

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NETHERBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Netherton

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103824

Headteacher: Mrs J Atherton

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Cox  
25074

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 246321

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Chester Road  
Netherton  
Dudley

Postcode: DY2 9RZ

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Loftus

Date of previous inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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25074	Mrs J Cox	Registered inspector		Characteristics of the school Results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
19697	Mrs J Moorhouse	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and careers
26945	Mrs S Gatehouse	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	The quality and range of opportunity for learning
27369	Mrs C Powell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and Design Design and Technology	
25771	Mr P Sandall	Team inspector	Science Information Communication Technology Physical Education	
2818	Mr G Warner	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs English as an Additional Language English Religious Education	
8781	Mrs C Lythe	Team inspector	Geography History	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a larger than average community primary school situated in Netherton on the southern outskirts of central Dudley. It caters for pupils aged between 3 and 11. The school is popular and oversubscribed in the infants. Pupils who attend the school live locally and come from some private housing but mainly from an estate of local authority housing which surrounds the school. This is an area of social disadvantage in relation to local and national comparisons. Most pupils are from white European backgrounds but a few have a different heritage, for example Indian, Pakistani or Black Caribbean. There are 10 pupils whose mother tongue is not English and two pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. Two refugee families have settled into the community and two children from Somalia and Poland are currently being integrated into the school. There are 492 pupils on roll, including 90 children attending part time in the nursery. Children's attainment on entry into the nursery is below average. About 18 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is broadly average when compared to other primary schools. Some 22 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is average. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school's improving results in national tests earned it a Department for Education Achievement Award in 2001.

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

Netherbrook is a very good school, which is giving pupils a very good education. Pupils are encouraged to enjoy their work but they are also challenged to do their best. Standards are higher than you would normally see in similar schools and pupils achieve very well. This is due to the very good quality of teaching and high expectations of all staff working in the school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and precise procedures support all aspects of the school's work very well. The learning environment is impressive and reflects the excellent relationships and values, which the school promotes. The school is always looking for ways to improve its work. It provides very good value for money.

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

- It helps pupils of all abilities to make very good progress and to achieve results that are above average in national tests when they are eleven years of age.
- The school uses the results of tests and assessments very well to set targets for pupil improvement.
- It provides very high standards of teaching. Teachers are very enthusiastic, hard working and knowledgeable and together with the support staff work well as a team.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development fosters the excellent relationships and the very positive attitudes, behaviour and personal development of all pupils.
- The headteacher is an excellent leader and is well supported by governors and senior staff in managing the school and planning for the future.

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

- There are no key issues for the school to address. Minor issues are identified for improvement in the report and these will form the basis of the governing body's action plan.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When it was inspected last in June 2000, Netherbrook was found to have serious weaknesses in the checking of its performance, which resulted in pockets of unsatisfactory teaching. Since then there has been very good improvement in many areas. Results achieved by pupils in national tests at the age of seven and eleven have risen considerably, as have the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. There is monitoring of all areas of the curriculum and very good subject management as a result of staff training. The quality of teaching and learning is now very good and the unsatisfactory

teaching seen in Years 3 and 6 has been eliminated due to staff changes. There has been significant improvement in the leadership and management of the school. The roles of the deputy head and the governing body have been revised and restructured and all staff and governors are very involved in evaluating and improving all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and motivates all staff and pupils to do their best and this means that everyone is dedicated and determined to succeed. The school is in an excellent position to improve further.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	B	B
Mathematics	D	D	A	A
Science	C	C	B	B

**Key**

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

Children enter the nursery with below average skills when compared to children of a similar age. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and the majority attain the early learning goals (the nationally expected standards) in all areas of learning.

Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 pupils attained average results in reading and mathematics and above average results in writing in the 2002 national tests. Standards seen during the inspection confirm that by the age of seven, pupils attain above average standards in reading and mathematics and well above average standards in writing.

Pupils' achievement in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is very good. Standards at the end of Year 6 are much better than at the time of the last inspection as a result of improved teaching, monitoring and subject leadership. This is confirmed by the very good and improving results in national tests. The school sets challenging targets and it always meets these and often exceeds them. This is mostly due to the consistently very good and sometimes excellent teaching seen in junior classes.

Standards seen during the inspection confirm the 2002 national test results and indicate standards in writing and mathematics are well above those usually achieved by Year 6 pupils. Pupils achieve above average standards in reading and science. The outstanding quality of the teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the challenge presented to higher attaining pupils in particular enables them to achieve the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who have English as an additional language achieve very well in class lessons because of the high quality support they receive from teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils look forward to their lessons and work extremely hard. They admire, trust and respect the adults who work with them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. They are very well behaved in lessons and around the school. There have been no exclusions for the last twelve years.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility. Older pupils play an important part in the school's day-to-day routines. Relationships across the school are excellent.
Attendance	Well above average. Pupils are very keen to come to school and arrive on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Very good and excellent teaching was seen in all parts of the school. Teachers have high expectations and this is reflected in the challenging activities that are presented to pupils. Higher attaining pupils make very good gains in their learning, which is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, which found that this group of pupils was not being challenged enough. Teachers give pupils space to think things through and to have a go at solving problems independently before intervening at suitable moments with well-focused questions, which spark their thinking further. Pupils' self-evaluation of their own and others' learning plays a major part in all lessons. This aspect makes pupils think carefully about how they have approached their work as well as the outcomes. Teachers' marking is detailed and gives pupils very clear guidance on how to improve. Very good assessment procedures have been developed to identify quickly the levels pupils are working at and to plan work to challenge and extend their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given very effective help in lessons and the support is focused precisely on what needs to be done to enable these pupils to achieve the targets identified in their individual education plans.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a rich curriculum that is broad and enhanced by very good links with the local community. The school's strategy for literacy is very good and for numeracy it is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs in lessons. Individual education plans have improved considerably since the last inspection.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made for the small number of pupils who have English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual development in assemblies and in lessons. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils very well. It places great importance on creating a calm yet purposeful atmosphere. It has very good systems for assessing and monitoring how well pupils do in their work.



Parents have very positive views of the school. The school has good links with parents and provides them with useful information, some of which could be presented in a more attractive and interesting way.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and fosters high expectations from staff, governors, pupils and parents. The deputy headteacher, senior staff and subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very supportive and fulfil their statutory responsibilities very effectively. They have a very good appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor the work of the school closely to help identify areas for improvement and raise standards further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has comprehensive systems for evaluating its own performance and putting into place effective strategies for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is very good and makes sure that the priorities for improvement are fully supported. The school considers the principles of best value very carefully when planning and reviewing spending.

The school has a very good number of teachers and teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum and pupils' needs. All staff work very well together and are a dedicated and enthusiastic team totally committed to providing the best they can for all pupils. The accommodation is very good and kept in an immaculate condition by the caretaker and the cleaning staff. Resources for learning are good in most subjects.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like going to school and make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• They would feel very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small number of parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• A small number of parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with parents' positive comments. In the opinion of the inspectors the school provides a suitable amount of homework and the provision of extra-curricular activities is impressive.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 There has been significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection and overall they are now above those expected by the end of Year 6. There has been good improvement in English, science, art, geography and music and very good improvement in mathematics. Standards are still well above average in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 6 and standards have been maintained in design and technology, history and physical education. Achievement by all pupils is very good. This includes higher attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and the small number of pupils who have English as an additional language. Netherbrook received a national award in 2001 as a result of the sustained improvement in national tests. The trend of improvement has exceeded that found nationally.

2 Children enter the nursery with below average ability when compared to children of a similar age. They make very good progress in the nursery class and good progress in the reception classes and by the end of the reception year reach the expected standard for children of their age. They attain above the expected levels in their creative and physical development as a result of the very good provision in these areas of learning. Good progress is made in personal, social and emotional development and children play very co-operatively in lessons or when playing outside.

3 In national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 pupils reached the expected standard in reading and mathematics. They attained above average standards in writing. Teacher assessments show that pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in science. Inspection evidence shows that standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in writing, reading, mathematics and science. Standards have risen considerably in the last three years, particularly in mathematics. Pupils make very good progress as a result of improved teaching, accurate assessment and much improved leadership by subject co-ordinators. The school is particularly successful in making sure that more pupils achieve well at the expected level. This gives them a good base on which to build during their time in the juniors. Higher attaining pupils are presented with high levels of challenge so that they attain high standards. Unusually boys have performed better than girls in reading and writing over the last three years but all pupils achieve well in comparison to their earlier attainment.

4 Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen dramatically since 1998 and national test results in 2002 in English and science were above average when compared to schools nationally and to schools that have a similar intake. Pupils attained well above average results in mathematics when compared nationally and with similar schools. A greater number of Year 6 pupils than usual attained the higher level 5 in all three subjects as a result of improved teaching, monitoring and subject leadership. Boys, in particular made dramatic leaps in test results in English and mathematics in 2002 national tests. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when higher attaining pupils were not being challenged enough. Teachers' very high expectations and the high degree of challenge presented in lessons, especially in Years 5 and 6 are having a considerable influence on raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress.

5 Inspection findings for the current Year 6 match the 2002 test scores and recognise the considerable improvement in standards in writing and mathematics since the last inspection. Challenging targets set in agreement with the local education authority in 2002 were exceeded in English and mathematics. Similar targets have been set for 2003, which is

realistic as there are more pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6. Nevertheless, all pupils achieve very well.

6 Year 6 pupils listen carefully and talk confidently about their work using a wide vocabulary to express their point of view. They read widely and discuss their favourite books and authors with enthusiasm. They possess all the necessary skills to extract information from a text, but during the inspection, had few opportunities to use the school library for independent research. Writing is of a high standard and pupils write in an impressive number of different genres. Pupils present their work very well, taking care with spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Pupils in Year 6 have very good computational skills and use ICT very proficiently. They have a very good understanding of concepts such as percentages. They reason well and can apply their mathematics in real situations. In science, there has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection in June 2000. Standards, which were broadly average then, have risen and are now above national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is true both for pupils attaining the expected level and those who achieve beyond this. Pupils have more opportunity for scientific investigation (although it could be better still), and the quality of teaching has improved considerably.

7 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards achieving the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They achieve very well, relative to their lower starting point. The very effective systems for identifying the needs of these pupils enable the co-ordinator to define relevant targets and support, both in lessons and in small groups outside normal lessons. A significant factor in the progress pupils make is the high quality support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

8 The small number of pupils whose mother tongue is not English, including two pupils who are refugees, make very good progress with learning and using English due to the very good help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

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

9 Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are interested in what is being taught and enjoy coming to school. They rise to the challenge when teaching is demanding and enjoy practical tasks. This situation is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when pupils' attitudes were said to be good. Pupils' very positive attitudes were noted in virtually all lessons and this enhanced their learning. Pupils in Year 2 entered enthusiastically and confidently into a role-play as part of a history lesson. They are capable of working independently and concentrating on tasks. Inspectors saw notable examples of concentrated work by pupils in Year 5 working on writing complex sentences and Year 6 pupils working on a probability investigation in a mathematics lesson. Pupils in Year 2 were seen handling equipment and resources sensibly during a design and technology lesson and confidently making decisions on the best methods of joining together a variety of materials. A good example of boys and girls working together co-operatively, helping each other and taking turns, was seen during an ICT lesson in Year 5. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree their child likes school and the inspection findings confirm their views.

10 At the time of the last inspection behaviour throughout the school was good. This situation has improved and inspectors saw consistently very good behaviour in the classroom, in the playground and in the dining hall. The very good classroom behaviour had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected from the time they start school and meet those standards consistently, including moving around the school very sensibly even when they are unsupervised. A significant

majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that behaviour in the school is good. There have been no exclusions for the last twelve years.

