good listening skills, echoing the complex rhythmic nonsense words in pitch and volume exactly. Not only was it an effective warm up but it also built a strong sense of community that led effectively into the singing.

126. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They listen particularly well and all participate enthusiastically in the singing. It is difficult to generalise about the overall quality of teaching from such a small evidence base. Nevertheless at least one member of staff has evident subject expertise. The previous report noted that there were some shortcomings in overall teaching because the quality of teaching reflected some weaknesses in the musical knowledge and experience and confidence of the teachers. On the basis of the lesson seen, the music programme that the school has invested in provides effective support. The teaching seen was satisfactory with some good features.

127. Currently the subject is without a co-ordinator and the headteacher is acting in this capacity. She is clearly aware of the developmental needs of the subject and the need to continue to promote staff confidence and expertise. The scheme has been introduced and worked through so that year groups are at the correct stage of the course, which means that the progression in developing musical skills and experiences is more assured. Visiting specialist instrumental teachers provide good teaching in brass, violin and guitar.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Athletics only was taught during the inspection week and most lessons had to be taken in the hall at the last moment because of unsuitable weather conditions for outdoor activities. Based on this limited range of activities, standards by the end of Year 6 are judged to be in line with what is expected for the pupils' age in athletics. From scrutiny of pupils' achievement awards in swimming, there are indications of standards being above what is expected. Whilst some pupils do not reach the expected standard, many pupils swim long distances far in excess of the 25 metres expected.

129. In Year 3 pupils were able to jump in a variety of ways and were using their arms and the position of their body to jump further. In Year 4 pupils showed more control in jumping and were able to create a sequence of jumps, varying the direction. In Year 5 pupils showed satisfactory techniques in javelin throwing actions and in Year 6 pupils were able to demonstrate more sustained running and appropriate control after class discussion. Whilst pupils generally add to their skills satisfactorily as they move through the school, they are not always taken forward enough in their learning within lessons. This is mainly because the school is in the early stages of implementing a scheme of work and some teachers are not yet fully secure in how to provide progressively more challenging work. In after school activities in cricket, football and netball pupils make good progress because of the strong emphasis on skill development and working as a team. This reflects the good subject knowledge of the teachers involved.

130. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory, with a little teaching being good. This shows improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the middle part of the school. Teachers plan and organise lessons carefully so that resources are readily available and pupils are clear what they have to do, which gives lessons a good overall pace. All teachers manage pupils very well but occasionally pupils become over excited and find listening difficult and this reduces what they are able to achieve in a lesson. Teachers provide good warming up and cooling down exercises and related discussion with the result that pupils know the effects of exercise on their bodies, with good links often made with science. Sometimes these activities are too long, particularly in lessons that only last half an hour and this means that there is insufficient emphasis on the development of skills to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers use a good range of strategies to promote learning such as participating themselves as a role model, pupil demonstration and discussion and often pupils improve their performance as a result. Teachers and teaching assistants give regular support to pupils both individually and within groups with the result that pupils of all abilities are able to take part and make satisfactory progress. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others but the approach to this inconsistent. This and the difficulty that many pupils have in expressing their ideas in a structured way means that by the end of Year 6, pupils have below the expected standards in this aspect of the subject.

131. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, concentrate hard and are keen to improve. A few pupils take a little while to settle at the beginning of lessons but respond to the firm but encouraging approach of the teacher. Pupils work very well collaboratively in planning and performing, for example in Year 4 in developing a sequence of jumps. They are often confident and willing to persevere. In Year 6 after some initial anxieties, pupils responded well to the teacher's advice and support, were keen to run the 200 metres and were very pleased with their improved performance on the second attempt.

132. The school follows a published scheme of work within all year groups and this is being used to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate curriculum, covering all aspects of the subject. The range, quality and quantity of resources are satisfactory. The outdoor facilities are good and the school makes good use of the local leisure centre out of school hours. A good range of after school activities and other events provides pupils with opportunities to extend their skills and to participate competitively such as football and netball tournaments, swimming galas, the local area sports and the school's own sports afternoon. The headteacher monitors the teaching and learning and has provided appropriate professional development for staff in the last three years. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and works closely with the headteacher to offer good subject leadership.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education. Pupils' attainment by the age of eleven is similar to that found at the last inspection. However, at that time this level of attainment was inconsistent across the school and progress was variable even within year groups. The school has produced its own scheme of work based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this has had a good impact on pupils' learning. Standards in all year groups are satisfactory overall but in some lessons seen in the middle of the school there was evidence of higher standards due to teachers' very good subject knowledge and teaching. Progress over time is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities.

