

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sale

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106298

Headteacher: Mrs J Spencer

Reporting inspector: Mrs C A Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th June 2002

Inspection number: 244974

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Springfield Road
Sale
Cheshire

Postcode: M33 7XS

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs G English

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9479	C A Field	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
14214	G Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
6752	J Dickins	Team inspector	English Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14991	A Hardwicke	Team Inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	
22380	P Parrish	Team Inspector	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Geography History	
2818	G Warner	Team Inspector	Equality of opportunity Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for children in the Foundation Stage Music	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the centre of Sale, in the borough of Trafford, and close to Manchester. Pupils who attend the school live locally and come from a mixture of private and social housing. Most pupils are from white European backgrounds but a few have a different heritage including; Indian, Chinese, Pakistani, black Caribbean and black African. Around nine per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language; 12 pupils receive additional support to help them learn English. There are 398 pupils on roll: 216 boys and 182 girls aged between five and eleven years. The school also provides for 52 children who attend its nursery part-time. Children's attainment on entry to reception classes is above average. Just over eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is well below average when compared to other primary schools. Some 17 per cent of pupils have learning difficulties that cover a range of specific needs. Additionally, two pupils have moderate learning difficulties and are in need of regular support from learning assistants. Overall, the number of pupils in school with learning difficulties is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Springfield primary is an effective school. The ethos is caring and supportive and provides a good learning environment. The headteacher, supported by a strong management team, is providing clear educational direction and has rightly identified the key targets that will enable the school to press ahead to raise standards. Teaching is good overall and is leading to most pupils learning successfully and achieving appropriately. Staffing issues over the past few years have slowed down the pace of improvement to some extent, but since September there has been a more stable structure and a lot of ground has been made up. Standards are broadly average in most subjects across the school but have the potential to be better as improvement continues. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in English, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, music and physical education towards the end of Year 6.
- Determined leadership is ensuring that the school strives for improvement and that the priorities being pursued are the right ones to help raise standards further.
- Very good provision in the nursery ensures that the children get off to a flying start to education.
- Pupils are taught well and are provided with a wide range of curricular experiences that assist them in their growth as responsible young people who are enthusiastic learners.
- Good attention is paid to developing pupils' health, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being.
- The very good partnership with parents in underpinning pupils' effective learning, especially the very good support for homework.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, science and mathematics are not as high as they should be, particularly for middle attainers.
- The school's procedures for keeping a record of pupils' progress are not underpinning pupils' learning over time. Those for keeping track of the school's performance lack rigour, and are not drawing everyone required into the process of checking how well the school is doing.
- The curriculum is rich and varied; however, the balance does not enable sufficient time for pupils to extend their skills and knowledge in some subjects, for example religious education, geography and history.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made reasonable progress in tackling the issues raised by the 1996 inspection. Staff changes have hampered progress in some respects and the impact of this is seen in the less than expected standards achieved in national tests by the end of Year 6 in 2001. Some of the issues flagged in the previous report are still on the school's agenda for continuing improvement. For example, a good start has been made in developing an assessment policy but this has yet to be fully implemented. The school development plan is well conceived and the targets are the right ones to lead improvement forward at an appropriate pace. The school staffing is now up to full strength and it is clear that there is shared commitment to move forward. School managers have the full support of parents and the backing of an effective governing body. There is strong indication that the school has good capacity to press ahead with improvement and make provision still more effective.

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	B	A	B	A
mathematics	C	B	C	C
science	D	A	D	D

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

The school's results in the 2001 national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were average in all tested subjects when compared to all schools, including those with a similar proportion eligible for free school meals. The school's results in the 2001 national tests taken at the end of Year 6 were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. When compared to similar schools results were well above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. A greater proportion of pupils than expected do better for their age in English. The proportion of pupils achieving the level expected in all subjects was much less than teachers' predicted. The school did not reach the targets it had agreed and the results were significantly lower than any in the past five years. The school's rate of improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 is below the national average. Managers have looked at this critically and have taken positive steps to make improvement by implementing a range of useful strategies to help raise standards.

In the work seen by inspectors standards were average overall with around a quarter of pupils achieving at higher levels and the same proportion below average. Standards are higher in English than mathematics and science. Those pupils in the middle are the ones not achieving as well as they could in these two subjects. The rate at which pupils learn in school is uneven and the school has not yet established rigorous systems aimed at tracking and targeting raised achievements. These are key areas to tackle if the school's performance in national tests is to accurately reflect the capabilities of the pupils. The school's targets for pupils' performance in the 2002 national tests are reasonable but could be more challenging.

The youngest children start school in nursery with a broad range of abilities. They are given a very good start and many reach above average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in communication, language and literacy when they move to reception. The children learn steadily throughout reception, consolidating earlier learning and by the time they move into Year 1 standards are around the level expected. Inspection evidence shows standards in Year 2 to be average in all subjects except art and design, ICT and music where they are above average. Most pupils make steady progress elsewhere during their time in Year 1 and 2. Progress is more uneven in Year 3 to 6 with some dips in places and acceleration in others. The standards being achieved by Year 6 are average in all subjects, except in English, ICT, art and design, music and physical education where they are above average. Standards could be higher in other subjects if learning was more consistently good. The achievements of pupils who speak English as an additional language are much the same as others due to the good support they receive. Those with learning difficulties receive the help they need to enable them to achieve appropriately. Inspectors looked carefully to see if there was significant variation between girls' and boys' performance and found this not to be the case.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school, are keen and enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The standards of behaviour are good in class, at break and lunchtime. Although there are occasional incidents of bullying, these are carefully recorded and managed; this is reflected by the fact that there have not been any exclusions for many years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist amongst pupils who show tolerant and respectful attitudes to one another. Pupils' personal development is good
Attendance	Very good attendance is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Pupils are punctual to school and the day starts promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good overall, with strengths in the teaching of basic skills, ICT and music. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the week of inspection. Teachers have good expectations on the whole, manage behaviour well and use homework very successfully. These are key factors in helping pupils to make gains in their learning. All pupils irrespective of their background or gender share in this good teaching. However, some pupils of middle ability are not being given consistently good opportunities to reach their full capabilities. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from the additional support given to them, and learn successfully as a result. Those learning English as an additional language are helped successfully to become proficient in their command of English at a good pace. Classrooms

are productive and purposeful places of learning in which pupils work hard and show good levels of interest and independence. Relative weaknesses in lessons generally are the lack of precision in identifying exactly what different pupils need to learn and involving pupils in reviewing how well they think they are doing. The school does not track its pupils sufficiently rigorously in terms of standards and progress, As a result, early signs of difficulties are not consistently spotted or dealt with.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Pupils are given a wide range of good quality curricular experiences that assist them in their growth as responsible young people. However, there is too little time given to some subjects to enable pupils to learn to their full capabilities.
Provision for pupils with learning difficulties	Good provision is enabling these pupils to make good progress against their individual targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school's expectations for these pupils are high, they are suitably challenged and supported and this enables them to achieve appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, social and moral development is good and assists them in developing a good set of values and principles by which to live. Cultural development is well attended to and is helping pupils to prepare for life in an ethnically diverse and multi-culturally rich society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good attention is paid to welfare, health and safety aspects. The arrangements for child protection matters are fully in place and work well. The procedures for assessment although improving are not yet consistently underpinning pupils' progress over time in school. There is insufficient amending of planning to ensure that all pupils learn equally well.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school is very effective in harnessing the support of parents as partners in education and this makes an important contribution to the quality of education provided.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides determined leadership and has motivated staff to good effort that is improving standards, teaching and learning. School priorities are the right ones to assist the raising of standards. There is clear educational direction and a strong sense of unity of purpose at all levels of management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are fully supportive of the school. They are well informed and have good systems in place to assist in securing the best value in purchasing goods and services. They ensure that all legal requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management team knows well the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, not enough people are drawn into a rigorous programme of tracking pupils' progress over time and targeting still better achievements
The strategic use of resources	The school has an adequate level of staffing, resources and accommodation. It receives a well below average amount of finance to provide education and although standards could be higher, the quality of education provided gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make progress. • Behaviour is good and pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good and there are high expectations. • The school is well managed and led and parents feel able to approach staff with any concerns they have. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing of significance was brought to the attention of the inspection team.

Inspectors received questionnaires from 30 per cent of parents and met with 18 to discuss the school's provision. The above table shows the views expressed. Inspectors can see why parents hold such positive views as the school is providing a good quality education.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has changed significantly since the previous inspection in 1996. Most staff are new, the pupils being educated then have transferred to secondary schools and the curriculum has undergone a major overhaul. The school has grown considerably in size over the last six years and is providing for a more diverse group of pupils than it did in the past. Around a tenth of the pupils on roll have non-white European backgrounds which include Indian, Chinese, Pakistani, black Caribbean and black African who are represented across the ability spectrum. A third of these pupils are at a very early stage of learning English and require additional support to access the full curriculum. It is apparent that the school shows commitment to welcoming all pupils – the Vision statement is a powerful message that encourages, 'Caring, Learning, Achieving – Together', and this is very evident in school. The changed situation makes it difficult to compare standards now and at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards today are at broadly similar levels to those in 1996 in most subjects by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

2. Pupils' attainments in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2 were average in all tested subjects. The results in national tests at the end of Year 6 present a more 'roller-coaster' picture and are not as positive today as they were back in 1996. Pupils' attainments by the end of Year 6 in the 2001 national tests were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. When compared to similar schools results were well above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. A greater proportion of pupils than expected did better in English for their age. The proportion of pupils achieving the level expected in all subjects was much less than teachers' predicted. The school did not reach the targets it had agreed and the results were significantly lower than any in the past five years. The schools' rate of improvement in standards by the end of Year 6 was below the national average and was a cause for concern. The school's data suggests that the dip was unexpected but can be attributed to two key things. Firstly the adverse impact that staffing problems have had in the past on some older pupils ability to do as well as they might in the tests. Secondly, the actual levels achieved did not necessarily correspond to teachers' assessments.

3. The school has implemented a number of effective strategies this year and much has been achieved since September. There is a stable and committed staff who between them have many skills and talents to bring to bear positively on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

4. Inspection evidence shows that strengths in teaching basic skills ensure that most pupils make sound progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills during their time at school and achieve appropriately. Throughout the school there has been positive impact on the achievements of pupils from the successful implementation of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. They have had relatively more impact for the younger pupils at present. For those in Year 5 and 6 the changes have come on top of already established working patterns and so the impact has been less. The school's setting arrangements which places pupils into two ability groupings for English and mathematics are working well for some pupils, and not so well for others. The system of two sets, an upper and lower, places significant demands on teaching to ensure that all needs are met and that pupils of different ability learn at a consistently good pace. The two sets comprise the higher attaining pupils in one set and the other a very wide range of lower and middle attaining pupils. Progress is not as rapid in some of the lower sets and a significant proportion of

potentially middle to higher attaining pupils are missing out by the existing arrangement. Teaching is better in some sets than others and this too has a significant impact on the quality of learning. The school's tracking and targeting systems are not used frequently or regularly enough to detect the differences and support the best rates of progress being made. The school is tackling the weaknesses identified by its analysis of last year's test papers through the effective use of its action plan and via a range of strategies, for example, pupils who are a little behind in literacy and numeracy are benefiting from an effective range of additional strategies. The school has sensibly planned the introduction of a computerised assessment management system to support the handling of the enormous amount of data available to assist it in tracking individual performance, whole class and set performance and the school's performance overall. Inspectors looked carefully to see if there was significant variation between girls' and boys' performance and found this not to be the case. Girls and boys are present in all ability groupings and are equally enthusiastic for learning.

5. Skills in the use and application of ICT are developing well. There were several aspects of ICT that gave concern in 1996 and these have all been addressed. The new ICT suite is time-tabled intensively to enable pupils ample time to develop skills and knowledge, and class based computers are put to generally sound use in fostering cross-curricular use of ICT, though in science there is room for improvement. Pupils produce good quality work in word processing, graphics and data handling. Older pupils are building good insights into the power of computers to sort, search and interpret data.

6. Pupils with learning difficulties make sound progress towards achieving the targets set for them. They achieve appropriately, relative to their low starting levels. The systems for identifying the needs of these pupils enable staff to define appropriate targets and support, both in lessons and in small groups outside normal lessons. In some classes, pupils with learning difficulties are grouped to work with other pupils of similar ability and receive additional support with their literacy work from well-deployed learning assistants. This is a good strategy that is having a positive impact on accelerating the progress these pupils make and assists the raising of standards. The impact of the work undertaken by learning assistants is having more impact currently in Years 1 and 2 than Years 3-6.

7. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall. Those who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress in relation to prior attainment, and sometimes very good progress. Results in national tests by the end of Year 6 in 2001 showed that these pupils reached the nationally expected levels for their age in the same proportion as all other pupils. The school's expectations for these pupils are high, they are suitably challenged and supported and this enables them to achieve well.

8. In the work seen by inspectors standards were average overall in Year 6 with around a quarter of pupils achieving at higher levels and the same proportion below average. Standards are higher in English than mathematics and science. Some of those pupils in the middle are the ones not achieving as well as they could in these latter two subjects. The standards being achieved by the end of Year 6 are average in all subjects, except in English, ICT, art and design, music and physical education where they are above average. The practical aspects of art and design, music and physical education that focus on enabling pupils to 'learn by doing' are resulting in particularly effective learning and the above average standards reflect that this approach is successful. Although standards reach the level expected in religious education, history and geography by Year 6, the standards reached in intervening years are below the level they should be in Years 3 and 4 and above average in Year 5. Progress is uneven because of patchy coverage of the curriculum due to time limitations and because there is no clear structure to exactly what knowledge, understanding and skills pupils need to build on in these subjects. The result is an unbalanced curriculum and missed opportunities to take learning forward at a good pace.

9. The area of taking stock of pupils' achievements is one that the school has moved forward on but there is still improvement required in the following:

- weighing up how well different pupils achieve in their lessons and using this information consistently to set suitably challenging future work, especially for middle attaining pupils;
- using marking to be certain of what pupils know and understand and giving clear feedback on the next steps for improvement;
- sharing individual targets with pupils and their parents so that they can play a full part in assessing and reviewing individual progress;
- sharpening up the ways in which data is used to track individual progress and setting new targets that can be measured and used to assist the school in improving its results and overall performance.

10. These are key areas to tackle if the school's performance in national tests is to accurately reflect the capabilities of the pupils. The inspection team judges that the school has good capacity to raise standards and has set the right priorities to assist it in reaching its goals. The school's targets for pupils' performance in the 2002 national tests are reasonable. Parents are very supportive of the school; they are conscientious partners in the education of their children and their involvement is making a valuable contribution to the standards being achieved. Some very high quality personal research on a range of topics has been done by older pupils as homework that inspectors enjoyed reading. The school is not fully exploiting pupils' clear ability to research and find things out for themselves in all the subjects they study in school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The previous inspection found that pupils enjoyed coming to school and that they were polite and well behaved. Over the intervening six years, this positive picture has been maintained and, in some respects, has improved further. Children in the nursery and older pupils now have very good attitudes to school and to their work. Pupils of all ages continue to be well behaved and there have been no exclusions for many years. Pupils' personal development is good and they relish taking part in the increasingly wide range of opportunities that are available. Relationships between the pupils and with adults are very good. Overall attendance is well above the national average and there have been no unauthorised absences over the last school year.

12. Most of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire are confident that their children enjoy coming to school. Parents also feel that their children are encouraged to work hard and that they are making good progress in their learning. Their confidence is very well placed. Teachers are very clear in their expectations of behaviour and work and address the pupils with the respect and consideration they deserve. Pupils respond warmly and their very positive approach to learning helps to create a lively and vibrant atmosphere. The standard of teaching is good and, by presenting lively and interesting lessons, teachers create a purposeful atmosphere that is very conducive to learning. Pupils are very enthusiastic and speak warmly and loyally of their school. Children in the nursery, as well as their older schoolmates, settle down quickly and work hard. They listen carefully to their teacher and enjoy being able to make choices. For example, lessons in the nursery often involve a wide range of different activities. Children thoroughly enjoy being able to, for example, use the computer to colour in pictures or use underwater toys to conjure up exciting marine adventures. These young children play happily and share the available toys fairly and amicably. A particular feature of this school is pupils' enthusiasm for the many extra-curricular clubs; in fact, so many pupils want to come along, that their attendance sometimes has to be restricted.

13. Pupils behave well during the school day. They are confident, out-going and very friendly. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils sense that their teachers genuinely want them to do well and each is comfortable in the other's company. For example, during a class discussion that dealt with the transition from Year 2 to Year 3, one pupil told his class teacher how she compared with his 'old' teacher and eagerly pointed out the differences in her approach! Pupils of all ages mix freely and they are well mannered and polite. The behaviour of pupils during lunchtime and playtimes is good and pupils automatically consider each other's needs. The school has a very successful policy of social and educational inclusion and all pupils get along very well. Pupils help and encourage their friends who are learning English and urge them to play a full part in the day-to-day life of the school. Although there are occasional incidents of bullying, these are carefully recorded and managed; this is reflected by the fact that there have not been any exclusions for many years.

14. Pupils with learning difficulties have positive attitudes to the school because they feel well supported. They are fully involved in all of its activities. For example if they wish to join the school choir they can do so because it is an extra curricular activity that is open to every pupil. Consequently the pupils feel valued. Pupils with learning difficulties are happy to join in with their classmates whatever the activity. They are as well-rounded individuals as all pupils are in this caring school. On the whole they are growing in maturity and making a good contribution to the school community by the time they are ready to leave the school.

15. Pupils with English as an additional language are integrated well into the social life of the school. Those in the early stages of learning to speak English are supported well by staff and pupils, helping them to gain well in confidence.

16. All pupils respond well to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their personal development is good. As they move through the school, nursery children and older pupils become increasingly mature and perceptive. For example during a music lesson, Year 4 pupils listened to 'In Freezing Winter Night' by Benjamin Britten and drew pictures of the mental scenes that the music created. Pupils also wrote about how the music made them feel and talked about feeling scared, cold or sad. A whole-school initiative is the 'Springfield Greens' group. A representative from each class has been elected and the group has helped to raise awareness of environmental issues, such as the ecological value of re-cycling rubbish. Pupils have also contributed to designs for the school playground and have helped to plant raised flowerbeds that are used to grow vegetables and flowers. Pupils visit nearby places of interest and Year 5 pupils go on a 5-day residential visit to Buxton. They undertake outdoor activities, such as river walks and abseiling and these experiences encourage pupils to use their initiative and to become increasingly independent. Pupils of all ages willingly undertake a wide range of responsibilities, such as helping to distribute the class registers and tidying away equipment at the end of lessons.

17. Overall attendance is well above the national average and there have been no unauthorised absences over the last school year. Pupils usually arrive in good time for the start of the school day and lessons get off to a prompt start. When pupils are absent, it is usually because they have been ill or have had a medical appointment.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. It is not entirely valid to make direct comparisons between the quality of teaching at the time of the previous inspection in 1996, as there has been a big turnover of staff. With the exception of 3 teachers, everyone else including the headteacher, is new to the school. In the 114 lessons observed during this inspection teaching quality was of satisfactory or better quality in 100 per cent. In three quarters of lessons teaching was of good, or better quality, and in a quarter of very good or excellent quality. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. This is a more positive picture than six years ago when seven per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. All pupils irrespective of their background or gender share in this good teaching. Classrooms are productive and purposeful places of learning in which pupils work hard and show good levels of interest and independence. Most pupils are learning successfully and achieving appropriately because of the good expectations teachers have. There are three aspects of teaching that are relative areas for improvement; the precision with which learning objectives are set for different pupils, the use of assessment to target improved performance and enable pupils to have consistent levels of challenge in their studies and the marking of pupils' work to identify the next steps in learning. Additionally, a sharper focus on weighing up the quality of teaching and its impact on learning would enable the school to identify weaknesses early on and take remedial action.

19. All teachers were observed to teach at least one good lesson. The school's positive strategies for literacy and numeracy are resulting in some good teaching and learning in lessons, however progress as shown in the sample of pupils' work is uneven for middle attainers in some years. There are particular strengths in the teaching of art and design, music, physical education and ICT throughout the school. All teachers show good levels of confidence in these subjects. They use resources and time well to enable pupils to have worthwhile experiences that regularly involve the pupils managing appropriate aspects of their learning, reviewing their performance and having hands on experience to 'learn by doing'. These good features are not always apparent in otherwise good lessons in other subjects.

20. Teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes (known as the Foundation Stage) is good overall. There is some very good work undertaken by the nursery team who assist the very youngest children in school to get off to a flying start in their education. The children benefit from exciting and stimulating experiences that assist them in becoming effective learners in all the areas they experience. The focus is very much on enabling the children to learn at their own pace and this results in most making very good progress from their different starting points. The attention paid to enabling the children to take initiative, make their own choices within the well structured learning environment is paying dividends in building their confidence and self-esteem. The reception team continue to build on these very good early learning gains, though the progress children make evens out. Not all the nursery children transfer to the reception and this year about a dozen children joined. These new children are well integrated into the school. The team approach in the reception classes works effectively. The balance of experienced staff with those new to the teaching profession is a positive feature in providing the overall good quality teaching that enables most children to reach the targets expected by the time they transfer to Year 1.

21. Teaching is mostly good or better throughout the school because teachers ensure that pupils have good quality learning opportunities that provide a rich and stimulating diet. There are no significant variations in teaching and learning quality between infant and junior phases. Pupils make uniformly good progress in ICT, art and design and music and more uneven progress in other subjects, particularly in Years 3-6. Staffing issues in the past have had a negative impact on the progress made by some of the oldest pupils in school and to some extent this is reflected in the 2001 national test results. The time required to help pupils get fully up to speed in literacy and numeracy work has clearly resulted in a shortage of time

for them to learn in sufficient depth in a few other subjects. This was apparent when inspectors examined pupils' work in religious education, history and geography for example, and found few opportunities were being provided for them to develop personal research and recording skills. The teaching of reading in school is good and is resulting in some good standards being achieved. The push on writing is coming through in the quality of pupils' work and standards seen. However, insufficient attention is being paid to grammar and punctuation and otherwise high quality work is spoiled by poor presentation and inaccurate spellings. This is an area for development, which the school is aware it needs to give attention in all subjects.

22. Teachers are supported by effective long and medium term planning in most subjects. Teachers generally plan lessons appropriately, maintain a productive and purposeful ethos, manage behaviour very well, use a good range of interesting materials and largely structure lessons well to make best use of time, resources and the accommodation. Setting arrangements are proving to be a positive feature in supporting teaching and learning for most pupils in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics. They are however, not having the full impact on raising academic standards at the rate required by school managers. The organisation of the two sets by necessity involves a top and lower group. This means that the lower sets comprise pupils who have specific needs, moderate learning difficulties as well as those who are lower or middle attainers. The scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work showed quite clearly that the middle attaining pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable, there is variation and often because of the quality of teaching they receive. There is the need for sharper and timelier assessment of pupils' learning so that intervention action can be taken to 'fast-track' or 'back-track' relevant aspects of the pupils' learning as required.

23. The very best teaching leading to pupils achieving particularly well was observed in music. There are common features to music lessons that could usefully be extended more widely. Firstly, very close attention is paid to what pupils should learn and constantly set new challenges that ensure all pupils, no matter what their starting point make very good progress and achieve to a good standard. Teachers place strong emphasis on pupils' planning and managing appropriate aspects of the lessons and they use time targets to assist the cracking pace set. Questioning is used very effectively to enable pupils to share their learning with others in class and find out what pupils felt they could do better in the next lesson. In music lessons pupils work with very high levels of motivation and concentration and were observed to be literally bursting to give of their very best. Very good relationships in lessons support the great enjoyment that teachers and pupils felt in working together successfully.

24. The teaching provided for pupils with specific learning difficulties is good and these pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that are matched to their needs. Learning Support staff together with good input from the School Support Service give good assistance to pupils who have severe difficulties and this ensures that they can enjoy the same curriculum as their class-mates.

25. The support provided for pupils with English as an additional language is generally good. Teachers liaise well with the support teacher employed by the local education authority and this results in careful planning of extra work, closely linked to the same areas being studied by their peers. Precise systems for charting individual progress and clear individual language plans mean that the time spent with the support teacher is profitable. However, there are times within lessons when these pupils have insufficient opportunities to share dialogue with an adult. There were few instances observed within lessons when teachers were suitably helped by a classroom support assistant to enable this to happen.