11 Pupils respond willingly to opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. The majority of pupils have responsibilities in their classrooms and for keeping shared areas tidy. Some classes have a rota of 'class helpers' and all, including the youngest children, have an opportunity to be dinner register monitor. Older pupils have duties and responsibilities around the school and pupils' very good sense of responsibility is carried through into the quality of their work. Responsibilities include preparing the hall and music for assemblies, acting as librarians during lunchtime and assisting the lunchtime supervisors in the dining hall and in the playground. In the library, pupils take responsibility for issuing book using the school's computerised system. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and handle them reliably and efficiently. Inspectors found pupils to be polite, friendly and helpful.

12 Relationships in the school are excellent and a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when relationships were very good. Pupils were seen to have respect for the feelings and values of others and this accords with one of the school's aims. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrated a respect for items from religious faiths. No incidences of unkind behaviour were seen between pupils and they understand the consequences of unkindness or bullying. Bullying is discussed during personal, social and health education lessons and in assemblies and pupils know to approach staff or, in the case of younger pupils, their older 'buddy'. Older pupils were seen helping younger ones during lunchtimes both in the playground and the dining hall. Pupils form excellent relationships with teachers and other adults, including parents and governors helping in classrooms. In classrooms, the relationship between the pupils and the teacher is of a consistently very high quality and has a very positive effect on pupils' personal and academic development. Inspectors saw notable examples of excellent relationships between teacher and pupils enhancing learning; for instance during a discussion time in a Year 6 religious education lesson pupils sensitively and maturely shared ideas on ways of handling their anger.

13 Attendance at the school is very good with figures higher than those of other primary schools nationally. Very good attendance is helping to enhance pupils' learning. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection when attendance was satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually at school and lessons start on time. Unauthorised absence is consistently low. As at the time of the last inspection, figures are affected by parents who take their children on holiday during term time.

14 As a result of the good level of support given to special needs pupils they have good attitudes to their learning. They listen with care. They respond thoughtfully to all of the adults who work with them. Staff and other pupils have very good relationships with special needs pupils. Other pupils are often anxious to help them. As a result of the good emphasis that there is on group work in the tasks devised by teachers it is relatively easy for this support to be given naturally. All pupils are able to embark on tasks together readily. They do so with enthusiasm and pay appropriate attention to including everyone in the decisions made in their groups. Pupils with special needs make valid contributions to group work that are also valued by adults and other pupils. Teachers are careful in targeting their questions so that special needs pupils can answer correctly and enhance their self esteem. They develop effectively as members of small and larger groups in consequence because their values are well respected.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 There have been very good improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection and this is now a significant strength of the school. The quality of teaching overall is judged to be very good due to the significant amount of good, very good and excellent teaching seen. Many of the teaching strengths identified in the previous inspection are still apparent, for example, teachers' very secure subject knowledge, lively pace and effective questioning skills. Major improvements noted in this inspection are in the high level of challenge to pupils' work and the teachers' expectations of what can be achieved.

16 Teachers' high expectations and the excellent way in which they manage their pupils was a constant and significant feature of teaching during this inspection and play a major part in the much improved standards that pupils achieve. For instance, in an excellent Year 5 English lesson the teacher said, 'Are you ready for the challenge of this work? You've got to be up to it.' This really keeps pupils 'on their toes' and they are very involved and very interested in investigating how characters are depicted in C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. All hands go up to answer questions and the teacher reinforces pupils' enthusiasm saying, 'I like the way all your hands are up because that shows you're really thinking' and, 'Excellent, you're referring to the text to support your opinions and you have to learn to do this in your writing.' This is teaching of a very high calibre and results in all pupils making excellent progress.

17 One of the most outstanding features is the teachers' positive and enthusiastic approach, which they pass on to their pupils and which really makes them sit up and listen. Lessons have a clear start and there is definite expectation from teachers and pupils that learning will take place. Teachers are very good at making sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn. These 'intended learning objectives' are always shared with the class at the beginning of the lesson, which focuses pupils' attention so they know what to expect. Pupils' previous learning is also skilfully referred to so that pupils can relate this to new learning. For instance, in an excellent Year 6 religious education lesson, the teacher thoughtfully and subtly related pupils' previous work on Christianity, Islam and Hinduism to current work on community rules. Teachers are very good at planning work that is just at the right level of difficulty, but challenging enough to make sure that pupils learn and make very good progress. Pupils are invariably engrossed in lessons. Time passes quickly and they learn a great deal.

18 Teachers are very skilled at convincing pupils that they are capable of achieving high standards. They do this by promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence so that they are confident to 'have a go' at asking questions even if they are not sure they know the correct answer. Teachers and support staff manage to combine high expectations of what pupils can do with a 'relaxed' and enjoyable attitude to learning. Phrases such as 'this is going to be fun' or 'you're really going to enjoy this' encourage pupils to be motivated, hard working and productive. Teachers' use of praise is outstanding and in addition to their excellent relationships with pupils, makes for a climate of acceptance of everyone's ideas. Pupils are confident and comfortable and readily offer ideas and suggestions in discussions.

19 During the course of lessons, teachers showed how good they are at asking questions to find out whether pupils understand what has been taught, and to challenge them to extend their thinking whenever possible. This form of 'ongoing assessment' by teachers has many benefits. For example, if the pupils' answers indicate that they understand the lesson the teacher can move quickly on. If their answers show some misunderstanding the teacher knows that revision is needed. Pupils cannot 'sit back' and hope that they will not be involved in answering.

20 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall but this varies between classes. The quality of teaching in the nursery is always good and sometimes very good and excellent. However, in the reception classes teaching is a mixture of good and satisfactory and on one occasion, unsatisfactory though it is good overall. The teaching in the nursery consists of a shared team approach of high quality. Opportunities for exploratory, investigative and creative experiences are extensive. Sometimes in reception these lack structure and provide insufficient opportunities for children to consolidate their learning at the end of a lesson for example.

21 The teaching of literacy is very good overall. Pupils are given very good opportunities to talk about their work in many different subjects. Early reading strategies are taught well and pupils approach new reading material with confidence. Pupils' writing is thoughtful with due consideration to the audience. They are prompted to use varied vocabulary choices and to check their spelling and punctuation through very focused marking. The dialogue struck up between the teacher and pupil adds to the pupils' understanding of how they can improve their work. Research skills are fostered well but more use could be made of the library. Teachers use CD-ROMs and the Internet very well to help pupils develop their research skills in a range of subjects.

22 The teaching of numeracy is very good. Teachers know the National Numeracy Strategy thoroughly, their planning of the three-part lesson is very good and they use questioning very well. They have developed very good activities for the "quick-fire warm-up" introductory part to their lessons. These motivate pupils well and reinforce previously learnt skills, and often usefully lead on to support the main activity of the lesson.

23 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in class lessons is very good. Class teachers are fully aware of pupils' special needs and skilfully plan different levels of work so that pupils learn effectively and make very good progress. The teaching assistants and nursery nurses provide very good support to all pupils. Tasks are imaginatively presented and good resources are used to interest and inspire pupils. The effective use of resources makes tasks more interesting and so pupils work hard to complete their best work for their teachers.

24 There are a small number of pupils whose mother tongue is not English. Teaching assistants are carefully deployed which means that pupils learning English are regularly supported in English and mathematics lessons. Support is comprehensively targeted in the nursery and infant classes in order to meet needs at the earliest stages. A recently appointed teaching assistant gives good support to a Swahili speaking pupil to ensure good progress is made in English acquisition and in settling into a new community.

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

25 The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides a broad range of opportunities across all the areas of learning. The curriculum is planned by all staff in a continuous way and pays good attention to all the stages of learning known as the 'stepping stones'. There is good provision for the wide range of children's abilities. The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils including those with special educational needs and the few for whom English is an additional language. All statutory requirements including those for religious education are met and the school provides a very effective programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education including sex education and raising awareness of drugs. There have been major improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection for example in the provision for mathematics.

26 The school has fully embraced the principles of educational inclusion. All pupils have full access to all subjects and activities. For instance, a second suite for ICT is situated on the ground floor making access for pupils with physical impairment very easy. Teachers and support staff are acutely aware of pupils' individual needs and plan carefully to make sure there are opportunities for all to achieve success. This is not only true for work in literacy and numeracy, but also for pupils' personal and social development: raising pupils' self-esteem is effectively achieved due to the high quality of support provided. The school has identified the more able pupils and has made arrangements to meet their particular needs, for example in mathematics. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 are arranged by ability for numeracy and literacy lessons every day so that their needs can be more precisely matched. The school has a register of pupils it regards as gifted and talented. For instance in science, some Year 6 pupils have had extra challenges and attained the very challenging level 6. It has not yet had an impact on pupils in other year groups.

27 The school's curriculum is very broad. All subjects of the National Curriculum are offered. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are implemented very well and are having a very positive effect on raising standards. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects. The balance between subjects is entirely appropriate. Although there is justifiable emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science this is not at the expense of other subjects. The school's provision for music, for example, is of a high standard because of specialist teaching. A very good feature of the curriculum is the way in which teachers incorporate links between subjects, for instance encouraging pupils to make use of their numeracy skills in religious education and geography, and their literacy skills in music and history. This exemplary practice lends coherence to pupils' experience making their learning much more meaningful. Homework to supplement or consolidate learning in class is regularly set for all pupils and reflects many areas of the curriculum but principally literacy and numeracy.

28 There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. There is a very careful assessment of pupils' needs at an early stage with needs being identified quickly in the nursery class. Special needs pupils are given every chance to work alongside other pupils in their classes. There is comprehensive tracking of pupils' efforts. Regular review systems ensure that pupils' needs are re-stated and resourced appropriately. Most needs are met within classrooms but some pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 are withdrawn to work with the special needs co-ordinator. The withdrawal work focuses closely on developing pupils' language skills.

29 There are a small number of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue. Their needs are carefully met through the support work carried out by teaching assistants and nursery nurses in classes and by the special educational needs co-ordinator in withdrawal sessions. Their support is managed effectively by the headteacher. She is fully aware of what the pupils' needs are and works closely with the co-ordinator. The headteacher is a strong driving force in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are being met effectively.

30 A significant strength of this school is the very good way in which it promotes personal, social and health education, and citizenship. In lessons, pupils are given very good opportunities to discuss their feelings about matters like vandalism, what's fair and what's not fair, and the qualities most desired in a friend. 'If only vandals would leave things alone', writes a Year 6 pupil. Certificates are presented not only for good work in lessons but also for the qualities that the school holds dear, such as helpfulness, kindness or perseverance.

31 The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities: this aspect of the curriculum is very good and a strength. The many and varied clubs are well attended by pupils and make an exciting contribution to their learning and the ethos of the school. The clubs represent many areas of the curriculum: creative writing, creative music, art, guitar, dance, drama, ICT as well as a wide range of sports. They provide opportunities for pupils to work together with others that they might not meet during the school day: this is very good provision for pupils' social and personal development. The work that pupils do in clubs is exciting and innovative. For example, in guitar club, pupils have written the lyrics and composed their own song that they rehearse diligently in preparation for a possible recording. Another unusual feature of out-of-school clubs is the way in which the school has involved parents. For example, parents and pupils together attend weekly workshops in numeracy or ICT, and parents also play an important leading role in the creative writing club.

32 Through very good links with the local community, the school provides a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities both in and out of school. Visits are planned carefully to complement pupils' studies. For instance, visits to Faith City deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of world faiths. These are especially valuable since the day is organised by a member of a particular faith, whether it is Islam, Hinduism or Judaism. The school has regular links with the local churches, St John's and the Methodist chapel, and annually visits the nearby home for the elderly to sing carols. Visitors enhance pupils' learning very powerfully in history, geography and science. For example, pupils enormously enjoy having Vikings or Roman soldiers in school for a day, or dressing up themselves as Victorians or Tudors, while a planned visit by a hot air balloon stimulated immense interest in science and geography. Close links with the secondary school provide a good range of interesting links for pupils in Year 6 in a wide range of subjects such as science, mathematics, art, dance, music and a number of sports.

