

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST ANNE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chelmsley Wood, Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104104

Headteacher: Mr Michael Henry

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson  
2220

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 246351

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Nineacres Drive  
Chelmsley Wood  
Birmingham  
Postcode: B37 5DD

Telephone number: 0121 770 3878

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Christine Hopkins

Date of previous inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2220	Ian Nelson	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)	What sort of school is it? Standards, results and achievements Leadership and management What the school should do to improve
19697	Janice Moorhouse	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Care of pupils Links with parents
25623	Ted Cox	Team inspector	Special educational needs English History	
17253	Andy Bond	Team inspector	Science Physical education (PE)	Quality of teaching and learning
25771	Peter Sandall	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	The curriculum
27369	Carolyn Sandall	Team inspector	Art and design The Foundation Stage Design and technology	
26945	Sylvia Gatehouse	Team inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Number on roll	339 (Above average)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	11% (Below average)
Pupils whose mother tongue is not English	0%
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	16% (Broadly average)

St Anne's Catholic Primary School is an above average size voluntary aided nursery and primary school for pupils aged three to eleven years. The school serves an area of Solihull that includes pockets of social and economic deprivation in excess of that suggested by the numbers claiming free school meals. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and none for whom English is an additional language. Of the pupils with special educational needs, most have moderate learning difficulties, while a small number has speech and language needs. Six of the teachers have joined the staff in the last two years. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average.

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

This is a good school with some excellent features. The very good leadership of the headteacher and the governors has led to a school firmly rooted in an extremely caring Catholic tradition where everyone is valued. This leads to excellent relationships throughout the school. Effective management means that standards are improving through good teaching and learning and that pupils achieve well and make good progress. There is scope for subject co-ordinators and senior managers to play a stronger role in checking how well the school is doing in their areas of responsibility in order to raise standards further. Very efficient management of resources ensures that the school achieves good value for money.

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

- The head and the governors provide very good leadership and have a very clear vision for the future of the school.
- Teaching is good so that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The school ensures that pupils are very well cared for, whatever their needs.
- The excellent provision for social and moral development ensures excellent relationships, and very good attitudes to work and behaviour.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress towards their targets.

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

- 
- Subject co-ordinators and senior managers could be more actively involved in checking how well the school is doing in their areas of responsibility.
- Standards and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Since that time it has tackled the key issues from the previous report well, though it could still make more effective use of assessment information in planning work. It has also improved standards, though even with good gains in mathematics, attainment in that subject has still not reached the national average. The school has also made some significant improvements to the building and to resources, including the computer suite and improved playground facilities. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## 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	D	C	B	A
Mathematics	D	D	D	C
Science	C	C	C	B

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

The table shows that in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2002 standards were above average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics compared with all schools. Compared with schools with similar pupils, standards were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. Standards in English were below average in the year 2000 tests and average in 2001. Standards in mathematics have been below average since the year 2000 tests. Standards in science have been average over recent years. Overall, the standards in the tests have risen broadly in line with standards nationally, though this broad judgement hides the fact that attainment in mathematics and science, particularly among boys, has improved more than standards nationally. The school did not meet its targets in the 2002 tests for eleven-year-olds and has set slightly lower ones this year to reflect the abilities of the current pupils. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 standards were average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics compared with all schools. Compared with schools with similar pupils standards were well above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. Over recent years attainment at seven has fluctuated in reading from well above average to average. In writing it has ranged from well above to below average. In mathematics standards have ranged from average to well below average. Teacher assessments in science show the seven-year-olds attained average standards in 2002. Higher attaining pupils do well in the national tests at eleven, particularly in English. Lower attaining pupils do well in lessons because of the good support they receive. The inspection findings are that standards are average across the school in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science by Year 6. Standards in mathematics at seven are below average. Standards in all other subjects are average at both seven and eleven except for ICT where they are below average at eleven and design and technology (DT) where not enough was seen to be able to make secure judgements.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school, have very positive attitudes to the tasks they are given and are always interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good in classrooms and around the school. They are always very polite and well mannered.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility and do any tasks they are given with great care and pride. Relationships are excellent. Pupils get on very well with each other and with the adults in school at all times.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Levels of attendance match the national average.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall so that pupils make good progress while they are at St Anne's. The best teaching is in Years 1, 2 and 3, though there is some very good teaching and learning elsewhere too. Very rarely does teaching fall below the satisfactory level. Where teaching is less than satisfactory the level of challenge is sometimes not appropriate so that pupils do not learn enough in the lesson. In the best lessons teachers plan effectively and make sure all pupils know what is required of them. They make it clear that they expect pupils to work hard and to achieve a lot and pupils respond well to these high expectations. The effective use of classroom support staff helps pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, to learn effectively and complete tasks. A strong emphasis on teaching basic skills, especially in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, ensures that pupils learn to read and write well and that they grow in confidence when using numbers and calculating in their heads. In most lessons teachers ensure that all pupils are well supported but given challenging tasks to complete, though sometimes all pupils in a lesson are given the same work to do regardless of ability or aptitude. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and this ensures that pupils have very good attitudes to learning and want to do well. In some classes, however, teachers accept pupils' work that is not presented as well as it should be.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects are planned for with an appropriate balance between the various elements. However not all units of work are actually delivered in DT and ICT.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school supports pupils with special educational needs very well so that they make good progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for moral and social development is excellent so that relationships and behaviour are strengths of the school. Provision for spiritual development is very good, reflecting the Catholic nature of the school. The school provides good opportunities for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is an extremely caring school where individuals are nurtured and very well cared for at all times, whatever their needs. Assessment systems are good in English, mathematics and science but not in most other subjects.