26. The school does not have the financial resources to employ many support staff and levels are not generous. Generally, support staff were observed to be supporting behaviour and doing this effectively. Their deployment is not wholly effective because teaching staff do not plan specifically what their contribution is to be in lessons. The work learning assistants do outside classrooms, for example in supporting pupils needing to consolidate their skills in literacy and numeracy is effective. However, the location of some of these sessions in main thoroughfares is not conducive to the most successful learning. The school has yet to fully explore different ways of using the expertise of support staff to help raise standards.

27. The school has given a good push to setting targets aimed at raising achievement in writing as part of performance management. The use of targets to support learning across other aspects of English and other subjects is very much in its infancy and practice varies. There are good examples on which to draw. For example, in the Year 5 top literacy set targets are used very effectively to encourage pupils to aim high in what they achieve and to reflect on what they have learned and to have greater involvement in setting personal targets for improvement. The school does not set specific targets to support pupils' work in science and this is a missed opportunity to support improved performance. There is variable use of time targets to aid the pace of individual's learning when the teacher's attention is focused elsewhere. Marking is satisfactory overall but has yet to show consistently how pupils may improve their work. For example, in some English books, the teacher sets clear goals for the pupils to aim for. In other subjects however, there is often too much emphasis on praising effort and not enough on targeting improvements. These features are impeding potentially very high quality teaching and learning.

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

28. The curriculum is as effective as at the time of the previous inspection and all statutory requirements are met. There are many more strengths than weaknesses in the school's provision. For most pupils across the school, the curriculum is broad and balanced and the provision for literacy and numeracy is effective. Pupils are given a wide range of experiences that assist them in their growth as responsible young people. There are however some areas for improvement. Insufficient time is allocated for developing learning fully in some subjects such as religious education, geography, and history. There is also some imbalance within subjects. For example, there are not enough opportunities to develop pupils' oral work in most subjects, including English and practical work requires further emphasis in science. The youngest children make a flying start to their education in the nursery although the lack of joint planning between the nursery and reception means some of this momentum is lost. The school has a very clear set of aims with strongly expressed values; these drive the curriculum effectively. Everyone is valued; the school is highly inclusive and prepares pupils well for life in a multi-cultural community.

29. The school gives careful attention to ensuring that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who do not speak English as their first language, have an equal opportunity to become involved in all of its activities. It has a clear written policy that is subscribed to by all staff. The head teacher pays particular attention to ensuring that this policy is continually held up against practice and its requirements are met.

30. There are effective planning systems in place which ensure fair and equal coverage of the National Curriculum, National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies and the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is a well-planned systematic approach to personal, social and health education. Sex education and teaching about drugs is well managed and effective. ICT skills are planned for and taught discretely but the contribution of technology

and computer work to improve learning across the curriculum is not fully developed in some subjects.

31. Across the school staff plan together in year groups and this ensures pupils in parallel classes cover the same material. This was seen to work effectively across Years 1 and 2 where teachers work with their own class for English and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are set for these lessons and a wide range of ability was observed in each set. Lesson planning is satisfactory but not tight enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers include learning objectives relevant to pupils' ages drawn from the National Curriculum programme of study in their lesson planning but these are too general to support different levels of attainment for the same age pupils. Experienced staff know how to translate these general objectives into challenging questioning and activities for different pupils but not every teacher has the same depth of knowledge and understanding. Therefore, progress is not consistent throughout Years 3 to 6 because the work is sometimes not demanding enough. The outcome is that some pupils make erratic progress and do not achieve as much as they could. The school has staff with high levels of expertise who are well able to motivate and extend the learning of all pupils. School managers need to extend the ways of sharing the features of the best practice effectively with all colleagues.

32. Subject leaders examine whole-school planning and are well placed to check subject coverage across the school, but they do not currently check balance within subjects. This is a missed opportunity to find out how teachers are planning to develop speaking skills in all subjects and how practical work is developed in science and in mathematics for example. Homework is well used to reinforce reading, spellings, and skill development. Teachers, parents, and pupils all have high expectations that homework will be completed well and on time. Year 5 pupils have produced some exceptionally good pieces of personal research on cities as homework projects, and are currently working on new ones about art and artists.

33. The school has fully implemented the Foundation Stage curriculum and this enables children to make particularly good progress in the nursery. Progress in the reception classes is steady. One reason for this variation is that staff do not plan together across the Foundation Stage and therefore opportunities to extend learning and share expertise are missed.

34. The school has taken steps to ensure that its provision for all pupils with learning difficulties complies fully with the latest requirements. Staff use the targets in pupil's individual education plans to provide and deliver the right level of work for these pupils which ensures they are well motivated and work hard. Occasionally, withdrawal for specially tailored work programmes means that some pupils miss out on what the rest of the class is doing and the school is not yet tracking the impact of this.

35. The school makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language, supported by the local education authority. The needs of these pupils are routinely assessed on admission and appropriate plans are put in place for those in the early stages of learning English requiring extra support with learning. In these cases, clear individual language plans are set up and reviewed termly. Liaison between the support teacher and class teachers is good and suitable links are made with curriculum subjects where the pupils experience specific difficulties with understanding specialist terminology.

36. The curriculum is enhanced by good provision for extra-curricular activities, which are well supported by pupils and their parents. Sports activities figure strongly and pupils receive regular coaching, for example in football, which enables them to improve their skills well. Pupils also have periodic opportunities to join a writers group and their newsletters and work on the reception project have been published recently. There are plentiful opportunities for

pupils to extend their creative skills in the additional clubs organised in music and art and design and for those with *green-fingers* to develop their ecological and horticultural knowledge.

37. Provision for the personal development of pupils is good overall and very good for social and moral development because of the very good opportunities pupils have to work and play together. The school has usefully held staff meetings and looked at the curriculum to identify where activities to promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural could be specifically planned.

38. Everyone in school has consistently high expectations about how pupils will behave and relate to each other. Rules are very prominently displayed in every classroom and teachers make their expectations clear. This is very effective and results in good behaviour both in the classroom and playground. There are numerous well-planned opportunities for pupils to take part in day and residential visits, which complement and extend their studies. When pupils are given opportunities to plan and negotiate with each other, they do so well. This was seen to good effect in a Year 2 religious education lesson when pupils had to work together to prepare scenes from the story of the Good Samaritan and when Year 6 pupils worked together to compose poems about the weather. A strong sense of responsibility for the environment and for the school community is fostered well through the work of the *Springfield Greens* eco group and the school council.

39. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. Assemblies reflect the values of the school well and focus everyone towards the same objective, 'Caring, learning and achieving together.' There is very good emphasis on poetry, literature, art and design, and music in the curriculum to heighten pupils' cultural appreciation and awareness of the diversity and richness in the world. A very spiritual moment occurred during a Year 4 music lesson when pupils listened to a descriptive piece illustrating a freezing winter night and responded with many reflective comments. For example 'silent forest, lightening and stars in the sky,' and 'old forgotten ruined church, piles of leaves, two singing ghosts.' Pupils' achievements are celebrated in high quality displays about the school. The school is housed in two separate buildings but work is displayed in such a way that it ensures all pupils see samples of work from across the age range. This is one strategy employed by the school to promote a unity of purpose.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school is very caring and gives a great deal of sympathetic attention to the personal development of its pupils. The strengths found in this area of provision at the time of the previous inspection have been sustained. The school pays careful attention to providing a full and meaningful education for all of its pupils, whatever their gender, ability or race. It is a harmonious place of learning in which to work both from the point of view of the pupils and staff.

41. Provision for health, safety and welfare of pupils is satisfactory overall and has many good features. There are regular risk assessments made that support pupils well. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The head teacher is the nominated person and she has received the necessary training to carry out this role effectively. The school has a number of first-aiders who are able to care appropriately for the pupil's health needs. The procedures for monitoring attendance are effective.

42. The school provides well for those pupils with learning difficulties. Their personal development is monitored assiduously. There is a systematic approach to ensuring that these pupils have every opportunity to be fully involved in all of its activities. There is,

however, not enough attention paid to charting the progress that they make. The special needs co-ordinator has observed the provision being made for these pupils in classrooms and her notes show that the pupils' entitlement is being met in full. What they do not show is how well the pupils are learning and which of the various 'catch-up' strategies the school employs is most effective. Some of the pupils with learning difficulties also have specific language needs and receive support from external services. The school has not yet made the necessary checks to ensure that the impact of the various strategies is working to best advantage individual pupils.

43. In contrast, the systems for charting how well the pupils learning English as an additional language are doing, are good. On entry to school, the well focused system is used well by the local education authority to determine whether a pupil will receive extra teaching support to learn English. The system that identifies the point at which these pupils begin to learn English usefully dovetails to the early learning goals for learning English within National Curriculum requirements and enables individuals to be entered at the appropriate level, a personal plan devised and progress to be charted. The approach is effective and pupils make good progress overall and sometimes very good progress because of the attention to detail. The pupils enjoy the extra lessons with local authority teachers and benefit well, advancing their spoken and written English skills and also their self-confidence. Although a good balance is generally struck between support in class and withdrawal from class, there are occasions when pupils are likely to benefit more if they work within a small group rather than individually to extend their skills. In some classes, more specific sensitive targeting of pupils' spoken contributions would be worthwhile.

44. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard at reviewing its procedures for tracking how well pupils are achieving. It is still at the stage of refining many of the systems that it has been experimenting with in order to do this effectively. The procedures for tracking different pupil's attainment in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory. However, there are still shortcomings in the procedures for charting how well pupils are doing on a termly basis and whether individuals are on track to meet the targets they have been set. Procedures for weighing up pupils' achievements in other subjects are not yet in place and this is a shortcoming. The school is not consistently guiding the way that class teachers plan for the next steps of pupils learning. Neither is it setting small, measurable targets for improvement that might help the pupils to understand the need to take some responsibility for their own progress. The school recognises this and is determined to continue the process of giving careful consideration to this aspect of its development.

45. Personal guidance is good. The pupils have a personal 'My book' established in the nursery class and then have records of achievement that transfer with them as they move through the school. The lunchtime mid day assistants work hard at providing the pupils with a good range of play activities at lunch times whilst they wait or return from eating lunches. This helps their personal development as they have extra reasons to co-operate and work with one another. Both class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well. Teaching assistants play a significant role in ensuring that the pupils' needs are being met effectively through their curriculum support. A wide range of extra curricular activities are an element provided by the school staff to show pupils their wish to give them as many opportunities as possible to do well.

46. The school promotes the good behaviour of its pupils through the consistent approach of all of its staff who uphold the agreed positive approaches extremely well. There were no instances of bullying observed during the inspection week. Parents feel that the school pays careful attention to this aspect of school life and identify that they would be fully involved if it were necessary. Pupils respond well to the caring values that the school promotes in its unique mission statement and relevant aims.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The previous inspection found the partnership between home and school to be effective and this continues to be the case. Views expressed by parents during the pre-inspection meeting and analysis of their questionnaire reflect the wide popularity of this school and show that parents hold the school in high esteem. Parents provide the school with strong practical and financial support and they are keen to help in any way they can. They ensure that their children attend regularly and that their homework is completed on time. Parents' active involvement helps to motivate their children and encourages them to work hard and to do their very best.

48. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Regular newsletters help to keep them very well informed about the day-to-day life of the school and the many extra-curricular clubs. There are regular opportunities to discuss their child's work and teachers also make themselves available at the start and end of each school day. Parents also receive very detailed annual reports. They help to provide a comprehensive picture as to what the pupils can and cannot do, along with an assessment of the progress they have made. Parents are also given tips on how to help at home and exactly what homework will be set, and when. Parents appreciate being so well informed and they are very positive about every aspect of the school's work; they have no significant concerns.

49. Parents are particularly pleased with the way in which the school is encouraging their children to become mature and responsible. They also feel that the standard of teaching is good and that teachers have appropriately high expectations of their children. Members of staff are seen as being very approachable and parents also feel that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agree with these positive views. The overwhelming majority of parents attend consultation evenings and parents provide strong support for homework.

50. The parents of pupils with learning difficulties are fully involved in ensuring that their children's needs are being met appropriately. They are invited to come to all reviews and the school has a regularly positive response to the invitations. During the course of the inspection week parents were observed discussing needs with the special needs co-ordinator on an informal basis. Many parents take up the open invitation to discuss needs on an on-going basis rather than waiting for a formal review time, particularly if they have any concerns. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment to inclusion and is a very positive feature.