33 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and provision for cultural development is good. Provision is significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection. A very good policy, providing suggestions for the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in all subjects effectively underpins and strengthens the school's provision.

34 Assemblies contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual development. During inspection week, the theme was 'Special Things', culminating in an excellent assembly which afforded time for reflection on what people value most in life, and which was very relevant to children's own lives. The Year 6 teacher and one pupil captivated the audience with their moving presentation of the simple things that were important to a child evacuated during the war. The teaching of religious education makes a significant contribution, and moments of awe and wonder are experienced in other subjects too, as, for example, when children marvelled at the creation of patterns in an ICT lesson.

35 The provision for moral development is very good. From an early age, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Teachers and other adults provide very good role models. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, use the school's behaviour policy consistently and treat pupils with respect. The school's code of conduct, which pupils helped draw up, is well understood and applied, as are classroom rules. 'Circle time' allows pupils to discuss feelings, experiences or class issues as a group and gives them very good opportunities to consider the impact of their actions upon others. The school supports many charities, and pupils are encouraged to explore issues in personal, social and health education lessons. In one very good lesson, they were learning about democracy.



36 Pupils' social development is very good. There are excellent relationships between the pupils themselves, and between pupils and adults. Children are given many opportunities to work in groups in all subjects, supporting each other, and staff actively encourage teamwork, for instance, by having children evaluate each other's work in art or having them take part in discussions in religious education. The 'friendship stop' used at playtime is a good example of the way in which pupils are expected to care for one another. A very good range of extra curricular activities and school trips contribute very well to pupils' social development by providing opportunities for pupils to learn in different settings. Children frequently take responsibilities for tasks around the school, and for looking after younger children. The school also has plans to develop a school council.

37 The provision for pupils' cultural education is good. Educational visits are regularly undertaken to broaden the curriculum, and the good quality extra-curricular clubs enhance the cultural provision. A new library has recently been developed, and visitors to school play an important part in widening pupils' experiences. The teaching of religious education promotes the study of other faiths, and cultural awareness is also promoted in subjects such as English, the humanities, art and music. The school has identified the need to develop multi-cultural education further, and plans to organise visits by representatives of different cultures.

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

38 Netherbrook School takes very good care of its pupils. The school has a sufficient number of relevant and updated support, guidance and welfare policies to guide and underpin its actions. These policies are implemented consistently across the school. The school nurse assists the school well in the sex-education programme for older pupils.

39 The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupil welfare are very good and all staff are aware of the named personnel and procedures. There is evidence of thorough and careful monitoring by the headteacher and the school has a sensitive concern and awareness of the needs of its pupils and their parents. All staff have had child protection training including the newly qualified teacher and the teaching assistants. Policies are in line with local procedures and good relationships exist with personnel from outside agencies involved in pupil care. The school has one member of staff qualified in first aid and all staff have undertaken first aid training. All the necessary procedures are in place for dealing with minor accidents or incidents. Arrangements and procedures for the conduct of educational visits fully comply with local authority guidelines. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular health and safety audits are carried out in the school with governor involvement. Governors are aware of the need to provide a safe environment for pupils and staff. There is a good Internet safety policy, which is fully adhered to by all staff and pupils.

40 Supervision at lunchtime is organised well through a rota of supervisors. If necessary, one of the senior supervisors is able to liaise with the headteacher on a daily basis to discuss problems and concerns. Lunchtime staff are fully involved with implementing the school's behaviour policy and select their own 'class of the week' for sensible and responsible play and good manners. With the help of Year 6 pupils, supervisors organise games and competitions in which pupils are keen to participate. As a result, lunchtimes are happy and orderly occasions that make a good contribution to pupils' social and personal development. Pupils treat supervisors with politeness and courtesy.

41 There has been a significant improvement in attendance since the time of the last inspection and this has helped to enhance learning. The very good attendance procedures and systems in place are maintained conscientiously by the deputy headteacher. Through clearly written letters and reminders in the school's newsletter, the school effectively

demonstrates to parents the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the smooth running of the school. The school follows up parents who fail to communicate reasons for their child's absence so that for most pupils unauthorised absence is minimal. Individuals who have achieved 100 per cent attendance are rewarded at the end of the school year.

42 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school gives a very high priority to the expectation of good behaviour. Pupils and parents are aware of the standards of behaviour expected as set out in the school's behaviour policy and the consequences of misconduct. Appropriately worded class rules, drawn up with pupil involvement and based on the 'code of conduct', are consistently displayed in classrooms. Good behaviour is publicly recognised during the weekly 'Praise Assembly'. Inspectors saw consistently good behaviour that was rewarded with praise and team points so that pupils were encouraged to work hard and succeed. Staff have a very thorough knowledge of their pupils and monitor their personal progress in an informal way. Pupils are constantly supported and, in turn, promote the welcoming and caring culture of the school.

43 There has been considerable improvement in the assessment of pupils' academic achievement since the previous inspection. Procedures are now very good, and they are also applied very effectively. They are understandably strongest in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Through regular half-termly assessments and the use of annual tests, teachers build an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving, and know whether they are maintaining their expected progress. Results are carefully analysed and are used to set targets for year groups and individuals. They are also used to organise junior pupils by ability in classes for English and mathematics. Pupils undertake an investigation each term in the three core subjects to check their understanding as well as their knowledge. Assessment in other subjects is more variable, although there are useful checklists, for example in ICT, to make sure pupils have the necessary skills. A new and very effective assessment policy has been agreed by the teachers and will soon be implemented. This will ensure that the teachers have a good idea of pupils' progress in all areas of the curriculum.

44 Teachers also make very good use of assessment in the course of their teaching. In mathematics and science, for example, the use of whiteboards to display answers gives teachers instant opportunities to check understanding. Several teachers altered their planning for the next lesson during the inspection, because the pupils had not coped as well as expected, or because unexpected difficulties had been experienced. This combination of focused, recorded assessments and the good use teachers make of day-to-day judgements ensures that for most of the time pupils are very effectively challenged.

45 The school makes valuable initial assessments of pupils' needs in the nursery. Individual education plans, for those with special educational needs, are carefully drawn up by class teachers with support and advice from the special needs co-ordinator. The progress made by the pupils, including those with a statement of special needs is carefully tracked by all staff who work with the pupils. Pupils with statements of special need receive good support and all aspects of their statement are implemented. There is regular useful support given by a range of outside agencies to meet pupils' various needs. The school receives useful additional support from educational psychologists and speech and language therapists. The special needs co-ordinator conscientiously ensures that pupils receive the necessary support.

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

46 The school has continued to build on the good and effective partnership with parents that it had at the time of the last inspection. Parents' opinions of the school are very positive and there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. The school works well with its parents in a relationship of mutual respect. A significant majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree the school works closely with them. Parents receive good quality information that is sufficient, informative and friendly. There are frequent letters presented in a readable and informative style. There is a well-written school prospectus containing detailed and essential information, including the school's code of conduct and the timing of parents' consultation evenings. Newsletters are sent home on a regular basis. They provide parents with information and invite them to attend events such as workshops related to the curriculum. However, the school could usefully investigate ways of making the governors' annual report to parents more interesting in presentation by, for example, illustrating it with pupils' work.

47 The contribution of parents to pupils' learning is satisfactory both in school and in the work pupils do at home. The school has continued working towards a greater involvement of parents in their children's education. Parents are invited to class assembly and to the leavers' assembly for Year 6 pupils. Each class provides an information sheet for parents giving an overview of what will be covered in all subjects during the coming term. A grandparent and a governor are part of the small but loyal group of parents who help in school on a regular basis. They hear children read and make a useful contribution to practical activities in design and technology and geography lessons. The small but active 'Friends Association' organises a number of fundraising activities throughout the year, which benefit pupils through additional resources. Members of the group painted a mural on part of the infant playground. Money raised has been used to purchase equipment and enhance the school environment. The majority of parents have signed the home school contract and comply with the requirements it contains. The contract has strengthened the relationship between parents and staff.

48 Parents responding to the questionnaire felt well informed about how their child is getting on at school. There are four parents' evenings - called consultation evenings - each year and attendance at these meetings is good. The first meeting held in September is an opportunity for class teachers to give detailed information on what children will be doing throughout the year. At later meetings, pupils' targets for the next term are discussed with parents together with progress made during the previous term. A sample of reports scrutinised by inspectors contained a thorough and systematic record of pupils' progress and some information on personal and social development. Reports include two or three targets for development and a separate sheet for all pupils, including children in the Foundation Stage, to comment on their own academic and personal progress. The arrangements for the setting of homework and the types of tasks pupils may be expected to do at home are usefully included in the school's prospectus. Inspectors saw good practice in the setting of homework in line with the policy and very good examples of investigative work done at home by pupils in projects based on history and geography topics.

49 The parents of special needs pupils are fully involved in the school's work. They are invited to attend all reviews. Many take up this opportunity and the school is continually seeking ways to ensure that parents of pupils with special needs are fully involved. For instance, there is a place on pupils' individual education plans for parents to make comments.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 There has been very good improvement in the aspects of leadership and management, which were deemed to have serious weaknesses at the time of the last inspection in 2000. This is because the headteacher has used her excellent leadership and management skills to deal very effectively with all the issues identified for improvement. It is also due to the considerable contribution made by all staff: the deputy head, senior staff, subject co-ordinators and teaching assistants and the great improvement in effectiveness of the governing body, which is now very good. In fact the whole community including all the parents united behind the headteacher to improve the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection.

51 The excellent quality of the headteacher's leadership is a major influence on the high standards pupils achieve and the very good quality of their education. In all aspects of the school's work the headteacher provides an extremely positive and professional example. She has a total conviction in the priorities and aims of the school, is quietly but immensely determined and highly motivated. She empowers her staff so that they can fulfil their responsibilities very effectively knowing she is always on hand to support when necessary.

52 When priorities have been identified, usually through a specific and constantly evolving school development plan, but occasionally in day-to-day management, she acts very quickly and decisively. The outcome is the very strong staff team spirit within the school, to which the deputy makes a most noteworthy contribution, and the excellent learning ethos present everywhere. This is also reflected in the very high degree of shared commitment by the staff to improve standards and every other aspect of pupils' education and learning environment. Subject and phase co-ordinators benefit considerably from this open and consultative leadership style, and as a consequence are also making a very good contribution to the school's development and improvement.

53 Throughout the school there is a shared commitment to high achievement and constant improvement. Co-ordinators are very influential in achieving improved standards of attainment, teaching and resources in their subjects, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Senior managers are very well deployed to take action to improve aspects of the school's standards and provision. For instance, the numeracy co-ordinator in conjunction with the deputy head introduced many successful strategies to improve teaching and learning in numeracy lessons. These incentives resulted in much-improved results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in national tests in 2002.

54 The special needs co-ordinator has successfully addressed the issues that were identified by the last inspection. An efficient audit was carried out before an appropriate action plan was drawn up. The co-ordinator manages the deployment of the support staff who carry out such an important role in enhancing the learning of special needs pupils. The support staff are well informed because their training regularly and effectively up-dated. The co-ordinator is well supported by the headteacher and the special educational needs governor who is also one of the school's teaching assistants. The co-ordinator is also responsible for the development of gifted and talented pupils. The school has recently formally identified these pupils and additional work is required to meet these pupils' needs.