The school works well with parents, providing a good range of information about the work their children will cover each term. It provides good opportunities for parents to get involved in the life and work of the school and to support their children's learning. Parents have positive views of the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The head provides excellent leadership and has a very clear vision for the future of the school. Management overall is effective, though subject co-ordinators could have more responsibility for checking how good provision is in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and of the strengths and areas of development in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has some very good systems in place for checking how well it is doing, particularly in English, mathematics and science. It now needs to extend these systems to cover other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The governors and staff make very good use of the funds available and insist on getting the best quality they can within their budget.

The school has a good number of suitably qualified staff. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects. In science, physical education (PE) and ICT resources are good, but in geography and music they are unsatisfactory. The amount and quality of the accommodation is good overall. The head and the governors have a very clear understanding of the need to challenge each spending decision to ensure that it is necessary, to get the best quality they can at the best price, to consult widely over budget issues and to compare how well the school is doing against similar schools.

## 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>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best</li> <li>• Behaviour in school is good</li> <li>• The school is helping children become mature and responsible</li> <li>• Children are making good progress in school</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of after-school clubs and activities</li> <li>• The amount of homework children receive</li> <li>• The information on how children are getting on</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents over what pleases them most and fully endorse their views. However, the inspection team does not agree with the parents over what they think could be improved. While, clearly, there is always room for improvement, the inspectors do feel that the school offers sufficient after-school clubs and activities and homework and provides parents with plenty of good quality information on how well their children are getting on in school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1 When children enter the nursery, attainment is below average. Good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage, that is the nursery and reception classes, leads to good progress so that most children enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment. There are indications from assessments by the school that attainment on entry to nursery is currently higher than at the time of the last inspection.

2 The latest national tests for seven-year-olds showed standards to be average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics compared with all schools. When compared with schools with similar pupils, standards were well above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. Over recent years standards in reading have risen faster than standards nationally. However standards in writing have declined while national standards have improved. In mathematics, girls' results have risen more slowly than those for girls nationally, while boys' results have declined. Overall, therefore, while standards in mathematics have risen slightly, they have not kept pace with the national improvement in attainment. These trends are well illustrated in the table below.

		School	National
Reading	Boys	+1.2	+0.6
	Girls	+1.3	+0.5
	Total	+1.3	+0.6
Writing	Boys	-0.3	+0.6
	Girls	-0.5	+0.7
	Total	-0.7	+0.7
Maths	Boys	-0.3	+1.5
	Girls	+0.4	+1.3
	Total	+0.2	+1.5

**Table showing the difference in average points scores\* between the 1998 and 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds. (\*Points are given for the numbers of pupils who gain each level. The higher the level achieved the more points gained. This is how the government determines the national average in the tests.)**

3 The proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 or above in the most recent national tests for seven-year-olds was average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics compared with all schools. The proportion gaining the higher than expected Level 3 was average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. This is shown in the tables below.