51. The parent teacher association is very well supported and the committee organises a wide range of social and fund raising events. The money raised has recently been used to buy books and has contributed towards the purchase of play and sports equipment. As part of the on-going environmental project, parents are helping to develop the school's grounds and come along at week ends in order to plant numerous shrubs and plants.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The school is well led and managed, the issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully and there is good commitment to improvement amongst the united staff team.

53. When the headteacher joined the school after the 1996 inspection, she set about improvement with determination and good educational direction. The headteacher introduced a different management structure to the school, made a number of wise appointments to key posts and tackled the unsatisfactory teaching then apparent in school. Since September last, when several new appointments were made, the staff team has developed well and the quality of teaching has risen to a good level with some very good features.

54. The headteacher has forged a particularly strong partnership with the two assistant headteachers. Together they have approached innovation with confidence and have set the tone for future advancement. The assistant headteachers are very successful practitioners who are very good role models for the staff. They share considerable strengths in their own teaching and awareness of school performance and the school can utilise this experience as it moves ahead in the future. They are both however full time teachers and as such have limited opportunity to undertake a full programme of monitoring and evaluation. This is one aspect that to some degree is curtailed by the tight budget that the school operates within.

55. The headteacher and assistant headteachers are the senior management team and as such oversee the strategic management of the school effectively. The four team leaders who oversee the different phases in school from the Foundation Stage to the upper juniors support them in this work. Recent appointments have much strengthened this team and they are settling to a good role in ensuring quality provision and consistent progress by pupils in their year groups. These middle managers have yet to have a wider role in tracking the quality of learning and progress, though it is evident that most have the skills to undertake this successfully.

56. Subject leaders generally do an effective job of planning the work for their subjects and in ensuring that they are resourced properly. Again, they do not have enough opportunities to monitor pupils' work in other lessons but the potential for them to do a thorough job of this is positive.

57. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator has been in post for the last year. Prior to this she was shadowing the previous post holder who had indicated that she would be leaving the school. Consequently the current special educational needs co-ordinator was already aware of the role when she took on the post. Since taking up her responsibilities she has moved forward in ensuring that all staff have the information and support they need to play their part. The provision for the pupils with learning difficulties is well managed and they have effective assistance given to them by class teachers and support staff when these staff are skilfully deployed. This is normally the case, particularly in the Foundation Stage and infant classes where there are good levels of regular full time support. Pupils with learning difficulties in these classes also benefit from effective help given by local authority teachers. Deployment of support staff in junior classes is reliant on more part-time support and is not as seamless in its organisation as lower down the school. The location of some of the assistance given to pupils with learning difficulties takes place in corridors that are thoroughfares with movement of other pupils causing disruption to these pupils' concentration.

58. The school's provision for the pupils with English as an additional language is overseen effectively by the headteacher, who has a good understanding of their needs. She checks their progress regularly and promotes support for their needs well. Although test results are not analysed specifically to check for any differences in the attainment of pupils from varying ethnic backgrounds, the headteacher maintains a good awareness of the progress of individuals.

59. The governors are a well-informed and influential group. They have a good system of committees and the link governors are successful in their work to keep up to date with developments in their linked subjects. Governors make good comparisons to ensure that the school is competitive and are alert to the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Governors issue all the necessary information and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

60. The school's systems to ensure that performance is weighed rigorously are developing soundly. At present these systems are led capably by the senior managers but they tend to focus on planning and teaching skills rather than learning, standards and progress. The target setting and tracking programmes introduced over the last year have the potential to keep a watchful eye on progress and to alert staff to under-performance in a timely way. Currently, analysis of progress is retrospective at the end of each year rather than on a regular basis as pupils complete the annual programme. Senior managers recognise this weakness and are very resolved to make the process more rigorous and efficient. As a sensible first step, they are to simplify the data collected and manage it more efficiently through the use of a software program.

61. The school operates within a budget that is well below that of other primary schools and cannot always afford desirable additions to provision. Thus, the level of support staff is much lower than in many primary schools for example. The school secures additional funding to help raise standards. For example, additional literacy strategy funding is used soundly overall. Finance is well managed on the whole and the administrative staff operate good systems to ensure the budget is managed and controlled prudently. The school has not received an audit to check that all aspects of budget control and monitoring are up to speed for over four years; this is something the governors may wish to pursue with the local education authority. The school improvement plan is a well-conceived document and gives good focus to improvement. It is costed fully and has good information to help managers complete their priorities to schedule. There are no shortages of teaching staff, accommodation or resources and these are used soundly to support learning.

62. The school helps pupils to succeed. Standards are improving, progress is strengthening and the development of pupils as pleasant children is a strength. The school gives good value for money and there is every chance that its future will be bright.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In their work to further improve the quality of education at the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Continue to press ahead with raising academic standards in English, mathematics and science and particularly for middle attainers by:
 - Providing guidance to teachers to support improvement in pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of work;
 - Finding ways to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum;
 - Reviewing the organisation of junior learning sets in English and mathematics to ensure that all pupils are given consistently challenging work that will enable them to reach their capabilities;
 - Sharpening up the pace and variety of the mental and oral parts of numeracy hours and improving the way pupils present work to encourage accuracy;
 - Setting targets to support pupils' learning in science and widening opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves;
 - Identifying exactly what knowledge, understanding and skills pupils need to build on in lessons and ensuring that there is sufficient time for these to be developed;
 - Identifying and sharing the features of the best teaching and learning to be found in school;
 - Reviewing the deployment of support staff to best advantage pupils' learning in all years;
 - Drawing more people into the process of self-critical review;
 - Developing the subject leader's role to enable each to play a full part in raising standards in the subject for which they have responsibility.

(Paragraphs: 4, 10, 21, 22, 26-28, 32, 34, 54, 57, 61, 74, 75, 78, 82, 86, 89, 93, 96, 98, 126, 140)
- (2) Improve systems to enable teachers and managers to track pupils' progress in all subjects by:
 - Establishing opportunities to take stock of learning in all subjects;
 - Checking up on how well different pupils achieve in their lessons and using this information consistently to set suitably challenging future work, especially for middle attaining pupils;
 - Using marking as a tool to make sure that pupils' progress is on track and to give clear feedback on the next steps for improvement;
 - Sharing individual targets with pupils and their parents so that they can play a full part in reviewing individual progress.
 - Involving subject leaders in charting pupils' achievement against National Curriculum levels in the subject they lead on;
 - Sharpening up the ways in which data is used to track individual progress and set new targets that can be measured and used to assist the school in improving its results and overall targets.

(Paragraphs: 10, 27, 44, 60, 80, 82, 88, 116, 119, 121, 127, 138)

- (3) Review the curriculum to ensure that time is available for pupils to extend their skills and understanding in religious education, geography and history by:
- Looking at the balance of the curriculum in terms of time allocations to subjects and when they are planned to take place;
 - Reviewing exactly what it is that pupils need to learn in each subject and exploiting fully the opportunities for promoting this through cross-curricular links;
 - Widening the opportunities for pupils to research and find things out for themselves;
 - Building in time for pupils to develop powers of reasoning, voice their own opinions and reflect on new learning.
- (Paragraphs: 8, 28, 112, 114, 116, 119, 121, 139, 141, 142, 144)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	114
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	29	55	29	0	0	0
Percentage	1	25	49	25	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	398
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	68

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	35

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	24	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	33
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	53	53	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (91)	90 (91)	95 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	32	31
	Girls	22	23	23
	Total	52	55	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (91)	93 (94)	92 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	27	33	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	15	20
	Girls	29	25	28
	Total	47	40	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (96)	67 (87)	80 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	23	17
	Girls	28	30	29
	Total	47	53	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (83)	88 (85)	77 (85)
	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	3
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	6
White	310
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	732 911
Total expenditure	712 271
Expenditure per pupil	1 669
Balance brought forward from previous year	15 108
Balance carried forward to next year	35 748

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	450
Number of questionnaires returned	144

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	40	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	52	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	46	12	2	3
The teaching is good.	60	36	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	51	13	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	33	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	33	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	50	10	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	61	30	7	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	40	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	32	3	2	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64. The school has sustained the quality of provision for the youngest children since the previous inspection. Progress was reported to be good, particularly in the basic skills. This remains the case, especially in the nursery class where children are given a flying start to their education. This is then more steadily continued in the two parallel reception classes. The children with learning difficulties and those, whose first language is not English, receive good support and consequently make similar progress to all other children. The class teachers and very effective teaching assistants pay good levels of attention to all areas of learning. In the nursery they pay particularly thoughtful attention to developing the children's personal, social and emotional development initially as well as their communication, language and literacy skills. They do this through the provision of a wide range of interesting and enjoyable activities. The resources available for all areas of learning are satisfactory.

65. Provision for the youngest children in school is made in the nursery and reception classes jointly known as The Foundation Stage. Not all children transfer from the nursery class to the reception classes but many of them do so. There are 52 children attending the nursery class on a part time basis whilst there are 27 children in one reception class and 26 children in the parallel class. The nursery teacher leads the work of the Foundation Stage classes as the recognised Foundation Stage leader. The leader has worked hard at ensuring the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are being met through setting up a system of planning that is followed by all classes. However, the nursery staff and reception classes staff do not plan together to assure continuity across the early years stage of learning and to some extent this limits the potential for capitalising on some of the very good value added earlier in the children's learning. Teaching is good in all areas of learning, and often very good in the nursery class. The teachers and teaching assistants plan carefully together in their separate class areas. They give thoughtful attention to devising stimulating activities that develop learning effectively. However, the staff in the nursery and reception classes do not plan jointly to assure the seamless nature of Foundation Stage provision and this is an area for development. The children in both nursery and reception classes benefit from the highly effective teamwork of both teachers and teaching assistants. Their roles are often interchangeable as the teaching assistants give the children regularly effective support. The tracking of the children's achievements across the areas they learn is carried forward through the use of their 'My book' which captures progress over time in both nursery and reception classes. The books contain examples of the children's work from different areas of learning. They are useful tools to underpin the staff's knowledge of how well the children are progressing as well as charting individual achievements.

66. The school's assessment of the children's attainment when they start school is based upon the local authority system. This data shows that in some years, the profile of the children's attainment is average and in other years above. For example the current Year 2, were an average attaining cohort when they were in reception. The profile of the current intake of children is above average. In the nursery class they move forward swiftly in their learning where they are given a rapid start to their learning. This good progress slows as the children continue their learning in the reception classes where expectations are not quite as high. However, the children leave reception classes well prepared for their work in infant classes. By the time that the children make this move most have reached expected targets and some are appropriately beginning to get involved in National Curriculum work.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development in both nursery and reception classes is very good. Teaching is good and enables all children to make good progress as they develop in confidence, and self-esteem and reach the targets they should. In the nursery class children come into school with parents or carers and happily settle into the day-to-day routines. Many animated discussions about how much the children are enjoying school take place involving children and adults together. Children speak with confidence to one another as well as adults. They co-operate well as they share table-top activities. They show good levels of concentration, as they stay focused on their activities. They register their own attendance with occasional help from parents and carers. No one takes part in an activity in isolation, as the children interact with one another sensibly. They become very well prepared for their transfer into reception classes. In the reception classes their maturity level is well developed as they take part in circle times together. The children all listen carefully when their teacher brings out a *shy teddy bear* and introduces him to them. The teacher creates a calm atmosphere, which the children respond to positively. They share their thoughts with one another very openly as they explain to one another why their teddy is special to them. The children are able to verbalise some thoughts such as 'Teddy is warm and blubby' because they feel so comfortable in the company of adults and other children. They always observe the rules of the circle time because they want to listen to what one another have to say.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Provision for the children's communication, language and literacy skills is good in both nursery and reception classes. Both teachers and teaching assistants pay careful attention to developing the skills of communication through the stimulating range of activities that they plan for the children. In the nursery class the wide range of activities supports the children's development in both formal and informal ways to develop reading, writing and oral skills. In one observation, some children worked with the teacher as they listened to a funny version of *Humpty Dumpty* and identified familiar rhyming words such as 'fly' and 'cry' for themselves. The teacher skilfully moved learning forward as she used the *Humpty Dumpty* doll to encourage the children to name less familiar words such as 'slug' and 'jug' that also rhyme. In another observation, the children worked with the student patiently and accurately as they matched words on cards to link rhyming sounds. Some children were having very confident conversations with the teaching assistants as they waited at the *hairdressers* that has been set up in the home corner. They showed clear understanding of words such as 'hot', 'shampoo' and 'washing' as they wait for their appointment time. The children's love of books is confirmed as they choose the books that want to 'read' to adults. Many are already able to write their names with clarity and care for letter formation. It is possible for the children to do this so competently because they are given time to become utterly absorbed in using pencils and felt pens in their writing corner. In the reception classes the children are being well prepared for their work in Year 1 as they share a big book together such as 'The sandwich Max made.' The teacher reads the text with the children, stopping to ask questions to establish understanding. The teaching assistants sensitively support children who need extra help whilst the teacher ensures that they are asked questions that they are able to answer correctly. The children confidently build words on whiteboards that arise from the story. They focus well in group reading time. The children show their love of books as they read stories delightfully recognising words, and matching pictures to words to help them in developing reading skills. The children write independently about their weekends whilst the teacher keeps a close eye on their progress. Most of the children achieve the targets before they move into Year 1 classes and some are already working within the National Curriculum.