55 The governors' role in the work and evaluation of the school described in 2000 as 'unsatisfactory' has been transformed in the last two years. They have developed very effective delegated committees and several management systems. This has resulted in regular focused training, frequent school and class visits and monitoring. They report their suggestions and findings to their committees and to the whole governing body, both verbally and in writing. Governors are playing a very effective role in shaping the direction of the

school and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties very well. All necessary policies are in place, including one that addresses racial equality. The governing body's successful re-organisation and development has been due to the absolute dedication and commitment of the very hard working chairman. He works very effectively with the headteacher and his support is greatly valued by the school staff.

56 The school has very detailed and comprehensive procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own performance. All staff are involved in this and the open and frank approach means that issues are addressed very effectively and quickly. Careful analysis of assessment information drives forward the process and any dip in standards leads to focused discussions on whether adjustments need to be made to teaching, learning or the curriculum. Self-evaluation is central to the school's systems for performance management arrangements and these are closely linked to school improvement. Suitable training is identified to support any objectives identified with individual teachers.

57 There is very good provision of teachers and support staff promote pupils' learning. Co-ordinators are in place for all subjects of the curriculum. Some have been recently appointed and they have varying levels of experience and subject knowledge. There is one newly qualified teacher. In addition to the full time teaching staff the school has the assistance of six trained nursery nurses, and six trained classroom assistants and two education support staff who work specifically with pupils who have special educational needs. This provision is very well targeted to meet pupils' needs. The support staff make an invaluable contribution to the smooth running of lessons. They are respected and appreciated by teaching staff and the pupils. The administrative and clerical staff provide an efficient, friendly and reliable service to the school. The school site manager is well supported by a team of cheerful assistants. They all work diligently to ensure that the school is cleaned and maintained to a very high standard. The kitchen staff are happy and friendly and make lunchtimes a very pleasant social occasion for the pupils. All staff work very well as a dedicated, enthusiastic and hardworking team who are committed to providing the best they can for all pupils. The school ethos is reinforced through the very positive way that all visitors are welcomed into the school.

58 Procedures for the induction of new staff and the professional development of all staff are both very good. Very good structures are in place to support and develop newly qualified teachers. All teachers and support staff attend a wide range of in-service courses to support their own professional development to the benefit of the pupils.

59 The quality of accommodation in the school is very good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when it was judged to be good. There has been recent refurbishment to the school building and further improvements are planned, including the building of additional rooms to provide areas for group support work for children and parents. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting commented favourably on the school's pleasing environment and the emphasis on maintaining good decorative order in bright and cheerful colours. The school makes very good use of its accommodation and the quality of facilities is very good. Classrooms are sufficiently large in size for the effective education of pupils. There are two halls; one is very large with a stage, and the other is smaller and used as a dining hall. There are smaller rooms that are used effectively for group work and specialist teaching. A refurbished large library is no longer used for other purposes as it was at the time of the last inspection. A comfortable ICT suite and a spacious special educational needs room contribute well to pupils' learning. Well-carpeted rooms and corridors add significantly to the calm feeling of the school. There is large outside accommodation including a well-maintained and extensive playing field. There are separate

designated play areas for Foundation Stage, infant and junior pupils. They are all secure and adequately supervised by teaching and support staff.

60 Resources are good for English, mathematics and science and very good for ICT. For the other subjects the quality and range of resources are good for the tasks planned. They contribute positively to pupils' learning. The storage of resources is good; they are readily available and accessible to teachers and pupils alike. The two computer suites provide a valuable resource for all subjects. Items from different cultures complement a number of displays in the school.

61 The school makes very good use of its financial and other resources. The finance committee has a clear understanding of the day-to-day financial running of the school and works closely with the senior management on the strategic management of financial resources. They also work consistently to the principles of best value and have always looked at value for money in their recent spending and for future projects. The headteacher has given a strong lead to the school in the financial management and is very adept at identifying specific grants, which could help the school. These grants are spent judiciously. The parents association makes a good annual contribution to the resource needs of the school. The school administrators, who are typical of the whole staff in their dedication and hard work, make a very good contribution to the day-to-day financial management, using new technology very effectively. The greatest contribution of the very good financial management has been its effectiveness in helping to raise standards, especially in the core subjects. As a result of this the school gives very good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62 There are no key issues for the school to address. Minor issues are identified for improvement and these will form the basis of the governing body's action plan.

- Increase opportunities in science lessons for junior pupils to set up their own investigations. (Paragraphs 110, 111)
- Continue to ensure that those pupils identified as gifted and talented receive an appropriate curriculum. (Paragraphs 26, 54, 114)
- Devise more attractive and interesting ways to present information to parents. (Paragraph 46)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	103
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	12	32	42	16	1	0	0
Percentage	12	31	41	16	1	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)	45	402
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	100

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance 2001/02

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	47	35	82

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	43	43	45
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	75	75	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (86)	91 (88)	95 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	43	45
	Girls	33	33	34
	Total	75	76	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (90)	93 (88)	96 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	28
	Girls	25	24	27
	Total	51	50	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (69)	83 (61)	92 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	25	27
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	47	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (76)	83 (76)	88 (82)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



## Ethnic background of pupils

## Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	351	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	20	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22:1
Average class size	27

### Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	307

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15:1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1,036,631
Total expenditure	1,003,012
Expenditure per pupil	2,090
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	33,529

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

492
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Number of questionnaires returned

114
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### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	41	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	53	3	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	10	1	5
The teaching is good.	58	38	3	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	36	7	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	46	6	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	38	4	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	33	11	3	14

## **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**

63 The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides a broad range of opportunities across all the areas of learning. The findings of this inspection are similar to that of the previous inspection. The curriculum is planned by all staff in a continuous way and pays good attention to all the stages of learning known as the 'stepping stones'. There is good provision for the wide range of children's abilities. The organisation of the curriculum and teaching arrangements for the reception children is undergoing a period of change, resulting in some aspects of the curriculum being less effective at the present time. The school needs to review some aspects of organisation and the use of time, particularly at the beginning and at the end of lessons in the reception classes. The outdoor provision is an aspect that is also developing and the school is aware of the need to establish a curriculum for this area of the Foundation Stage. Throughout the key stage, activities are well resourced, thoughtfully planned and provided, however the school has identified the need to make these resources easily accessible so that children can take more responsibility for their own learning, make choices and learn to think for themselves.

64 The nursery and reception classes are attractive and stimulating, providing a warm and inviting atmosphere. At the time of the inspection there were 90 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis and 26 children in the two reception classes. Older children in the nursery attend the morning session and younger children attend in the afternoon. Most children transfer to the two reception classes in September and January, depending when they are born. There are very few pre-school educational opportunities in the local area. A gradual introduction to the nursery through meetings and visits to the school, together with helpful information given to parents, ensures children make a good start.

65 Over time, children have entered the nursery with well below average levels of attainment but assessment results show that there has been an improvement during the last year resulting in attainment now being below average. Depending upon places available, most children spend five terms in the nursery before transferring to the reception classes. Here they make very good progress. In the reception year children make good progress overall. This results in broadly average attainment by Year 1 but some more able children achieve beyond these expected levels. As children enter Year 1, standards are average in all the areas of learning except physical and creative development where they are above those expected for children of this age and progress is very good. Children are identified as having special educational needs at an early stage and these children receive good support and make the same progress as their peers.

66 Assessment procedures are good but inconsistent in the way the information is collated and compiled between nursery and reception classes. There is more emphasis placed upon reception to Year 1 assessments rather than the continuous development of skills and knowledge from nursery to reception and on to the early levels of the National Curriculum, creating a natural flow of assessment information. Day-to-day informal assessment is good. Staff know their children well and information is regularly shared and recorded. Tracking of children's achievements is also thorough and provides a visual picture of children's overall achievement.

67 The well-qualified and experienced support staff play an important role in the development of children's learning in both year groups. They skilfully make a considerable contribution in all aspects of the curriculum. Parents' contributions are a regular feature in many lessons and also provide very valuable support to children's learning.

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

68 Most children enter the nursery class with below average skills in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result of good teaching children make good progress so that by the end of the reception year children achieve the expected levels in this area of learning. Although nursery and reception children are encouraged to take responsibility in the way they choose or mark their name on arrival and serve the fruit and milk at snack time, insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of independence in their learning. Staff have identified this aspect as an area for further development.

69 In the nursery, the 'new intake' mixes happily with the children already there, sharing opportunities to take part in the 'home corner'. Younger children sit together at the beginning of the day, and teachers skilfully encourage and discuss activities available, enabling children to make choices in their selection from a range of prepared activities. Although many children are new to the nursery they behave very well and are sufficiently confident to seek other children to share their activities, for example in role-play or in the construction area. Although many activities are varied, interesting and exciting in the reception classes, there are fewer structured opportunities and less emphasis placed on children taking responsibility. For example, there is no expectation that children will always help to clear away their activities at the end of a lesson.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

70 By the end of the reception year standards are in line with those expected for children of this age and some achieve beyond this level. Children make very good progress in the nursery. Progress in the reception classes is good with good emphasis placed on role-play activities and opportunities provided for writing. Teaching overall is good with teaching in the nursery being very good.

71 Initially many children offer one-word comments when asked a question, or give a nod or shrug in response. This is not the case for all children however. One child offered the suggestion that the shape on the back of a toy horse was 'a cape'. By the end of the reception year most children are able to express themselves clearly in phrases and sentences. All staff play a significant part in children's language development, both in and out of doors. They take part in role-play activities and skilfully ask questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' response, paying particular attention to those children with special needs.

72 In both the nursery and reception classes children listen to and join in with stories and rhymes. They enjoy books and are interested in stories and pictures, which are in abundance throughout the nursery and reception classes. They name the title of favourite books and share books in the comfortable library areas. Nursery children identify their names each morning and all children borrow library books and visit the local library on a regular basis. In all classes children enjoy stories involving a 'big book' with an adult. Older nursery and reception children recognise a capital letter and some, a full stop although not all with understanding. One child thought that the dot on an 'i' was a full stop too. They know the 'title page' and recognise when text is 'jumbled up' or read the 'wrong way round'. Reception children make a good attempt in their recognition of letter sounds and rhyming words, encouraged by games and stories. All children spoken to say they visit the local library as well as borrowing books from school and all have 'loads' of books at home, which they enjoy.

73 In the nursery and reception classes there are good planned opportunities to practise the basic skills of writing such as patterns, tracing and drawing. Teachers develop this well because they have a good level of understanding and high expectations of what children can achieve. Children write their names on all their work from an early age, and 'record' in a variety of ways what they want to say. Most children make good progress because of the good range of writing activities provided. The oldest children write their names and some use a cursive script with accuracy.

### **Mathematical development**

74 By the end of the reception year children make good progress overall and reach standards that are generally in line with those expected. Some children achieve beyond this level, particularly in number. Progress in the nursery is very good which reflects the teaching. In the reception classes teaching is good.

75 In the nursery, children experience a good range of mathematical experiences such as 'tallying' the numbers in a skittle game and counting the number of sheep and horses in a farm game. More able children achieve well. One child counted 15 sheep with good understanding, explaining to her friend how to do it. Every opportunity is seized to extend all aspects of children's mathematical knowledge. Even 'snack time' is used very well in 'family groups' to teach the mathematical language of position. Staff ask very good questions to promote children's thinking skills.

76 Reception children build on the very good experiences in the nursery resulting in good progress by the end of the year. However, when a short mathematical session is inappropriate, children make insufficient progress. Here, some children recognise numerals to nine or recognise a 'deliberate mistake' along a number line however, when there is insufficient challenge, children do not make enough progress. Activities provided in this lesson are too easy. In mathematical activities, reception children are successful in making a book for the nursery children, 'My Sheep Counting Book', involving numbers to 10. A weakness in children's understanding of the mathematical language has been identified through assessments and this receives a good level of attention by all staff.

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

77 Children reach standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the end of the reception year and make good progress. Teaching is good, with very good teaching in the nursery. This area of learning is developed by focusing on specific topics in the Foundation Stage curriculum.