134. By the end of Year 6 pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of celebrations within a range of world faiths. They are able to describe different ways of praying and give details of some of the clothes worn, for example the Kippah, Tullit and Tefillin in Judaism. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the festivals of Christmas and Easter and many pupils can present their ideas by writing as one of the main characters in the stories. They understand the impact of belief on people's lives through discussion of the work of Mother Theresa and are able to consider this in respect of their own actions.

135. Most of the teaching seen was good, with a little being very good in the middle of the school. A strong feature of all the teaching is the very good management of pupils with the result that pupils listen attentively, concentrate hard and know that they are expected to persevere to complete tasks. Carefully planned lessons and well-prepared explanations ensure that tasks are purposeful and pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding. Teachers often build appropriately on pupils' prior learning but there is some evidence of repetition of work at a similar level such as when pupils were given the same literature in Year 6 as in Year 3 as part of their work on moral issues relating to the environment. However, in the scrutiny of work produced during the year there is an increased emphasis on teachers addressing the feelings of people involved in stories so that pupils are guided to consider belief and relationships as part of their understanding of spiritual development. Teachers question pupils effectively to ensure that pupils of all abilities reflect and consider evidence. A very good example of this was in Year 5 when pupils were asked to undertake an enquiry into the actions of the characters in the story of The Good Samaritan and justify their actions. Pupils took this very seriously and were using inference and their knowledge of the importance of the beliefs of the Levite to explain why he acted as he did. This made a significant contribution to their social and moral development as well as their knowledge and understanding of Bible stories. Teachers and teaching assistants give regular support to groups of pupils during lessons and work is often matched to the needs of different ability groups to enable them to make good gains in their learning.

136. In all classes pupils have regular opportunities to record their ideas and pupils often do so most easily when they are asked to do so in a range of ways. Examples of this were evident in Year 3 when pupils were writing a charter of how to look after the environment and in Year 6 when pupils were writing as one of the Three Kings as part of their recording of the Christmas story. On occasions, pupils copy too much of what the teacher has written and do not have sufficient chances to learn through expressing their own ideas either in text or drawings. Overall teachers give pupils too few opportunities to research, although some good work was set in Year 5 when pupils were asked to compare and contrast the story of Christmas in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

137. Pupils take pride in presenting their work well and show particular enjoyment when asked to take a different approach to recording. In Year 4 pupils of all abilities settled quickly to writing confidently to tell their own story based on the story of Pentecost. They gave serious consideration to the moral issues linked to their newly found powers. One pupil wrote that he would use his new talent to save endangered species rather than for his own benefit. In all classes pupils show respect for, and value, the views of others. Pupils are often confident to contribute but some pupils remain passive in whole-class discussions. Some teachers address this by providing good opportunities for collaborative work and pupils exchange ideas and learn well from each other in this context. In the final part of the lesson teachers give pupils time to share their ideas and often to build on learning but this part of the lesson is sometimes too short for pupils to gain sufficiently from others.

138. Lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' past work show that pupils have a balanced religious education programme linked to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has identified this subject as a priority for development and whole-staff discussions have been held about how to build on the pupils' learning more systematically across the school to raise standards further. The headteacher works closely alongside the subject co-ordinator in monitoring teaching and learning and the subject is led and managed well. The school benefits from good support from a member of the Governing body who has a good level of expertise. Resources are satisfactory overall and the school makes good use of a local loan service to provide more resources when required. Additional funds have been allocated to purchase more artefacts and research materials and these are needed to improve pupils' independence in research skills. Religious Education makes a good contribution overall to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because of the opportunities that pupils have to reflect, work together collaboratively and to learn about a range of traditions and celebrations of a range of world faiths.