Mathematical development

69. The children often bring some knowledge of mathematical learning with them when they enter the nursery, particularly counting skills. Both the teacher and teaching assistant build upon this to good advantage. The children's learning is very good in consequence. The children develop well their understanding of numbers by using a varied range of resources, both formally and informally. They use pegboards and different coloured pegs as they make patterns up to ten with accuracy. Laces are used in a similar way as colours of beads are threaded on to the laces competently. The sequence of the colours reinforces the numbers as none of the different levels of colour go beyond ten. This is because of the vigilance with which adults are checking what the children are doing. Some children are using the a computer program that involves number recognition as they move up and down ladders as well as backwards and forwards to make matches. This has the dual purpose of supporting the children's development of computer mouse control as well as numeracy development. The children show very good levels of concentration in order to complete these tasks accurately. In the reception classes the children's pace of learning is good. However, in nursery it is very good due to the challenges provided by the teaching. Most children will reach the targets in this area of their work, although in number work attainment is better and some will exceed the targets. Many children can count to 20 and recognise these numbers. A small number of higher-attaining children count beyond this. Staff focus well on mathematical language and children learn useful mathematical phrases such as 'taller than' and 'smaller than'. Higher-attaining children learn to estimate and make good guesses as to the number of articles in a jar. They show good understanding as most of them write the correct estimation on a clipboard. They are well supported in their accurate counting by class number lines imaginatively displayed as a string of fishes swimming across the classroom.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. The children come into nursery class with a wide range of experiences of the world around them. Teachers and teaching assistants build upon this skilfully so that learning is very good in both nursery and reception classes. In the nursery class the children make good use of the computer and control the mouse with skill as they choose colours to illustrate a character in a favourite story. They find out about directions as they draw maps that show their journeys to their school. They talk knowingly about past times as they observe in detail of a model of the area that was very different to where they live today. Much of the children's understanding of the world is skilfully brought together in the reception classes. The range and quality of learning experiences is good. For example, the children make miniature gardens in small groups. They draw up sensible designs initially with good levels of adult support. The imaginative designs are then built up very well as plastic pots; soil, stones and plants are put into the positions indicated in the designs. The children discuss their choices and give good reasons to adults for them. As the gardens are being built at different times during the school week the children are able to find out about the way that plants change over a short period of time. They use their construction skills competently as they make swings for their gardens out of small Lego. The children make creditable efforts as they are encouraged by the teaching assistant to improve upon their swings so that they can be used safely. The children draw thoughtful conclusions because of focused adult support. The support is given through posing pertinent questions such as 'Well what do you think?' rather than through giving the children answers. Consequently the children are reaching the targets set for them and they are very well prepared for their future work in Year 1 classes.

Physical development

71. Attainment in this area of learning is average for children of this age. Teaching and learning are good overall. The children's physical skills are being well developed in the nursery class as they use space indoors and outdoors safely and creatively. The children are also given opportunities to develop their finer physical skills as they cut papers, use pencils to form letters correctly and control the computer mouse competently. The process of developing physical skills slows in the reception class, as not all children are able to put larger actions of movements together with enough control and accuracy. The greater variety of activities and tighter focus on individual progress are the key aspects that are moving learning forward at a faster pace in the nursery class. This wide variety of activities are carefully organised by the teacher to ensure that they can all be used safely. The children move around them having different physical skills developed. When the children use the animal masks they are able to try different ways of moving such as *galloping like a horse or moving more slowly and snappily like a badger*. The balancing bricks and see-saw are safely placed on the grassed area so that the children can use them with confidence because they have a soft landing area. There is good control of the wheeled toys, which gives further support to the children's understanding of direction as they move in a clockwise way around the outdoor space. Children use the space effectively. Indoors the children use the large hall space to control movements around an obstacle course made up from different pieces of apparatus. There are regular opportunities for the children in the nursery class to use the large hall space creatively and in safety. In the reception classes the children change appropriately in readiness to use their own outdoor area. In an observation focused on cooperative catching, throwing and batting skills the children moved with careful attention to one another's safety and had good awareness of space. There was opportunity for them to work co-operatively in pairs with bats and balls and most did this sensibly. However, not enough attention was paid to improving the skills systematically and although the activity was enjoyed the pace of improvement could have been quicker. The children's finer physical skills are better developed in the reception classes when the children are helped to make paper flowers, folding and sticking to create their own *masterpieces* in the style of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. By the time they join Year 1, most children are likely to have achieved the expected level in their physical development.

Creative development

72. The children have many opportunities given to them to develop creative skills well. Both nursery and reception classes join on occasions to enjoy music-making together. The children join with infant classes for some assembly times which gives them chance to sing joyously together. They also have a further time together in the school hall when they sing action songs. An accomplished volunteer accompanist plays the piano to support their learning about dynamics as she plays loudly and softly at appropriate times in the songs. The children respond by using their voices with accuracy in both pitch and dynamics. The children in the reception classes stay for a longer period of time in the hall together. They sing a wider repertoire of songs as confident soloists or in groups. They are able to explore how sounds change because of the good variety of songs that are the focus of their learning. When the classes work separately in their music making there is equally very good opportunities given to the children to enhance their skills. In the nursery class they use voices with control which is then transferred to the use of instruments. Performing skills are already well embedded as the children all have chances to become instrumentalists. They use small egg shakers, coconut shells, drum and shakers paying good attention to creating rhythm in their playing at appropriate times as the teacher tells the story of Humpty Dumpty. This idea is further developed in reception classes as the children use instruments imaginatively to represent characters and objects in a story. Learning is moved forward because the children now make their own choices of instruments. They keep a good beat and rhythm. They are

able to tell the teacher why instruments are being played in certain ways because learning is being well sequenced by the teachers careful planning.

73. In the nursery class the children have to select their own materials in order to make a picture of *Humpty Dumpty*. They are able to manipulate large pieces of Lego to print *Humpty Dumpty's* wall. The children use sponges to complete other parts of the picture. The learning is moving forward constantly as the teacher involves them in discussion about their choices. When a child says, 'Now I'm having some blue' the teacher asks, 'Where are you going to put that?' which makes the child think carefully before it is used effectively to paint the sky. In the reception classes prints of works by famous artists are introduced to the children to enhance their creative skills. Prints of paintings by Van Gogh and Gauguin are used for different purposes by the teachers. The Van Gogh print is used by the highly effective teaching team to focus the children on making their own version of paper flowers using tissue paper. The children are relaxed and confident as they make flowers and also paint in watercolours in the style of Van Gogh. The children using the Gauguin print as their stimulus for their learning are being encouraged to observe closely by the teacher. The children select colours carefully and add white to make colours paler. The teacher values their efforts and the children show pleasure and pride in being told how clever they are to have done so well. By the time they join Year 1, most children are likely to have achieved above the expected level in their creative development

ENGLISH

74. The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 in English are broadly average. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards overall, have been well maintained since the previous inspection. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well, analyses results carefully, and has changed its practice to meet areas of weakness. This has been particularly successful in improving the content, creativity, and expressive nature of pupils' written work throughout the school. The same rigorous attention has yet to be paid to improving their spelling, handwriting, and consistent use of punctuation. Inspection findings confirm standards achieved in the most recent national tests. However inspectors also identified that in about 20 per cent of Year 2 pupils' books there was good evidence that the content and organisation of written work were at a higher level than expected but that spelling, handwriting and punctuation were not. The lack of application in these skills is clearly hampering pupils' performance in tests.

75. The school is very successful in the teaching and learning of reading and in all year groups, inspectors judged standards to be above average. Pupils largely develop good reading habits. The very good involvement of parents and the reading partnership with volunteers, is proving beneficial to pupils' achievements. Pupils' writing skills in English books are clearly improving because of the good attention the school has given to extending this. Pupils are writing imaginatively and creatively at length and are clearly getting enjoyment from so doing. In creating eight lines of poetry called *kennings*, a Year 6 pupil wrote about water as: 'drought killer, reservoir filler, clothes washer, splish splasher, plant's mother, river's brother, death taker, life maker'. Pupils are writing in other subjects too, this was well demonstrated by a higher attaining child in Year 1 who in his writing about a science experiment wrote, 'We found some nature objects in the garden and made some pictures with them...'. This is not consistently the case across the curriculum however. It was apparent from looking at a sample of pupils' books that little high quality written work is being produced in religious education, geography and history, for example. In some older pupils' books work was untidily presented too. Spellings are practised in most classes but many pupils are still mis-spelling key vocabulary. In a successful lesson in Year 3 the teacher paid close attention to presentation, size and legibility of handwriting and enabled most of the group to make good progress. However, some pupils had different writing books to others

and the handwriting of those working in books without lines to guide them did not reach the same standards as others. Pupils are very attentive listeners and follow instructions well. They have well developed speaking skills. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically and with good vocabulary. The opportunities for them to develop powers of reasoning and put forward their own ideas and opinions are curtailed in some lessons where the teachers spends too long talking and this has a negative impact on stimulating higher level achievement.

76. Pupils with learning difficulties make sound progress and benefit from satisfactory individual support for their work in English. Their needs have been identified and targets in their individual education plans are clear. Pupils are most often supported in class lessons but where appropriate are withdrawn for specific support such as additional literacy strategy. Support for pupils learning English as an additional language, and for those from ethnic minority groups enables them to make sound progress. From Year 2 to Year 5, the school provides some additional support for pupils who have been identified as able writers. In the sessions observed, positive but critical feedback from the teacher helped these pupils know and understand how to improve their work.

77. Teaching and learning in English are good across all aspects of the subject. Good teaching and learning is seen across the school and with both upper and lower sets. The key elements that make a difference are high expectations and appropriate methods to achieve them. In a Year 5 upper literacy set the teacher set a cracking pace which motivated all pupils and made sure they worked hard. Together the teacher and pupils explored a text and gained much from this activity. Later examination of the records revealed that the majority of pupils in this set had already achieved Level 5 in reading. The pupils moved quickly into group work and pupils wrote a good deal in a short period. The teacher worked with one group and in an exemplary manner used their personal literacy targets very well to make sure each pupil knew what they needed to achieve in the lesson. Not surprisingly, these pupils had a very good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and where they needed to improve. Teaching and learning of similar high quality were seen in a Year 6 lesson when pupils studied poetry and later when they composed their own poetry in the ICT suite. In a Year 4 lesson, where pupils studied the language of advertising before writing their own compelling advertisements, vigorous teaching led to energetic learning and highly motivated pupils. In Years 1 and 2 basic skills are well taught and pupils are given imaginative opportunities to write. For example in a Year 1 lesson, *'Mr. McBurgles Safari'* book captures the pupil's interest; they concentrate hard and are keen to answer questions. The teacher not only made sure the pupils improved their reading ability and use of expression but also learned how the characters were being developed. In Year 2, pupils wrote about 'Mr. Gumpy's day under the sea.' The most able pupils included high quality dialogue, vivid language, and correct punctuation.