78 On entry to the nursery, children need encouragement to explore and investigate. This soon develops as a result of very good teaching from the nursery team. Children develop their curiosity and interest in the world around them, for example through a visit to a farm. All children in the nursery and reception classes experience the theme at different levels appropriate to the different groups of children. The younger children play in a farm shop that they help to construct and re-enact the experiences of their visit. Older children learn about other aspects including where animals live, what they eat and a 'vet's surgery', when they are ill.

79 Evidence from photographs, previous planning and displays represents a wide range of experiences in this aspect. All areas of learning are imaginatively taught through themes whenever possible. Examples of excellent parental involvement were seen in the nursery and reception classes where dinosaur models and masks were made. Nursery children care for two guinea pigs called Bake and Dimples. They become aware of growth and changes

as they plant in the nursery garden. There are many opportunities to build and construct using a wide range of good quality equipment. Older children are encouraged to draw their buildings prior to construction.

80 A visit to Leasowes Park resulted in very good examples of work representing both scientific and creative areas. This featured a planned 'sensory experience' involving natural resources. Children achieve well in aspects of ICT because there are good planned and well-resourced opportunities. For example, nursery children skilfully operate remote controlled cars around obstacles and confidently use the mouse when operating the computer. Reception children use the 'roamer', a controlled toy, planning its journey along a road, selecting numbers and programming the computer successfully. Children learn about the main religious festivals and appreciate that there are differences as they gain an awareness of the other cultures and the beliefs of others, including Divali and Christmas.

### **Physical development**

81 Children make very good progress in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, standards are above those expected for children of their age and teaching is very good overall. Younger children practise their climbing and balancing skills indoors and have planned opportunities to use large and small apparatus such as climbing apparatus in the nursery. They use bikes and wheeled toys in the outdoor play area. The reception play area is small but well defined and although there has been good attention given to the outdoor provision, there is a need to develop an outdoor curriculum and encourage safe, adventurous play to its fullest extent. In their hall sessions, reception children move in a variety of ways as they run and chase in and out. They pass beanbags from one hand to the other developing their throwing and retrieving skills successfully, with obvious enjoyment. Children use tools, such as scissors skilfully and with care, developing very good control throughout their activities.

### **Creative development**

82 Children achieve standards that are above the expected levels in this area of learning by the end of the reception year and children make very good progress. Teaching is very good and reflects the high expectations of children's achievements. The good development of children's creativity is reflected in the planning, in examples seen throughout the year and also during the inspection week. In the nursery, different textures are explored through play dough and a cream of tartar mix displaying amazing properties which one child described, 'It feels fidgy-squidgy'. In the reception class, children wear a blindfold to explore through taste as they identify different types of yoghurt, (closely linked to their work concerning milk and cows). They try to explain the flavours but there are many inaccuracies in their guesses. Through the good attention given to role-play, children extend their language and creative development significantly. They 'pretend' and re-enact situations, well supported by adults who share and extend children's imagination.

83 In art, children use paint and other media to a good and sometimes very good standard. In the nursery they experiment with colour and shape. Displays of paintings and observational drawings completed by reception children create a significant impact because of the very good standard achieved. The atmospheric paintings on display are in the style of John Dryer and are as a result of their 'sensory experience'. Music is a social occasion when nursery children gather around the piano to sing the songs they learn by heart. In the reception classes a specialist teacher accompanies children as they sing their favourite songs. Musical instruments are not available to use independently in an imaginative and creative way.

## ENGLISH

84 At the time of the last inspection standards in English were judged to be above average in writing and average in reading by the age of seven. Year 6 pupils were deemed to attain average standards. Since then standards have risen considerably and those achieved by eleven-year-old pupils are particularly impressive.

85 Standards in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 were average in reading and above average in writing whilst in speaking and listening teachers assessed that they were average. Standards in these national tests for eleven-year-olds were above average. Children enter the nursery class with below average skills in communication, language and literacy but make good progress in their learning so that they reach the expected levels when they enter Year 1. The good start that they are given in the Foundation Stage supports the pupils effectively in their English work in both infant and junior classes.

86 Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are reaching above average standards in speaking and listening and reading whilst they are well above average in writing. Progress is very good overall and accelerated in Years 5 and 6 where pupils benefit from very good and excellent teaching. The school's focus on writing, as a current priority is succeeding in raising pupils' achievements. This improvement in standards is due to improved monitoring by senior staff, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator and a hard working, committed staff team. The consistently helpful marking that is done by all teachers is a further factor that supports the improving standards. This ensures pupils pay thoughtful attention to the presentation of their work, including the skills of writing and spelling. Spelling is given particularly imaginative support through the identification of 'dictionary detectives' for the day in some classes.

87 In addition to the high level of commitment by all staff, pupils' progress is being tracked precisely and carefully. Teachers are very imaginative and thoughtful in the tasks that they are presenting to all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have individual targets carefully set for them. An appropriate number of targets are set and as a consequence these are met. There is equally careful attention given to the small group of pupils who have additional language needs. The headteacher and special needs co-ordinator have been assiduous in their quest to ensure that these pupils' needs are met. They have worked in close partnership with the literacy co-ordinator in order to enhance the provision for them. All teachers use the National Literacy Strategy very well. They have given careful thought to the best way to organise the literacy hour to ensure that all pupils achieve well. The setting of pupils according to their ability for literacy work means that teachers can plan and set work at just the right level for pupils to be motivated, interested and productive. ICT is used very well, both in classes and in the suite to support pupils' literacy work. Teachers are very good at ensuring that pupils practise their developing literacy skills in all the other subjects. For example, there are very few worksheets used in history and geography as pupils are expected to explain and write their new learning in their own words.

88 Speaking and listening skills are considerably improved and developed from the below average levels that children have on entry to the nursery class. They are now above average throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening because they are always encouraged to discuss their learning in all lessons. Talk is often a preliminary to writing and put to very good use when discussing books in literacy lessons. All teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils remember previous learning because they have been interested in the imaginative tasks that teachers have given them to



complete. Teachers ask the sort of questions that make the pupils think before they answer. Teachers are particularly astute at including special needs pupils and those for whom English is not their first language, by asking them the sort of questions that they can answer successfully. This raises the pupils' self esteem and makes a significant contribution to their personal development. In all lessons in all subjects teachers encourage correct and accurate vocabulary which improves pupils' communication skills. Pupils listen carefully to instructions as well as to one another when they report back their learning at the end of lessons.

89 Pupils' communication skills are further developed in Years 3 to 6 as teachers skilfully create many opportunities for pupils to share their learning with each another. In Year 3 pupils discuss characters and events in books sensibly and maturely before they begin their writing. Year 4 pupils debate the pros and cons of building a new road. Pupils listen very carefully to each other and have a very good understanding of the various viewpoints. By the time that they are in Years 5 and 6, pupils are confident in their contributions to class discussions. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 5, pupils maturely debate the similarities and differences between the school prayer and the Lord's Prayer. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, pupils are given the opportunity to work in groups to support each other when they discuss how to use plurals accurately. In another excellent lesson in Year 6 the teacher skilfully enables the pupils to compare their emotions with those of the evacuees in the Second World War.

90 Standards in reading are above average throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in learning to read in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of meticulous assessments and record keeping by the special needs co-ordinator. They are heard to read regularly and have books to enjoy at home. Higher attaining pupils read with fluency, expression and obvious enjoyment. By Year 2 standards are above average and the majority of pupils read with fluency and expression. They talk happily about books and read with confidence and understanding. Year 2 pupils are particularly good at predicting what might happen next in a story. Some of their predictions are very imaginative. Pupils are heard read regularly by all staff. Particular and important emphasis is correctly placed on ensuring that infant pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out new words. The very effective help given to the pupils by the support staff in all aspects of English is particularly apparent in developing their reading skills. There are good links established with home through a reading diary. Not enough parents respond as positively as the school would wish but the school continues to work at ensuring this.

91 Year 6 pupils attain reading standards, which are above those normally expected. Enthusiastic teachers skilfully convey their love of literature to their pupils. For instance, when sharing texts in the literacy hour, teachers encourage pupils to select particular phrases and sentences to explain how characters are developed. Pupils are very good at looking up unfamiliar words in dictionaries to ensure complete understanding. The Year 6 pupils visit the school and local libraries and all are familiar with the way in which libraries are organised. All can select a particular reference book and are knowledgeable about how to carry out research work using both the Internet and the library.

92 Guided reading is taught and teachers use this skilfully as an opportunity to teach reading skills to various groups. Teachers make individual diagnostic assessments of pupils during these sessions, which has a good impact on reading standards. The library is attractive and appealing with good displays of pupils' work. It is large enough for class research work.

93 Standards in writing are well above average throughout the school. This is because of the time and energy that the school has given to raising standards. Work sampling shows

that independence in writing is given effective attention from the early stages in the infant classes. This focus is confirmed in the lessons observed. Pupils write instructions in ICT lessons as well as in their English lessons. Teachers carefully match work to pupils' learning needs. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils have to compile their own instructions whilst others have support in the form of instructions started for them or have to alter instructions drawn up for them. The sensitive use of poetry inspires them to compose some of their own poetry. This stimulating exercise gives valuable support to their spiritual development. The enjoyment in defining rhyming words accurately in infant classes leads to pupils being able to plan and produce extended narrative writing as early as Year 4. By Years 5 and 6, pupils produce an impressive amount and variety of work: imaginative stories using appropriate grammar, complex sentences and paragraphs. Dialogue and the accurate use of punctuation such as question and exclamation marks are regular features of the high quality writing that is produced by Year 6 pupils. There is some lack of opportunity for the pupils to develop their research skills in their written work.

94 Standards in handwriting and spelling are good. Teachers pay careful attention to both of these skills. There are specific handwriting lessons where the formation of letters is practised. Pupils are expected to use these skills in other subjects. This is also the case with spelling. The pupils do not only have regular spellings to learn and be tested upon but the teachers expect that pupils will use correct spellings in all their writing. The teachers have high expectations of pupils and as a result pupils present their work very neatly, taking great care with spelling and handwriting. Teachers and support staff mark pupils work very well, clearly indicating what pupils need to do to improve. This is an important factor in the very good teaching that is a constant feature of the teaching of English throughout the school. As a result pupils make very good progress. Teachers plan with thought and care. They have very good subject knowledge. They are very knowledgeable about their pupils' varying needs and match the work to meet these appropriately. They resource the work imaginatively and prepare interesting tasks. The pupils are interested and enjoy their work. Teachers interest and inspire pupils with their own love of literature. There is very good lesson planning that builds very carefully on what pupils already know and understand. Joint planning between parallel classes is very effective and means that all pupils have similar learning experiences. At the beginning of lessons teachers state very clearly what it is that they want pupils to have learned by the end. This enables pupils to focus their thinking, stimulates their interest and motivates them to concentrate and learn.

95 The co-ordinator is passionately keen about the subject. She is very well informed. The policy and scheme of work are seen as working documents that need constant review in order to raise standards. Resources are good, including a library that has been well organised through the hard work of a parent governor. Extra-curricular activities such as the creative writing and language clubs further enhance the development of English throughout the school.

## MATHEMATICS

96 Standards in mathematics have risen substantially since the time of the last inspection in 2000 when they were judged to be broadly in line with the national average. The table below shows the strongly upward trend in the school's results since then:

*The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level and above:*

	Level	2001	2002
By the end of Year 2	2 and above	88%	95%
By the end of Year 6	4 and above	61%	83%

Scrutiny of pupils' work from the last school year confirms these very good results.

97 The scrutiny of work so far this school year shows that most Year 2 pupils are already reaching good standards that are above the national average. Most Year 6 pupils are attaining very good standards that are well above the national average. Observations of lessons during the inspection confirm that pupils are well on course to reach the targets set by the school by the end of this academic year. These judgements are based mainly on the following factors:

- A whole-school commitment to improvement and determination to succeed;
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluating of mathematics throughout the school;
- The very high quality of teaching especially in Years 5 and 6;
- The very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils in lessons;
- Very good support for pupils with special educational needs.