78. However, there are also some missed opportunities in the otherwise good teaching of English that leads to erratic progress for some pupils, and more typically middle attainers than other groups. This was evident in the sample of work that inspectors' examined and in lessons observed during the week of inspection. In an upper junior lesson for the lower set, the text, about Anne Frank was out of focus on the overhead projector and difficult to read. The lesson moved at a brisk pace led by the teacher's questions. However, many of these asked only for the recall of facts and when a higher attaining pupil within the set offered a response which had been inferred from the text, this was not used effectively. Additionally, the first part of the lesson took too much of the available time and this left insufficient time for pupils to record, productively what they had learned. In one lower set lesson in upper juniors, the pace was too slow and the teachers' questioning did not stimulate wider discussion or seek to deepen pupils' thinking skills and this hampered potentially good learning. In a lower junior lesson, where planning was very brief and focused almost entirely on teaching rather

than learning, tasks were much the same for all pupils and failed to stretch the more able pupils.

79. Pupil's response in English is always positive. Pupils have good attitudes; they behave well and are keen to have a go. Teachers motivate pupils so well there was very little evidence of reluctant readers and writers. Pupils are often expected to work together and they do so very well at all ages. By the end of Year 6, their negotiating skills are well developed. They can compose poetry in pairs at the computer, for example, very amicably.

80. In the very best lessons learning objectives, pupils' individual targets and marking all come together to maximise achievement. But this is an area where less experienced teachers have yet to learn from their colleagues. While all work is marked, much of marking relates to effort rather than focusing on improvements to content, spellings, grammar or presentation for example. This does not help pupils know how to aim for higher quality in their work. There is also a gap between the use of lesson objectives, targets and marking. Most lessons in English began by reference to learning objectives and they are often re-visited in the best lessons. But often these are really curriculum objectives for a unit of work and have yet to underpin learning at different levels by pupils of different ability.

81. There are many things to celebrate in the provision for English. The school led by the subject leader has already brought about improvements to standards, teaching and learning in English. The way in which pupils' work is valued and the enthusiasm of teachers are the most obvious strengths. Working together, they have the commitment and the capacity to do even better. Teaching and learning are checked by the subject leader who has built up good insights in to the quality of the curriculum. He now needs to focus his attention on making sure all lessons are equal to the best by identifying quite clearly the features of the most effective learning.

MATHEMATICS

82. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects a decline since the 1996 inspection when standards were found to be above average overall. Over the six years since the previous inspection, the standards in mathematics present a 'roller-coaster' picture. This is no doubt in part due to the varying capabilities of the different pupils taking the tests each year but also because of past shortcomings in the school's tracking systems which did not pick up on shortfalls in pupils' learning early enough.

83. The 2001 national test results in mathematics were average in both Years 2 and 6. Furthermore, they were average in relation to those schools with a similar rate of entitlement to free school meals. These results were disappointing for the school, as much work had gone into making changes to the curriculum and teaching quality to assist the process of making inroads into the relatively weak standards that had emerged after the previous inspection.

84. The work to find reasons for the 2001 results continued with renewed urgency at the start of the current school year. Senior managers evaluated individual results carefully to identify trends that worked against better levels of attainment. When the subject leader joined the school after Christmas she brought experience and some fresh ideas to help lift the stalled standards. Those responsible for the management of mathematics have done a good job of making improvement, but some things remain for further work.

85. Inspectors found current standards to be average towards the end of Years 2 and 6. Most of the oldest pupils in school have achieved appropriately given their starting point. However, there is considerable potential in the work of Year 4 and 5 that should result in better standards next year as these pupils are achieving well. Some pupils are reaching high standards; again this is most pronounced in Years 4 and 5. Overall, achievement is satisfactory but there are variations in the rates of progress pupils make, often due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.

86. Teaching and learning are good overall, and at its best it is very good. There has been good impact from the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and all teachers show confidence in planning and delivering it to conform with the guidance. Most pupils are learning successfully in mathematics and many are achieving the levels identified in the Numeracy Strategy for their age. Sharpening up the pace and variety of the mental and oral parts of numeracy hours and improving the way pupils present work to encourage accuracy are the two things that have yet to be given sufficient attention. Three further related aspects of teaching and learning have potential for improvement:

- The indication in planning of the knowledge, skills and understanding to be learned by different groups of pupils.
- The widening of opportunities for pupils to chart how well they are doing and to set targets aimed at improving their learning.
- The use of comments in marking to show how well pupils are doing and what remains for improvement.

Put together, the relative weaknesses in these things mean that the rate of progress made by pupils over the year is often imperfectly charted, so that timely intervention to ensure pupils remain on course to meet their targets is not always forthcoming.

87. In other respects, teaching and learning have a number of good qualities. Basic skills of numeracy are taught well, teachers have good subject knowledge, pupils are managed well and homework is used effectively to consolidate and extend skills and knowledge. Crucially, teachers have good expectations of their pupils, which is shown in some fast paced work and challenging tasks. Pupils return this good quality input by working hard in the main, producing good amounts of work and building skills and knowledge well. There is not much additional support for pupils with learning difficulties in lessons, even though a sizeable proportion of those with specific needs have numeracy as an element of their individual education plans. Nonetheless, these pupils keep up with the other pupils and they make satisfactory progress.

88. The curriculum for mathematics is good; it is broad and well-balanced and mathematical skills and knowledge are used and developed well in subjects such as science, design and technology and history. The use of ICT to do the same is also good, especially in the suite. The assessment of mathematical attainment is effective, though the use of the data produced to track pupils' progress is imperfect. Much data is collected and a start has been made to target setting and tracking but the whole process, along with that for checking and evaluating lessons, is geared more to what has been taught than what has been learned.

89. There is contradictory evidence about the effectiveness of the setting arrangements for mathematics in junior classes. In Year 5, setting is at its most effective and strengths are emerging in Year 4. In Year 5, the lower of the two sets is achieving well, with some pupils already working at level 4 mathematics and one or two at level 5. Present standards in this year group are above average overall, as they are in Year 4. However, in other years the 50:50 split of the pupils into two sets is not working effectively enough. In these year groups, the upper set is generally working at above average levels whilst the lower one is working at below average levels. Not enough pupils in the lower set are working near to the

expected level. Overall, this is giving a 60:40¹ split in attainment, rather than the 80:20 required to match the national average. The school's tracking of learning has not yet identified the reasons for the shortfall, though inspection evidence points to the need to sharpen targets for pupils in the middle attainment group and work to correct the relative shortcomings in teaching identified above.

90. Mathematics is well managed by the subject leader. She has not long been in school but has already made some positive changes to mathematics, including work to make the final, plenary, part of the lesson a more successful conclusion to learning. The subject leader has undertaken some effective monitoring and evaluation of lessons, though the emphasis has been on the teaching input rather than the learning of knowledge, skills and understanding. There is good indication from the improvements already made to mathematics that the subject will continue to advance. The 2003 Year 6 National Curriculum tests have the potential to be the best for a number of years.

SCIENCE

91. The standards achieved by pupils towards the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly average, and satisfactory progress is made by most pupils irrespective of their gender, race or ability. Since the last inspection there have been wide-ranging changes in the school, both in terms of teachers and other staff, and in the ways in which the curriculum is organised and taught. Because of these changes it is not possible to make a fair comparison between standards now and then. Wide fluctuations in pupils' performance from year to year have been a feature of the school's performance, and the latest national test results at the end of Year 6 showed performance to be below average when compared to all schools, including those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school missed reaching its agreed targets in science. In the light of this, the school has looked critically at how it can support the raising of standards in science tests and is embarking on a clear plan of action.

92. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievements in science are broadly average. In Year 1, pupils receive a broad curriculum, which prepares them well for future work in science. Activities are set up to give opportunities to investigate, for example, in finding out about forces, and to answer questions about what they discover. By the end of Year 1 pupils are developing their understanding of forces, and can describe changes caused by pushing and pulling objects. In Year 2, teachers continue to build on investigative skills, and pupils' understanding of scientific concepts is also developed steadily. For example when making electric circuits, or finding out what happens to water when it is made very cold. Their ability to carry out their own investigations, and to understand the importance of ensuring that tests are fair, also continues to develop appropriately.

93. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language, continue to achieve satisfactorily. They have an appropriate understanding of areas of the science curriculum. Pupils' scientific knowledge continue to grow, although their ability to carry out scientific enquiries is not well exploited because of teaching methods and approach and to some extent the time available for practical science work. In some of the upper junior classes, opportunities are missed for pupils to carry out their own practical investigations, and so their ability to discover things for themselves and seek information by first hand experience is limited. By the end of Year 6, pupils know how to set up an investigations because they have been shown how to by their teachers, but are less sure about doing this for themselves. For example, in controlling variables and

¹ 60% achieving the average level or better in mathematics and 40% achieving below this. The national figure is about 80% average and 20% below average.

undertaking fair testing they are very reliant on the teacher's direction. Formal writing-up of experiments demonstrated by the teacher is no substitute for pupils devising and carrying out their own practical investigations, devising their own recording formats and then reporting back their findings, in a variety of ways, to the rest of the class.

94. Throughout the school pupils generally show very good attitudes towards science, particularly when it is presented as practical, investigative activities. In lessons seen in both the infant and junior classes pupils worked well together, sharing, taking turns, and listening sensibly to the opinions of others. These very good attitudes make a significant contribution to pupils' social and personal development. When given these opportunities pupils also develop their language skills well, and most teachers are good at using correct scientific vocabulary, and expecting their pupils to do the same.

95. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. During the inspection some good and very good lessons were observed. Overall standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory as shown in the work in pupils' books and in discussion with pupils. Teachers generally manage their classes well. They expect their pupils to work hard and behave themselves, and the pupils respond well to these expectations. Teachers in all years show good knowledge of the subject. However, occasionally in the upper junior classes it is less confident. They can give straightforward explanations, and present work clearly to pupils of all abilities. In Years 1, 2 and 3 teachers plan their work well and use effective teaching strategies. They have high expectations, and, when marking pupils' work, often add helpful comments on how pupils can improve. Teachers manage their pupils well, so that they work hard and try their best. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher managed her class very effectively. She worked with one group while, at the same time, keeping a watchful eye on the rest of the class. There was a very good working atmosphere, as pupils investigated the forces involved in pushing and pulling a variety of toys. Pupils of all abilities were learning well, such as when one boy tried to decide whether a yo-yo has to be pushed or pulled. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but further development of these is needed, for instance to include more consistently constructive marking, and the setting of targets so that pupils know what they have to aim for and how best to learn. Whilst long-term assessment, such as that carried out at the ends of topics, is carefully done, the more day-to-day aspects of knowing what each pupil needs to do next require further refinement to be fully effective.

96. Some examples were seen during the inspection of teachers using ICT to usefully support scientific work. However, in many classes opportunities are missed when the computers could be used as tools for learning, such as through recording data and presenting results, or by using CD-ROM or the Internet as sources of information for scientific investigation.

97. The school has worked hard to develop environmental science. This is extremely beneficial. It has achieved 'Eco-School' status, and has won a National Environmental teamwork award. The school undertakes a variety of activities to encourage pupils to conserve the environment and resources, to recycle, and make informed decisions about environmental issues. The school grounds have been very well developed to support this work. There are well-maintained pond, bog and flower-growing areas, and the small tree-lined field has been thoughtfully adapted to allow for study of a variety of habitats, while still being used for general play. All these developments make very worthwhile contributions to the science curriculum.

98. The subject leader is experienced, and appropriately qualified. She has worked hard to update documentation, in line with national recommendations and has made sensible choices in the purchasing of new resources. She has sampled the work in pupils' books, and has planned to monitor the results of assessments from this year. She has rightly identified scientific enquiry as an area for development. No time has been allocated to monitor teaching and learning directly throughout the school, and this is an area in need of attention.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Standards towards the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average overall, and pupils make good progress in all years. Judgements have been based on examples of pupils' work, displays around the school, and discussions with teachers and pupils as no lessons were observed during the inspection. At the school's last inspection standards were judged to be average, and there has therefore been good improvement since then. The good quality and range of work in the subject is very well used to produce good quality displays in all areas. These displays show good skills development, have considerable visual impact, and make a significant contribution to the positive learning environment in school

100. Towards the end of Year 2 pupils have gained experience of a wide range of media and techniques. Displays show good quality examples of painting, collage, charcoal, and observational drawing. Pupils have learnt to mix colours and to test different colour and shading effects, for instance in work on cross-sections of different fruits. They have drawn portraits and experimented with showing different facial expressions. Examples of such work are displayed with great care, adding brightness and interest to classrooms and corridors.

101. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their artistic skills at a good pace. They look in close detail at the work of famous artists, such as Paul Klee, and produce work in a similar style, based on their understanding of the artist's techniques. A group of older pupils spoke to inspectors animatedly about the good opportunities they have to explore options in the design phase and make their own decisions when creating art. They continue to develop their skills through a range of art and design activities, such as repeating patterns skilfully when printing or in creating collages. They use their sketchbooks regularly to practice and refine techniques such as shading, trying out patterns and symbols. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have developed a good understanding of how materials and processes can be manipulated in different ways to make images and artefacts for a variety of artistic purposes. Their work on figurative and abstract art, for instance, based around portraits, shows careful use of materials and good exploration of visual ideas.

102. The curriculum is enriched through the provision of after school art clubs, where pupils can further develop their skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Work by visiting artists, such as the recent work on willow weaving, and activities with local art galleries also make worthwhile contributions to assisting pupils' good achievements.

103. Examples of pupils' previous work, displays, and discussions with the subject leader, and with pupils, all indicate that teaching is good overall. The range of skills taught, and the high profile given to art and design in school indicate the good standards of teaching at all stages. Pupils' work shows that activities are planned to give as wide a variety of experience as possible, and to use the full range of materials and techniques. Pupils with learning difficulties are fully included in the work, and there are good links with work in other subjects such as design and technology.

104. The subject leader works hard to ensure that art and design makes a high profile contribution to the everyday work of the school. She has monitored teachers' planning, and work seen in displays around the school, but has not been given opportunities to work alongside colleagues, or to monitor teaching and learning. The curriculum has been updated in line with official guidelines, and also through careful use of some aspects of a commercial scheme. The school has a good collection of art and design resources, including examples of art and design from a variety of cultures, and poster packs to stimulate pupils' interest. Resources are well organised, and readily accessible to staff. There is good capacity for the subject to continue being a strength.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve average standards. There has been a decline in standards since the school's last inspection in 1996, when standards were judged to be above average. In 2000, a new curriculum was introduced and this has set out very clearly what is to be learnt in design and technology and what the average attainment is for pupils of different ages. The school has introduced the new requirements well. All areas of the curriculum are given appropriate coverage, and pupils achieve appropriately in all aspects of design and technology as they move through the school.

106. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are given a range of experiences and use a variety of tools, materials and techniques. By the end of Year 2, they are able to develop their own ideas, through drawing, modelling and discussion, and can select and use appropriate tools and materials. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils had visited the local park and looked at play equipment. They then discussed how equipment was made, its shape, and the materials used. They went on to test different shapes for strength, using their own ideas for joining and fixing materials. With the teacher's help they explored the different shapes, sharing and discussing their ideas sensibly. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, enjoyed the practical tasks and made good progress.

107. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a widening range of activities. All aspects of the curriculum are given proper coverage, and pupils develop their skills of planning, making and evaluating appropriately. In Year 3, for example, they learn how the different ingredients in a sandwich can affect its taste and texture, and how these factors contribute to a healthy diet. They enjoyed tasting the different sandwiches, and worked well to record their findings on a data collection sheet. The activity made good links with aspects of ICT and science work. In Year 5, pupils learn to use a range of tools safely and correctly. Pupils were planning to make toys with moving parts incorporating a cam mechanism. They worked purposefully, and enjoyed their tasks, showing appropriate understanding of issues such as overcoming practical problems to make their toys work effectively. They also understood the importance of evaluating their work, in terms of the mechanisms and materials used.

108. Teachers are aware of the learning requirements of pupils with learning difficulties and those in the early stages of using English as an additional language and ensure that they have equal opportunities in design and technology lessons. There is no significant variation in the achievements of these pupils to the rest of the class in the subject.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers show appropriate subject knowledge, and have a good understanding of health and safety issues, for instance in the use of tools. They manage their pupils well, and have high expectations of both work and behaviour, and their pupils respond well to this. The basic skills of using tools and materials are well taught in a progressive way at all stages in the school. Procedures for weighing up how well pupils are doing in design and technology are informal at present, and,

although teachers know their pupils well, they do not use day-to-day assessments in their planning of what comes next. Pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for and respond well to the subject, particularly when it involves practical activities. They are fully included in all aspects of the work. Practical group activities make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development, although more systematic provision of opportunities to discuss work and ideas together would lead to better development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

110. The subject leader is new to the post, but has made a positive and enthusiastic start. She has monitored teachers' planning, and discussed aspects of the subject with colleagues. So far she has not had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning through working alongside colleagues and this has been identified as the next step for improvement. The school has sufficient resources for the subject, and they are well organised. Appropriate attention is given to the safe use of tools and materials, and teachers are careful to remind their pupils of the importance of handling them properly.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Attainment in geography is average for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6, but there are significant differences in the quality of work achieved by pupils in Years 3 to 6. The main strength of teaching and learning in the junior classes is Year 5, where standards are high. The lack of time given to the subject in Year 6 and the limited range of work covered are hampering better achievement. Since the last inspection, standards have been broadly maintained but are no longer 'comfortably achieved' as was reported at that time.

112. The teaching and learning in most lessons observed were of good and, sometimes, of very good quality. In the good lessons, teachers demonstrated a secure understanding of subject vocabulary, used geographical terms appropriately and naturally, and this enabled and enhanced successful learning. In Year 1, pupils walked to a local park and in making a map of their journey, noted 'attractive features' of the locality, such as the swimming baths and the canal area. Back in school, photographs of local amenities were selected for tourist information. Higher attaining pupils began to use the phrase 'attractive feature' when talking about their work. In Year 2, teachers patiently made sure that pupils could differentiate between the 'human' and 'physical features' of a seaside town. In Year 5, pupils comparing the human environment of different mountain ranges were encouraged by their teachers to use appropriate terminology to describe their observations, and in preparation for fieldwork on rivers of differing sizes, learned to identify *delta*, *confluence*, *source* and *meander*. Although pupils in one class in Year 4 were taught successfully to understand the meaning of *local*, *national* and *international* through clear and constant reference to suitable maps, the pupils in the parallel class were not helped sufficiently to reach a clear understanding. The terms were not defined precisely and a national map was not available for class use. As a result, progress within their subsequent work on locating news stories was limited.

113. Teachers are generally good at helping pupils to find and use a variety of sources of information. In Year 5, skills are very thoroughly taught and practised to a good depth of study during a residential field trip to Buxton, in the Peak District. Younger pupils in Year 2 travel to the coast to study a contrasting locality. In Year 4, pupils visit Manchester airport for their work on transport systems. In Year 6, pupils use a good range of secondary photographic evidence to begin to find out about the climate, landscape and employment opportunities in St Lucia, a Caribbean island. They hear evidence on audiotape of the experiences of a St. Lucian resident. In Year 3, however, insufficient links are made with the local environment to extend mapping skills and identify examples of the difference between villages, towns and cities.

114. In almost all lessons, pupils are managed very well, they are able to give their work their full attention and this adds significantly to the success of the lesson. Where teaching is very good, the teacher's enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils, who become exceptionally attentive and make very good strides in their learning. No time is wasted as the lesson deftly moves through the learning programme and a lot of work is achieved in the time available. This was particularly evident in Year 5, where groups of pupils researched a large amount of information on different mountain ranges. This extended their understanding well in the time available and they were able to present their knowledge confidently to the class. The quality of the final section in lessons varies between classes. Seldom is there time for pupils to reflect upon what they have learnt and in this way deepen their thinking as they learn *from* and not just *about* geography. In one of the Year 6 classes, information gleaned from a good range of photographs of St Lucia was usefully drawn together through a very productive question and answer session. The extra emphasis gave pupils opportunity to consider wider cultural aspects. In the parallel Year 6 class, the teacher asked questions of the pupils but failed to take pupils' answers forward to a suitable conclusion by extending their answers through further questions. Opportunities were missed to extend the pupils' learning further and giving time for their opinions to be fully explored and to develop powers of reasoning for example to their full capacity.

115. Teachers are aware of the learning requirements of pupils with learning difficulties and those in the early stages of using English as an additional language. They are supported as far as possible with, for example, extra help with literacy skills and the use of questioning tailored to their needs. However, the lack of learning support staff in most junior classes means that these pupils do not always get the extra practise they need in discussion with an adult. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language work successfully with the support teacher employed by the local education authority in order to secure their understanding of the technical words they need to learn.

116. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the national requirements for geography but is a part-time member of staff and this limits the pace of progress in raising standards across all classes. Clear plans are set for each year group but not always fully completed. A review of pupils' work has indicated the lack of consistency in teaching within the subject but there have been no opportunities to observe lessons to identify or share features of good practice. The subject leader is working to extend resources for the subject where there are shortages, such as in the range of maps and aerial photographs available to teachers. A clear assessment system has been set out for teachers to use. However, practice in charting how well pupils acquire key skills and meet the standards expected, is inconsistent. This is a shortcoming that further guidance could help improve.

HISTORY

117. Standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6 and not as high as they were at the last inspection. There has been a reduction in the depth of study due to the priority of time given by the school to lessons in literacy and numeracy. The subject is taught in alternate half terms and this meant that no lessons could be observed. Inspection judgements are based on an analysis of teachers' plans, on pupils' past work and on discussions with pupils and the subject leader.

118. By the end of Year 2, the pupils know that changes take place over time, such as in the style of equipment used in the home, and have a suitable knowledge and understanding of significant events and famous people from the past. They have learned about the devastating effects of the Great Fire of London, for example, and the importance of Florence Nightingale to nursing. The higher attaining pupils begin to analyse events from different standpoints, as was evident when an infant pupil wrote of the Great Fire, 'The fire was good

for something. It killed the plague and that was a bad disease.' This skill is taken forward in the junior classes and is a strength evident within the pupils' written work and in discussions with pupils in Year 6. For example, during their work on Ancient Greece, pupils in Year 6 discovered that boys might be educated but not girls. In discussion, they could put forward possible reasons for this situation and maturely discuss the possible thoughts and feelings of the adults and the girls and boys. Written work shows that pupils are familiar with considering the viewpoints of both rich and poor people, for example, in Tudor times, Victorian and in the 1930's in Britain. Diaries are written from the viewpoint of a Spanish sailor involved in the Armada by pupils in Year 3, of a worker in the 1930's Jarrow march by pupils in Year 4 and of a slave and a master in Ancient Greece by pupils in Year 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils show that they have a suitable understanding of the chronology of periods studied and the key events and people. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language, show evidence of suitable progress over time in their subject knowledge.

119. Teachers' planning and pupils' past work indicates that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory overall and good in Year 5. The school strives to make the subject lively, interesting and relevant to pupils. Pupils enjoy history and speak with interest and enthusiasm about their work. Learning is enhanced by the provision of a good range of visits to places of historical interest, such as Larkhill Place Museum, where pupils in Year 2 re-enact life in a Victorian classroom, and Bramhall Hall where pupils in Year 3 view the features of the building and dress up in Tudor costume. Pupils in Year 5 learn from first-hand experience that archaeological digs provide an important source of information about the past when teachers provided a simulated 'dig' in school. Items linked to a Viking warrior were unearthed from the school sandpit and pupils worked to piece together the life of 'Ericbloodaxe'. In Year 5, pupils generally produce detailed and informative accounts of their learning within written work but, with the exception of higher attaining pupils, the work of pupils in other year groups in Years 3 to 6 is often too brief. Relatively little work is accumulated over the year in some classes and good opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills further. In marking pupils' written work, teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to highlighting successful analysis and setting pointers for future improvements.

120. Useful links are made with other subjects to extend the pupils' learning further. Pupils in Year 2 link their work on the history of the seaside with their work in geography. Timelines are routinely compiled, adding to pupils' skills in mathematics. Research within books and other texts gives purpose and practice to reading comprehension skills. Few opportunities are found to use ICT for either research or for recording evidence. Work in art and design is extended through the study of paintings made in the past, such as portraits of Tudor monarchs. This is a positive feature.

121. The subject leader is effective and works to ensure that the curriculum, laid out clearly within annual plans for each year group, is put into practice through checking teachers' planning and a selection of pupils' work. She attends occasional courses on teaching history and shares ideas with subject leaders working in other local schools. A start has been made on observing teaching within lessons in order to share good practice and raise standards further. Assessment systems are left to individual teachers to devise and are insufficiently linked to National Curriculum key skills and objectives. This means that work is not always matched to pupils' prior attainment and their learning needs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are achieving well. At the time of the previous inspection, ICT was a subject with some strengths, though levels of resourcing were not ideal. The school has made good improvement to the subject since then, despite staffing difficulties and a large turnover of teachers. Today, staff confidence has been built to good levels and the use of computers to assist learning has accelerated well.

123. Standards are generally good across the different aspects of the subject, though because of problems with the broadband connection to the Internet, pupils are not achieving quite as well in this element. However, the necessary basic steps are covered well and pupils have good knowledge of the power and speed of communication given by computers. An area of strength is that of the computer control and monitoring of processes and machines. There is good software available that simulates, for example, the phasing of temporary traffic lights at road works. Thus, during the inspection Year 6 worked to ensure that collisions could not occur as they programmed the lights to change colour, wait, and then change colour again in a logical sequence. Higher attaining pupils worked to added advantage on the sound effects to go with the events shown on screen.

124. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who learn English as an additional language, make good progress in the subject as they move from class to class. The work is well focused on the building of knowledge and skills and learning is good. Pupils are given ample opportunities to show independence and initiative in learning. For example, some Year 4 pupils sought out a chart of fonts to identify which would be most suitable for use in the PowerPoint presentation that they were developing in the lesson. This was an independent move that was not anticipated by the teacher. In general, pupils work hard in lessons and produce good amounts of work. They concentrate well, behaviour is good and relationships are harmonious.

125. The quality of teaching is good in ICT. Staff have good subject knowledge and confidence, they make effective use of computers and software, manage their pupils well and have good expectations. These good expectations are not always well represented in lesson planning. The identification of the precise skills and knowledge to be learned in lessons is inconsistent. Instead, much planning focuses on what the teacher will do, rather than what pupils of different abilities will learn. In addition, not enough opportunity is found for pupils to self-evaluate their progress at the end of lessons by considering whether they have achieved the learning objectives set for them.

126. The cross-curricular use of ICT is improving. Some good links were observed during the inspection, such as Year 6 literacy work on weather poems, Year 1 work on the *oa* and *ow* sounds in spelling and reading and the work seen in the scrutiny of other evidence on music, mathematics, science and history. Much of this work takes place in the ICT suite and in Years 3 to 6, the computers outside the suite are not utilised as much. There is insufficient use made of ICT in science and this is a missed opportunity to promote independent research.

127. ICT is well managed by the knowledgeable and hard working subject leader. He is determined to take on an increasing role in the monitoring and evaluation of learning in lessons and to improve the assessment of skills and knowledge in the subject. These are the right priorities to continue the good work in making improvements.

MUSIC

128. Standards are above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The strengths identified in the previous inspection have been sustained. The very clear and committed direction given to the subject by the subject leader enables all teachers to teach with confidence. Peripatetic, specialist teachers make a significant impact upon the pupils' instrumental work, such as the support they give to talented older pupils learning to play violin and guitar. The subject leader and another colleague support pupils well in learning the skills of recorder playing. The subject leader also leads a school choir that any junior-age pupil can join. The choir's high level of performance has been well recognised, as they are to perform at the baton ceremony for the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in the near future. As a result of the wide diversity of musical experiences the pupils achieve to a good level throughout the school. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those whose first home language is not English, enjoy their music making. This is a reflection of the school's positive policy of giving opportunities for all to be involved in its musical activities. These opportunities make an important contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils.

129. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. Lessons are planned thoughtfully. They are well resourced. Teachers take care to devise tasks that are interesting and enjoyable. Correct musical language is used by all teachers from an early stage in the pupils learning. As a result pupils are proficient in the use of musical terms by the time that they are able to join in many of the extra curricular activities. The pupil's interest results in good behaviour in lessons and very good attitudes to learning.

130. The pupils benefit from working with the subject leader in their music making because of her very good expertise. They are able to pitch their voices expertly at different levels through using words such as 'thunder' and 'pitter patter' as they compose their own rhythms. This is a precursor to using instruments equally effectively. Some pupils are composers whilst the others become competent appraisers as the composers respond to weather picture cards in small groups. The rhythm of rain is very successfully captured by pupils who have chosen a rainstick, a Chinese bell tree and a swanee whistle to capture the sounds effectively. The skills of using instruments and voices are further developed in Year 2. The pupils focus on duration as they use their voices to demonstrate the high quality representation of *loud* and *quiet*, *fast* and *slow* and *high* and *low* by chanting 'Slowly, slowly creeps the snail.' The high expectations of the teacher are met when instruments are gathered by the pupils. The teacher chooses one pupil from each table to be the leader and to start the distribution of the instruments to other pupils in their group. This means that the pace is quick and learning gains in momentum. Instruments are played with good control. Good measures of expertise are demonstrated as the pupils play the different lengths of sounds. The class teacher then moves learning forward by introducing the idea of playing instruments to musical notation that she refers to as 'symbols'. The teacher holds the symbols and although there is a rather ragged response initially the performance improves as pupils refine their composition.

131. In Year 3 learning is again advanced as pupils begin to understand the structure in music through using a repeating pattern. The teacher uses the correct musical language of *ostinato* so that the pupils are clear about what they are learning. The pupils watch a video of insects and animals and then make personal choices of instruments to competently describe them through producing the correct musical patterns. In Year 4 the pupils listen and appraise a piece of modern classical music. Britten's, 'In freezing winter night'. It is a complex piece of music that generates a high level of pupil interest. There is a very mature debate before they illustrate their thoughts on the music. The accuracy with which the pupils define the moods of the music is possible because of the pupils' thoughtful attention it. The learning that has been

built up so carefully is rewarded with the pupil's positive responses to music making in Year 6. In Year 6 many skills are brought together. The pupils accurately identify the difference between minor and major scales in music after watching a video extract from the film 'The sound of music.' The teacher usefully illustrates the difference with the glockenspiel before the pupils confirm their understanding in their singing. They join in with a tape paying thoughtful attention to pitch in the song. Dynamics in the use of the voice is achieved as the pupils move up and down the major and minor scales accurately. The challenge of singing a difficult song is met as the pupils improve as performers.

132. The subject leader who has made available the support and confidence that teachers require to help them teach music effectively very well manages music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. In 1996 there were strengths in physical education including standards and progress. These have been sustained and standards remain above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This good attainment applies to all the strands of the subject observed and the school's records of achievement in swimming show that most pupils attain the desirable 25 metres distance by the end of Year 4. Pupils achieve appropriately as they move through the school.

134. Within this positive picture of standards and progress, there is one area where improvement has yet to be made. This concerns pupils' self-evaluation of performance. Some good examples were observed, including a Year 1 lesson to produce sequence of movement that included wide and narrow or high and low jumps. Here, the pupils evaluated their work as they collaborated in pairs and improvement in skills followed as they worked energetically to mirror the leader's movements when travelling across the floor. However, in many lessons, the teacher makes most of the evaluation by commenting on observed movement, rather than giving pupils the chance to talk about what they are doing or have seen and to make suggestions about how the performance can be improved.

135. Pupils work hard in physical education lessons, they are well behaved and the good level of relationships shows clearly when pupils work together in teams and groups. A Year 4 lesson on shot-putt skills was a very good example of pupils showing independence in their work and initiative as they set up the area for the activity. They found ways to throw their beanbag shots in safety and to measure the distance accurately without reference to the teacher. Separate groups of pupils were well dispersed around the field but all worked in safety and with good effort.

136. Teaching quality is good and enables pupils to learn effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the pace of learning is brisk and the management of pupils is effective. In general, there are good expectations of what will be achieved and staff use a good variety of methods in lessons. Pupils respond by working energetically, behaving well and showing good levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work.

137. There is a good curriculum for physical education although the subject leader is working to streamline the scheme of work into a more systematic development of skills and knowledge. All aspects of work are included; athletics, dance and outdoor pursuits. There is a very good programme of activities outside lessons and good links with different sports organisations in the community. The after-school training that takes place on three evenings each week is a particularly successful venture.

138. The subject is managed effectively by the subject leader. She has not long taken over the responsibility for the subject, but is already working on the simplification of the physical education scheme of work and making the assessment of knowledge and skills more consistent. She has not had opportunities to monitor and evaluate work in lessons and this is a missed opportunity to check on the rate of progress being made by boys and girls in different age groups.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. The provision for religious education was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and this level of provision has been sustained. Pupils' current attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 broadly meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and pupils respond well in lessons. However, pupils' achievements in religious education are limited because of the small amount of time dedicated to the subject. The school has yet to implement the latest guidance on the time required for religious education as set out in the locally agreed syllabus.

140. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to learn from religion as they explore the concept of 'belonging'. The teacher used the story of Pocahontas effectively as a starting point to explore feelings of separation. In response the pupils made a good attempt to explore how they would feel if separated from their family. They build on their feelings for others as they write a 'Get well' letter to a friend. Pupils learn about religion as they identify signs and symbols and share in the story of the first Christmas and how Jews celebrate New Year. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils listened to the story of the Good Samaritan and demonstrated that they understood why Jesus had told the story. The pupils worked together in small groups and negotiated roles and pose as they created 'still pictures' from the story. Pupils presented their pictures to others and responded, by sharing their thought and feelings, in character when asked to do so. This lesson moved at a brisk pace and much was achieved. However the time at 30 minutes was too short and did not allow the teacher to explore ideas in depth or develop peer and personal evaluation. The lesson did however provide a good opportunity to promote purposeful talk.

141. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 follow the two strands of religious education but much of their work centres on learning about religion rather than learning from religion. In Year 3 pupils were introduced to the symbols of Sikhism and demonstrated interest in the topic. But some of the presentation was rushed and lacking in detail as the teacher seemed to lack confidence in the subject matter. However in Year 3 there was also evidence in pupils' books of some interesting work based on exploring religion in the neighbourhood of the school. In Year 4, in a good lesson pupils explored the questions, 'Who is my neighbour?' and 'Love your neighbour'. This approach based on a questioning proved successful in opening up the discussion so that all could contribute. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of just how difficult it is to 'Love your neighbour'. There was very thoughtful discussion about the need to respect everyone - even if you don't like him or her. Pupils demonstrated good understanding of concepts such as equal rights, fairness, and tolerance. Pupils in Year 5 explored the nature of God through a Hindu story. This was also used effectively as a starting point for written work as pupils wrote a story in the role of a parent to explain God to a child. Overall, not very much recorded work was seen in Year 6 pupils' books particularly those of the more able pupils. Some of the questions and responses seemed simplistic. For example, What is a mosque? And the reply from an able Year 6 pupil was 'A mosque is where Muslims go to pray' Much better work was produced following a visit from a member of the Islamic community when pupils had good opportunities to question her about how she practised her religion.

142. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but are hampered by time constraints. The school has adopted nationally produced guidelines but has yet to customise these to meet the needs of the school. There is a staff resource area with books and artefacts but teacher's subject knowledge and confidence in dealing with the subject varies. This has considerable impact on the detailed information and explanation they provide for pupils and the quality and openness of questioning. This was particularly evident in a lesson on Sikhism. In pupils' books words such as Buddhism and Diwali were frequently spelt incorrectly and no attempt appeared to be made to rectify these errors. Teachers often use story as the basis for the lesson and good story telling such as in Year 2 and Year 5 meant that pupils became highly motivated and interested in the topic. There was also effective use of question and answer sessions, for example in Year 4 to promote knowledge and understanding, and reflection and personal response. But overall these last two qualities are less well promoted. One reason for this is undoubtedly the shortage of time but the result is that there is not enough opportunity in many lessons for pupils to demonstrate learning *from* religion and to reflect on what this means to their own lives. Pupils' tasks are satisfactory overall and are good when oral tasks are provided. Teachers and support staff make sure pupils with special educational or language needs pupils do at least as well as the rest of the class. For example, they take care to place them in mixed groups for role-play where they can work alongside class-mates who can assist on any technical vocabulary if required. Marking tends to relate more to literacy skills and is not charting pupils' developing knowledge, understanding or skills in religious education.

143. Pupil response is good. They are interested and want to discuss ideas. They are sometimes slow to get started especially when questions require only 'yes/no' answers. Or when teachers ask a second question before they have had time to consider and respond to the first. Once engaged they show the ability to see things from different perspectives, are realistic and optimistic for the future. These skills in pupils could be so much more exploited.

144. The provision for religious education is ripe for improvement. The subject leader is busy developing a new system for assessing how well pupils are achieving. However, it is essential that school managers review the amount of time available for religious education and when it occurs during the school day. There is currently no effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure breadth and depth in learning about and from religion and this is a missed opportunity.