98 The school has taken a strong stance on meeting the needs of all pupils and its inclusion policy is fully implemented by all staff. All pupils including those with special educational needs are provided with a rich curriculum that includes numeracy and all areas of mathematics – number, algebra, shape and measures, and data handling. All pupils have equal access to calculators, computers and programmable robots. The use of ICT is very well developed and regularly integrated within the mathematical curriculum, most especially in data handling. All pupils have many good opportunities to acquire new mathematical vocabulary and practise their literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The very good procedures to track pupils' progress indicate that there are no marked differences in the attainment of girls and boys or different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they receive very good support from learning assistants and class teachers. In close partnership with teachers, the deputy headteacher also provides specially planned support that successfully meets the particular needs of small groups of pupils including the more able. The small number of pupils for whose mother tongue is not English also receive very good support and make very good progress.

99 In Year 2, pupils count forwards and backwards confidently and accurately in multiples of 2, 3, 5 and 10. They successfully replace multiples of five and ten with "Buzz!" or "Bang!" counting at speed. Their counting is measured and regulated by the very good use of a drum that sets a lively pace in the quick-fire warm-up start of the lesson. They recapitulate their knowledge and understanding of place value adding 3 in their heads to a range of two-digit numbers such as 57 and 84, and recognise that repeated addition is one method of calculating multiplication sums. They apply their knowledge of multiplication tables when calculating the total number of biscuits on four plates using terms like 'lots of', 'sets of' and 'groups of' and begin to use new words like row, column and array with confidence when engaged in practical activities. In describing solid shapes, pupils use the

correct mathematical terms with ease, for instance 'face', 'edge', 'cube', 'curved', 'flat' and use a computer program very effectively to construct a three-dimensional model.

100 By the age of eleven, pupils' multiplication skills are very securely developed: they speedily and accurately work out in their heads a range of calculations involving decimals and whole numbers. They successfully double and halve three and four-digit numbers such as 347 using a range of different methods including mental recall and partitioning. They apply their knowledge and understanding of multiplication to very good effect calculating the area of rectangles using the formula 'lxb', (length multiplied by breadth), and develop a strategy and formula for finding the area of a right-angled triangle. They make very effective use of their mathematical skills in identifying and classifying objects using two criteria when using computers, and make very good use of time lines and spreadsheets when solving problems involving hours and minutes. There are many opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy skills. For example, when investigating fractions or the properties of shape pupils confidently use correct mathematical vocabulary such as 'denominator', 'fraction', and 'equivalent'.

101 The overall quality of teaching and learning in the infants is good, and very good in the juniors. During the inspection the quality of teaching in Year 6 was excellent. Much of the teaching in Year 5 also had excellent features. In these lessons the best teaching was characterised by a number of factors:

- Lesson intentions made explicit at the start, referred to during the lesson and in summary at the end;
- Crisp pace, pushing forward pupils' learning with a strong sense of purpose;
- High expectations and challenging work to stretch pupils' learning;
- Frequent intervention and effective questioning;
- Summing up at the end leaving pupils with a strong sense of achievement.

102 In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to make predictions and solve problems in their own way, using strategies such as time-lines, or partitioning to calculate halving and doubling. Teachers devise challenging tasks that make their pupils think very hard. Pupils in Year 6 for instance successfully investigated probability to a level not commonly found in primary schools. Teachers ask probing questions and keep their pupils 'on their toes' with comments such as 'I challenge you to work this out – I know you can do it if you really try.' They use encouraging remarks such as 'Be a number detective!' and 'Are you switched on?' To maintain the momentum of lessons they spur their pupils on to even greater effort using remarks such as 'Four minutes have passed. You should be moving on now to the second problem.' For younger pupils they make very good use of a range of resources to capture pupils' interest and make lessons fun. These include using musical instruments to sustain momentum when counting, real eggs and bars of chocolate to illustrate multiplication, and television schedules to provide real-life examples of time devoted to news programmes. Teachers' use of these resources brings excitement and relevance to pupils' learning, and so they make mathematics enjoyable.

103 Experienced and well-briefed classroom assistants provide very good support in class for pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue. An excellent feature of teaching throughout the school is the close liaison between the class teachers and assistants so that pupils with special educational needs are asked specific questions and given the chance to succeed. For example a Year 5 pupil is eager to share how he worked out half of 126 using a whiteboard and pupils in Year 2 are invited to describe their solid shapes to the class using proper mathematical terms such as 'face' and 'edge'.

104 Teachers know the National Numeracy Strategy very thoroughly, their planning of the three-part lesson is very good and they use questioning very well. For instance, when investigating how much pupils knew and understood about units of time, a teacher asks, 'How long will it be before you can vote?' 'How long does it take to boil an egg/build a house/for a baby to grow?' They have developed very good activities for the quick-fire warm-up introductory part to their lessons. These motivate pupils well and reinforce previously learnt skills, and often usefully lead on to support the main activity of the lesson. For instance, recalling multiplication facts involving decimals prepared pupils very effectively for the calculations on areas of rectangles and right-angled triangles that followed. Teachers make very good use of whiteboards so that every pupil is engaged in calculations and time is used efficiently. These activities generate interest and a sense of fun as well as providing teachers and assistants with opportunities to conduct immediate assessments. This excellent implementation of the numeracy strategy is having a considerable impact on raising standards and accelerating progress.

105 Occasionally teachers spend too long in the first part of the lesson, and let the pace of the main activity slacken. However, teachers plan work very carefully within the ability sets to meet the needs of differing groups of pupils and sum up lessons effectively providing pupils with a sense of achievement, using questions like 'What have we learnt in this lesson?' The school has developed a very good policy for the presentation of written work that is included in pupils' exercise books, and fully implemented. All pupils have their own mathematical targets for the term in their books.

106 Pupils enjoy mathematics very much. In many lessons they were reluctant to stop work. 'Please can we go on?' said a Year 2 pupil engrossed in calculating multiplication using rows and columns. They work very well as a class, group, in pairs or individually. They listen attentively to each other and to adults. They have extremely positive attitudes towards their work, are enthusiastic and eager to contribute in discussions and in warm-up activities. They know the purpose of the lesson and articulate clearly what their tasks are and how to set about them. For instance, one pupil says, 'First I imagine a rectangle, work out its area, then calculate half of that to get the area of the right-angled triangle.' They take immense care and pride in the presentation of their work, using rulers, pencil and ink diligently. They work assiduously and concentrate hard, eager to complete their task. When moving between rooms at the beginning and end of lessons their behaviour is excellent.

107 Pupils make very good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects such as geography, history, design and technology, ICT and religious education. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils made very good use of Venn diagrams when classifying the rules of different world regions such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, and in geography pupils use their knowledge and understanding of angles and distance when investigating bearings. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, and good opportunities for their moral, social and cultural development through mathematics lessons.

108 Detailed reports are given to parents about their children's achievement, and homework is a regular feature. Parents' evenings and workshops are arranged although the latter are not well attended. However, the school has successfully organised a club for parents and pupils to work together after school. The school has made admirable improvements in assessment procedures and their use since the time of the last inspection. It now uses a very good range of assessment procedures to record and forecast pupils' attainment and progress. The analysis of test results is very effectively used to adapt the curriculum and arrange in-service training for teachers. Pupils' work is marked in accordance with the school's policy, and includes symbols that indicate a discussion with the teacher has taken place.

109 There is excellent leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, very knowledgeable and hard working. He supports colleagues very well and leads by example with his own excellent teaching. Although immensely encouraged by the very good improvement in the subject, the co-ordinator is determined to raise standards still further and rigorously monitors and evaluates all aspects of the subject throughout the school.

## **SCIENCE**

110 There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection in June 2000. Standards, which were broadly average then, have risen and are now above national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is true both for pupils attaining the expected level and those who achieve beyond this. Pupils have more opportunity for scientific investigation (although it could be better still), and the quality of teaching has improved considerably. While pleased with the progress made, there is a clear intention to get even better, and the subject is in a good position to continue to improve.

111 Discussions with pupils, as well as the work they have completed, indicates that they have covered all aspects of science thoroughly: life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. There is also plenty of evidence of scientific discovery through experiments and activities. While these are understandably usually teacher directed for younger pupils, older pupils lack sufficient opportunities to set up their own challenges, whether by deciding on an experiment to answer a given question, or by choosing their own methods, equipment or way of recording what they discover. A few higher attaining pupils in Year 6, working with the deputy head, sometimes have the chance to do this, but most pupils follow a set path prescribed by the teacher. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 express a real enthusiasm for experimental science, as well as a good understanding of what makes a 'fair test'. This, together with their high standard of behaviour and their ability to work well with each other, suggests that they would derive real benefit if given more independence.

112 Teaching is good overall. Teachers make good use of questioning. Sometimes this is to recap and check pupils' understanding of previous work, as when Year 2 pupils talk about health, or pupils in Year 5 rehearse the knowledge they have of solids, liquids and gases. On these occasions, and when teachers introduce new ideas, they are careful to use accurate scientific vocabulary and expect their pupils to do the same. This makes a good contribution to pupils' language skills: pupils in Year 6 confidently use terms such as 'opaque' and 'translucent'. Revision of what has been learned at the end of lessons is more variable. When it is well done, as in a Year 5 lesson, pupils are encouraged to talk about what they have discovered and realise that there is often more than one 'right' answer. This leads to a good level of debate, as pupils defend their ideas and take wider viewpoints on board. In other lessons, in Year 4 on electrical circuits for example, there could be more discussion of the pupils' own findings, so that the learning is derived from personal experience.

113 Teachers have good subject knowledge, and use it in a way that helps pupils to understand. Lessons are generally well planned, with carefully thought out activities and plenty of good quality resources. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils are given frequent short tasks to complete; between these tasks the teacher asks questions that make the pupils think before moving on to the next. In this way the pupils are constantly engaged and lots of learning takes place. In a less successful lesson younger pupils are set a series of written tasks to complete over a longer time; as a result some lose interest and their learning is limited. If younger pupils are to have the whole afternoon devoted to science the

planning needs careful consideration to ensure that they benefit. Other science lessons too would profit if there were explicit expectations of how much work pupils are expected to produce in the time available.

114 Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. Their books indicate that this is maintained throughout the school, and that pupils in different classes in the same year group are catered for equally. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, make good progress too: well-briefed classroom assistants support them, and their tasks are adapted where necessary, especially in terms of language. The use of support staff is well planned and the quality of the people involved makes a strong contribution to the progress of different groups of pupils. The school has recently identified pupils it regards as 'gifted and talented'. The Year 6 pupils who have extra challenges benefit from this: one pupil in each of the last two years has attained the very challenging level 6. It has not yet had an impact on pupils in other year groups.

115 Good use is made of ICT. It is well used by teachers in the classroom, for example through presentations exploiting the benefits of overhead projectors or 'PowerPoint'. Pupils themselves research scientific information on the Internet, and produce graphs to illustrate their findings. As well as learning how to record their findings clearly and systematically, literacy skills are also enhanced by the quality of questioning and discussion, and the expectation that pupils will use accurate and appropriate vocabulary. There are also good links with numeracy, as pupils collect and interpret numerical data, realising that they need to measure accurately and more than once to ensure consistency.

116 The subject is well led: the co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has done a lot in a short time, and is well supported by a very knowledgeable and interested governor. She is aware of the findings of the previous report and has made a good response to many of the issues raised. Her action plan indicates that she has useful ideas for further development. Assessment procedures are thorough and informative and are playing their part in raising standards. The co-ordinator is aware of what is happening in the subject through assessing planning and pupils' books, as well as monitoring teaching and learning. Ways need to be devised of using the best teaching, which is very good, as a model for improvement within the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117 Standards in art are above average by the age of seven and eleven. This represents good improvement by the age of eleven as standards were judged to be average for these pupils at the time of the last inspection in June 2000. All pupils make good progress including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The co-ordinator has worked hard to maintain the high standards and improve those for the older pupils. Here, staff confidence together with their expertise in the teaching of art has resulted in this improvement. Teachers explore creative and adventurous methods to improve pupils' knowledge and skills.

118 Pupils develop good skills with a good range of materials and techniques. Much of the art work in evidence is based on two-dimensional art and design, but involves an interesting programme of tasks that are well focused on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. Some very good artwork is produced in Year 2 reflecting colour, line, tone and shape. Here pupils produce portraits of their friends in pencil and work carefully to create an imaginary piece of work in pastel and charcoal, paint or crayon. Many pupils show close attention to detail and meticulous use of the materials, taking great care not to smudge their compositions. Teaching here is excellent, inspirational and challenging,

resulting in high standards. Pupils are encouraged to do their best knowing that all their efforts are valued. Good use of questions reminds pupils of previous lessons, consolidates their learning and establishes skills and knowledge. Specific vocabulary is used throughout these lessons, displaying very good confidence and expertise. A still life composition in Year 5 is approached sensibly, and pupils skilfully use the techniques of line, tone and texture in pencil sketches of vegetables. Skilful teaching in Year 6 demonstrates the use of perspective, encouraging pupils to practise the technique in their sketchbooks. Pupils achieve this with enthusiasm and amazement.

119 Pupils develop a good appreciation of the work of different artists, contrasting the pastoral scenes involving landscape compositions of artists such as Constable and Klimt. Pupils discuss the work of 'Picasso' as abstract and Mondrian as 'colourful, using line'. The development of pupils' specific language in art is good, built upon and reinforced throughout all the year groups.

120 The teaching quality is good throughout the school. Skills are taught well, teachers have good subject knowledge, methods are effective, expectations high and the pace of learning brisk. The pupils are involved in the evaluation of their work and enjoy art and design. They work hard and are productive and creative artists. Behaviour and relationships are strengths. Challenge for higher attaining pupils is good and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language achieve well.

121 The curriculum for art and design is focused effectively on the development of skills. It is broad, well balanced, relevant and contains considerable richness. The use of sketchbooks is developing as a tool to try and test ideas, skills and designs. There is good use made of ICT in lessons involving graphics programs such as 'colour magic'. Links with other subjects such as history, science and religious education are also good. Assessment in art is generally informal with the exception of Year 2 and Year 6 where formal assessments take place. In Year 2 portfolios of pupils' work are being compiled and this good practice is to be extended to other year groups. This will aid assessment and ensure that the high standards are maintained.

122 The subject leader manages art with interest, involvement and inspiration. She monitors the work in other classes through lessons and displays and provides support when required. Art is promoted through a Year 4 art club led by a visiting 'artist in residence' and good resources provide a wide range of media with which to work. The subject leader is aware that 3D art is insufficiently well developed, however, there are plans to give sculpture more emphasis in the future.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123 Standards are above the expected levels for pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection in June 2000. There have been changes to the curriculum, which have resulted in an improved range of learning opportunities. Pupils make good progress throughout the school including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The curriculum has been adapted to include elements of the original scheme of work together with the government guidelines for design and technology. Projects are now more varied and appropriate and skills are developed systematically. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Curriculum time is shared with art and provides realistic sessions for skills to be established and lesson targets accomplished.

124 The whole range of design and technology skills are included in the work, so that the younger pupils develop the ability to plan and design products, manufacture them, then



evaluate the result suggesting ways to improve. This was observed in a Year 2 lesson where the pupils designed a puppet to accompany a story for reception children. The pupils drew detailed sketches to show their designs and labelled them to show what materials were to be used and the joining techniques necessary. In this and other successful lessons, pupils are given opportunities to use their own initiative and show their understanding. There is good emphasis on using specific vocabulary throughout the year groups, resulting in older pupils using a good range of technical vocabulary quite naturally. They make choices in their investigations. Pupils in Year 3 decided the type of bread they preferred when making sandwiches, and gave good reasons for their choices, such as 'I like the sweet bread' or 'I don't like the seeds'. Skills are taught well as seen in a Year 4 lesson involving joining techniques: pinning, tacking and sewing. All pupils were well supported and successful because the lesson was well organised, resourced and staffed.

125 Teaching is good overall, with strengths in teachers' methods, planning, and resources. The teachers are confident and have good levels of expertise in design and technology. Lessons are mostly brisk with high expectations and use of humour. Support staff make a considerable contribution in lessons. They help to promote pupils' successes for example, in the teaching of sewing skills.

126 There is a good subject curriculum with a good focus on skills development. The system of assessment is mostly informal however; there is a portfolio of work to assist teachers in the maintenance of the high standards achieved. Teachers have attended a good range of training to improve their understanding of 'mechanisms' and 'control'. The 'construction centre' is used well to promote aspects of construction and enables pupils to experience 'hands-on' technology. There are sound curriculum links with science and ICT and there are plans to extend these opportunities. School initiatives in design and technology include a bridge built over the pond in the environmental garden, making a good contribution to pupils' social development.

127 The leadership is good and the subject well managed. The co-ordinator has been in post for two year. Resources are good, plentiful and of good quality. Storage is safe and easily accessed when attended by a member of staff. There is good attention paid to health and safety throughout the school in design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

128 During the inspection, only a small amount of geography was observed in the infants, but further evidence, gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with staff and pupils, and examination of teachers' planning, indicated that standards in geography are above national expectation at the ages of seven and eleven. This is an improvement on the standards at the time of the previous inspection and is due to a planned programme of monitoring by the co-ordinator, which has resulted in better teaching of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, and all pupils are fully included in the planned activities.

129 Year 1 pupils talk about where they live in relation to the school, and describe their route. They mark this on a simple map, adding the landmarks that they pass. They are beginning to draw their own maps, on a simple level, and have an understanding of a 'bird's eye view'. In Year 2, pupils have undertaken practical work in connection with their topic on shops. They have walked to the local shops and drawn maps of their route. They record the main findings of their visit in diagrams, using ICT, and demonstrate their ability to use a simple key accurately. Pupils in Year 3 investigate why some areas in the world are hot and others are cold. They can use world maps and a globe to look up the equator, and use the correct geographical terms, such as 'hemisphere'. Year 4 pupils explain how the weather

affects human activities, and record their conclusions about leisure activities in graph form, as well as using ICT. Year 5 pupils use atlases to locate where they live, relating this to Europe, and particularly to Greece, which is the focus of their current history topic. Year 6 pupils recognise the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in mountain areas. They use atlases competently to locate and identify physical features such as mountain ranges, and describe how human processes can change the nature of places, particularly affecting quality of life.

130 The quality of teaching and learning is very good in both the infant and junior classes. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and the teachers show good subject knowledge. Different activities are set depending on pupils' abilities as, for example, in a Year 1 class where one group was adding landmarks to the route to school, other pupils were drawing their own maps, while a third group was constructing roads at floor level. Classroom assistants give very good support to groups. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with challenging activities, and teachers' marking is of a consistently high standard.

131 Pupils are encouraged to work as a team and help each other, which contributes greatly to their social development. In a Year 4 lesson, for instance, each group had a team captain and they had to produce a graph as a team effort. The breadth of the curriculum supports pupils' cultural and moral education. Year 6 pupils were encouraged to give thoughtful answers to the question, "Is tourism always a good thing?" Pupils' written and oral work, their recording procedures, and the regular use of the computer make very good contributions to literacy, numeracy and ICT throughout the school.

132 The co-ordination of the subject is very good. A complete audit has been carried out since the last inspection; a very thorough scheme of work has been drawn up and good resources have been purchased. Good use is made of the locality for fieldwork, and an effective link with a school in a rural area has been established. The co-ordinators are now developing more regular assessment tasks for pupils at the end of topics.

## **HISTORY**

133 It was possible to see only one lesson in the infant classes, but scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers, and examination of teachers' planning show that standards throughout the infant and junior classes are above those expected by the time pupils are aged seven and eleven. This is consistent with the findings at the last inspection. All pupils are fully involved in lessons, and special needs pupils make very good progress owing to the very good support from classroom assistants and the high-quality activities provided by the teachers.

134 Pupils in Year 1 talk about changes in their own lives, use words and phrases relating to the passing of time and have an emerging sense of chronology. In Year 2, pupils make distinctions between aspects of their own lives and past times. For example, in one Year 2 class, pupils enjoyed acting out the concept of bartering, each taking the role of a different tradesperson, such as a carpenter or blacksmith; this also supported their development in literacy. In Year 3, pupils compared a Roman house with a modern one, deciding which they would prefer to live in, and giving reasons for their choice. In Year 4, pupils successfully found answers to questions they themselves had formulated about the Pyramids from a variety of sources, including ICT, working independently and co-operatively. The pupils could distinguish between primary and secondary sources, realising that one pupil in the group was actually a primary source of information, as he had visited Egypt. Year 6 children were able to empathise with housewives in the Second World War, who had to create a balanced diet for their families when food was rationed. As well as enjoying the songs of the Second World War, they described in detail events leading up the

outbreak, and knew where to access information, including the Internet and the Imperial War Museum's interactive website.

135 The standards of teaching and learning are very good in infant and junior classes, as is pupils' progress. Teachers are enthusiastic and provide imaginative tasks. For example, Year 4 pupils were asked, 'Would you like to be history detectives?' This immediately stimulated their interest and made them keen to learn. Tasks that are appropriate for the different needs of the pupils are provided, and teachers have high expectations for behaviour, as well as very good strategies for keeping pupils on task.

136 The encouragement of teamwork and the sharing of resources make very significant contributions to the pupils' social and moral education. Lessons are very well structured and appropriately linked to previous learning. In the very good lessons, excellent use is made of good-quality resources, role-play and other practical experiences, which require pupils to think carefully and make deductions from their findings. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on the Second World War, the children were amazed to see the food the teacher displayed, which represented the average rations for one person for one week, especially the meagre number of sweets! Pupils' response is very good. They have very positive attitudes to the subject. For example, Year 6 pupils, when interviewed, commented, 'We like to find out about interesting things like rationing. It's fun.'

137 The study of history makes a very good contribution to the development of literacy in both infant and junior classes. Of particular significance are the topics set for research at home, which are of a very high standard. Every opportunity is taken to use ICT for research, and the history curriculum effectively contributes to cultural education in the school.

138 Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has produced a carefully constructed scheme of work, and is given time to monitor the subject throughout the school to ensure that standards are consistently high. The co-ordinator and his counterpart in the infant class are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their roles; their next priority is to develop the use of more regular formal assessments of children's progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

139 The previous inspection in June 2000 found that the school had made considerable improvement, and that as a result standards were well above national expectations. These standards have been successfully maintained. The second ICT suite is being updated. As a result of training and personal commitment there is increased competence and confidence amongst the teaching and non-teaching staff. All the teachers have completed their training, and while the level of expertise varies, they are all more confident than they were. The school has also encouraged teaching assistants to train alongside them, with good support from the local authority. As a result the teachers, especially in the juniors, are able to rely on them to help when teaching in the computer suite.

140 All classes are timetabled to use the computer suite on a weekly basis, with more time available for junior pupils. This facility is very well used, sometimes to teach computer skills, and sometimes to use the technology as a vehicle for learning in other subjects. Teachers plan this thoughtfully, and where possible are careful to link these two strands together, so that the skills are practised realistically. For example, pupils in Year 2 practise highlighting and 'dragging' in order to create a list of instructions: higher attainers write their own instructions, remembering to use imperative verbs. In Year 3, pupils change fonts and import pictures in order to produce a book cover for a familiar story. Year 6 pupils, creating patterns by rotating regular shapes, are encouraged to use their mental mathematics skills and their knowledge of factors. There are also some gasps of wonder as the computer

produces complex and beautiful patterns in response to their commands, a good example of technology aiding creativity and spirituality.

141 Teaching is very good in both the infants and the juniors and pupils make very good progress. Planning in all subjects includes opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their ICT skills. These are varied and well chosen to support learning. Sometimes pupils work in pairs in the classroom, challenging their mathematical mental skills, word processing their writing or researching their topic, often using the Internet. At other times the whole class use the computer suite, for example to practise their mental addition skills by using well-constructed and challenging games from another primary school website. The difficulty here is that by the time the teacher has introduced the activity and talked about loading the program, and the pupils have accessed the website, there is little time left to practise the relevant mathematical skills, although the lesson is numeracy rather than ICT. On occasion smaller groups use the suite to pursue investigations, making good use of facilities such as spreadsheets to calculate large numbers as they calculate and compare the areas of rectangles and triangles.

142 The classroom computers are of high quality and are all linked to the Internet, making them effective support resources for pupils' learning. Because of this they are in frequent use. The general standard of pupils' behaviour, and their ability to work unsupervised, means that teachers are able to set tasks secure in the knowledge that pupils will use the equipment sensibly, sharing ideas and information. The school has suitable policies and systems to ensure that the Internet is used safely and appropriately.

143 The subject is very well led by a co-ordinator who combines enthusiasm and expertise. There is an interactive school website, designed by three pupil with support from the coordinator, which allows parents and pupils to access school resources and information if they have Internet access at home. All pupils have their own e-mail address: this allows them to access their own files for nine months after they leave the school. Documentation is recent, regularly reviewed and specific to the school. There is effective assessment of pupils' ICT skills to ensure progress. The co-ordinator's development action plan targets useful improvements, such as an interactive whiteboard to replace the less effective large monitor when demonstrating to pupils. The school is very well placed to make ICT even stronger.

## **MUSIC**

144 At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. Standards have improved since then and are now above national expectations. This is due to very good monitoring and evaluating of the subject by the co-ordinator, the high quality of teaching by class teachers and visiting staff, and a commitment and determination to succeed shared throughout the school. Staff and visiting specialists promote a high degree of interest and enthusiasm for music, and are developing a higher profile for the subject. All pupils have equal access to activities related to music. For instance, all pupils take part in annual musical productions at Christmas and in the summer term, and all have access to instrumental music lessons. These opportunities enable all pupils to consolidate and develop their musical experiences, and several talented pupils have distinguished themselves in drama, dance and music in the wider community.

145 Younger pupils sing with evident pleasure in their music lessons with good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. In lessons they were following melody lines and accurately singing rhythms as a result of very good modelling by the teacher. They enjoy listening to stormy music from the score of the film 'Titanic,' before expressing their feelings very effectively in paint and sound. They distinguish long and short sounds. Pupils in Year 2

successfully identify both pulse and rhythm in preparation for instrumental accompaniments on a range of percussion instruments. They successfully give a complete performance of their song, comprising a choir, and two groups of instrumental accompaniments, one marking the pulse, the other defining the rhythm. They hold their separate lines securely throughout.

146 Older pupils enjoy singing a range of songs in two parts. Their singing is accurate, well controlled and rhythmic and they hold their parts well. They have learnt to sing louder in some parts than in others but they do not yet use the musical term, *crescendo*. Older pupils are beginning to read conventional notation using correct musical vocabulary such as 'crotchet', 'minim', 'breve', and 'stave'. They compose their own music using a staff. They accurately fit their compositions to meet the requirements of 4/4 time. They enjoy performing their compositions for each other. Good links with ICT are being developed. Older pupils understand the term 'ostinato' and used computers to construct a sound picture based on their science topic, 'Journey into Space'. They have recorded their composition as a graphic score with appropriate symbols for the sound effects they want to portray.

147 The curriculum is considerably enriched by a very good range of activities and clubs such as guitar club, choir and lessons given by peripatetic teachers in clarinet, flute and oboe. In guitar club, pupils have successfully composed their own song on 'Bridges,' written the lyrics, and learnt to sing in two parts. They produce a lovely sound, very tuneful and enthusiastically performed, but they are eager to achieve perfection and practise willingly to improve their performance still further.

148 Most of the teaching is either good or very good. The teaching in Year 2 is excellent. The regular teaching of singing is good, with very good modelling and good listening opportunities. There is good liaison between the teacher and the accompanist, so time is used efficiently. The co-ordinator has recently established new resources to provide more variety in the types of songs taught as well as to provide greater challenge. Good links with literacy are made in singing lessons because the words of songs are projected for pupils to read. Teachers are very enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge, using correct vocabulary such as 'duration', 'pitch', 'pulse', 'bar' and 'stave'. They manage pupils and resources very well, and their lessons are well paced and lively. The teaching in instrumental lessons is very good and pupils make very good progress due to very good ongoing assessment procedures. Teachers in lessons observed have high expectations, and include opportunities for pupils to appraise their performances. They pay attention to technical aspects of singing, including posture and breathing using phrases like 'Prepare your body for singing.' Teachers make very good use of their own skills, for instance one lesson ended with the class singing a favourite song accompanied by the teacher on the mandolin.

149 Music provides good opportunities for enriching pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies include singing and listening opportunities, most notably live performances from pupils and staff on piano and clarinet. One beautiful performance sustained the deeply emotive atmosphere in a unique and entirely appropriate style. Suitable recorded music is also played on these occasions but teachers miss opportunities to expand pupils' knowledge and understanding about what is being played, who composed it, and when it was written. In most classrooms, music is played quietly at the beginning of the day providing a calm or inspiring atmosphere, representing music of different cultures and different times. Some teachers play music while pupils get ready for physical education lessons. For instance, in one class pupils hum along to 'William Tell' as they get changed.

150 The new co-ordinator has updated the policy and provided a detailed scheme of work that supports colleagues very well. Assessment opportunities are built in at the end of

each unit of work, and teachers include an annual report for parents summing up achievement over the year. The co-ordinator regularly checks teachers' planning and music displays, and has discussed music with pupils in Years 2 and 6. There are very good links in music being forged with Year 7 through the Dudley "Moving On" project designed to help pupils settle in to their secondary schools more easily.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

151 Standards in physical education are average at the end of both the infant and junior stages, and pupils make sound progress overall. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. There are however some variations within this broader picture. Pupils' progress in swimming is restricted by their limited opportunities, as they only use the swimming baths for one term in Year 3. As a result, only just over a half attain the national target of swimming 25 metres unaided at this stage. The school is aware of this, and is hoping to increase provision into other year groups. Conversely, standards in dance in Year 3 are clearly better than might be expected, and if carried through to Year 6 standards here would be above, if not well above expectations.

152 Apart from discussions with staff and pupils, and looking at school documentation and teachers' planning, judgements are based on the five lessons seen, two in the infants and three in the juniors. These included gymnastics, dance and games. Good teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 in both gymnastics and games. Both lessons started with effective warm-ups, involving both stretching and aerobic activities. There was a good emphasis on developing skills, especially in gymnastics where pupils were encouraged to watch selected groups who are performing well. Teachers managed pupils very well, and the pupils themselves were enthusiastic and keen to learn: as a result little time was wasted and good progress was made. Pupils' ball skills in games, and their control and co-ordination in gymnastics are as expected for their age, but this is early in the school year: if progress continues at this rate attainment will improve too.

153 This has already happened in dance in Year 3, where all three classes were observed. The quality of pupils' performance indicates they already have a good grounding; the quality of teaching they receive, which is very good, successfully builds on this platform. The warm-ups are excellent, appropriately linked to music of different tempos (as is the cool-down at the end), and teachers ensure pupils know why they are important. Careful planning, appropriate music, imaginative teaching, warm relationships, high expectations, and the use of pupils as examples: all these strengths ensure that pupils make very good progress. They enjoy what they do, they make perceptive comments ('I liked the way they used different levels', 'the dance suited the music'), they respond well to suggestions and they work very well with each other.

154 While pupils' attainment in games in Year 5 is satisfactory, as is teaching, less progress is made. The lesson starts very well, with a very thorough warm-up and good attention is paid to safety issues. However too much time is spent on pupil management, which leads to less time for learning. Pupils practise their rugby skills in pairs standing still, but the game that follows is too demanding, expecting pupils to pass and receive on the move while opposed. As a result, pupils are active but have limited opportunities to use the skills they have been learning.

155 There is good planning for pupils who are not taking part, for whatever reason. They are encouraged to observe the lesson carefully, often being asked to focus on something specific, such as 'which group is working best?' or 'can you see where pupils could improve?' This keeps them involved, and helps them to be aware of what has been learned

when they next take part. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those pupils whose mother tongue is not English, make similar progress to their peers.

156 The co-ordinator is new to the post, having been appointed in September, but she has already developed a useful plan of action for the future. Assessment grids have been introduced, which should give a better picture of pupils' individual progress. The school's membership of the School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership will bring further benefits. There are plenty of after-school sporting clubs, including dance, basketball, soccer, netball and benchball, all open to boys and girls and with opportunities for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. Most of the teaching staff have had in-service training in school, and good use is made of learning assistants, who make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157 At the time of the last inspection, standards were at the expected level by the end of Year 2 and above at the end of Year 6. These standards have been maintained. The policy has been up-dated and includes recent national guidance. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. This is due to better understanding of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the determined efforts of the co-ordinator and all staff to raise standards.

158 Year 1 pupils enjoy listening to the story of Sita and Rama and sensibly discuss the way in which good overcomes evil. In Year 2 the theme of good conquering evil becomes even more meaningful as pupils re-enact the story of David and Goliath. One pupil says 'God has made David strong from the heart' confirming that the story is being clearly understood by the pupils. When another pupil says, 'If you do good things you will always feel better' it is apparent that pupils' spiritual and moral views are skilfully developed in religious education lessons.

159 Experiences are enhanced in junior classes. Year 3 pupils learn about the festival of Hanukkah. They use the specific words related to Hanukkah such as *Shamash* candles with confidence because they know what it means as their teacher has brought examples to show them. In Year 5, pupils explore the different aspects of praising and asking prayers. This experience is made more meaningful for them as they first take the example of the school prayer that they have just shared in their assembly. They then move on to consider the more complex issues raised by studying the Lord's Prayer. Teachers in Year 5 classes approach the study in different ways whilst producing effective learning. In one class they learn from one another very successfully as they use whiteboards to write their understanding of sections of the prayer. In another Year 5 class the pupils work to a time target in pairs looking carefully at words to be explored so that true meaning can be understood. All of the pupils are well supported in doing this by one pupil who is the day's dictionary detective and finds the true meaning of words such as 'contentment'. In Year 6, community rules as depicted in *Carrie's War* and as drawn up by the pupils themselves for their school are compared with the rules of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. There are very good links with pupils' numeracy work as they record their findings in a mathematical diagram.

160 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are very skilled at planning imaginative tasks. They group pupils to work together thoughtfully. The views of pupils from different cultures are highly valued by the teachers when pupils explore other world faiths. Pupils with special needs are carefully integrated into the group and paired work. Tasks are devised at their levels of understanding. Teachers effectively choose to ask them questions that they know they will be able to answer successfully. This results in good progress being made by

all pupils. Pupils are interested and enjoy being involved in class activities because of the imaginative way that tasks are presented to them.

161 There is good leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator has produced useful documentation to support all staff. There is clear direction on how work will be assessed because it is based on the local authority guidance. Good resources have been purchased after consultation with teachers about what they really need. Religious groups also come into the school to promote knowledge and understanding of different religions. More use could be made of ICT to support learning.