The proportion reaching Level 2 or above in 2002 was:

	School	National
Reading	88%	84%
Writing	88%	86%
Maths	83%	90%

Proportions reaching Level 3:

	School	National
Reading	27%	30%
Writing	2%	9%
Maths	21%	31%

4 The lower than average numbers gaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics is the main reason for the overall grades in the writing and mathematics tests being deemed below and well below average. Teacher assessments in science show an average proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 or above in 2002, but well below average numbers gaining the higher than expected Level 3.

5 The latest national tests for eleven-year-olds showed standards to be above average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics compared to all schools. Compared to schools with similar pupils, standards were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. Although overall, standards rose broadly in line with those nationally, this masks some significant differences by subject and gender. In English the rise matched that nationally for boys and girls. In mathematics the rise exceeded that nationally for boys while girls' standards rose in line with those for girls nationally. In science the boys' rise in standards was well beyond the national rise for boys, while the girls standards rose more slowly than those for girls nationally. This suggests a strong focus on raising boys' attainment has paid off in mathematics and science while girls' results have risen more steadily. This is shown quite clearly in the table below.

English		School	National
	Boys	+1.7	+1.6
	Girls	+0.9	+1.0
	Total	+1.3	+1.3
Maths			
	Boys	+2.5	+1.4
	Girls	+1.7	+1.6
	Total	+2.0	+1.5
Science			
	Boys	+4.1	+2.2
	Girls	+2.1	+2.5
	Total	+2.9	+2.3

**Table showing the difference in average points scores\* between the 1998 and 2002 national tests for eleven-year-olds.** (*\*Points are given for the numbers of pupils who gain each level. The higher the level achieved the more points gained. This is how the government determines the national average in the tests.*)

6 The table also shows that, despite not quite matching the national average for standards in mathematics, the school has made great strides in improving this subject, in excess of the improvements made nationally. The school has also addressed the concern expressed in the last report about the numbers of pupils gaining the higher than expected Level 5 in the tests, at least in English and science, although it has not been quite as successful at this level in mathematics. This is shown in the table below.

Proportion reaching Level 5 in the national tests for eleven-year-olds:

	School	National
English	32%	29%
Maths	22%	27%
Science	37%	38%

7 The lack of Level 5s is the main reason for the overall grading compared with all schools being below average in mathematics, although the proportion gaining the expected Level 4 or above is also slightly below average. This is shown in the next table.

The proportion reaching Level 4 or above in the national tests in 2002:

	School	National
English	85%	75%
Maths	71%	73%
Science	93%	86%

8 The indications are that the school has successfully addressed the issue, raised in the previous report, about the lack of pupils gaining the higher levels in the national tests for eleven-year-olds, at least in English and science. The test results also indicate that the school has successfully addressed the key issue from the previous report about improving standards in mathematics. The school did not meet its targets for the numbers of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above in the 2002 tests and has set slightly lower, yet realistic, targets for the 2003 tests to reflect the capabilities of the current Year 6 pupils.

9 The inspection findings are that standards are broadly average at seven and eleven in all subjects, except for mathematics at seven and ICT at eleven where standards are below average. Too little evidence was seen of work in DT to be able to make secure judgements on standards, though given the limited evidence and discussions with staff and pupils it is unlikely that standards can be satisfactory. The table below summarises the inspection judgements on standards in each subject.

Subject	Year 2	Year 6
English	Average	Average
Mathematics	Below average	Average
Science	Average	Average
Design and technology (DT)	Too little evidence	Too little evidence
Information and communication technology (ICT)	Average	Below average
Geography	Average	Average
History	Average	Average
Art and design	Average	Average
Music	Average	Average
Physical education (PE)	Average	Average

**Table showing the standards found in the inspection in each subject by the Year 2 and Year 6.**

10 Overall, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Assessments undertaken as pupils start school show that, although attainment on entry is currently below average in nursery, it has been well below average in previous years. Consequently, pupils have started school in the past with attainment well below average and left at eleven with overall average attainment.

11 Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are below average but appropriate for their level of understanding. They make good progress relative to their abilities. Their good progress is the result of carefully planned work that matches their individual needs. It is enhanced by the very good quality of support they receive from the special educational needs co-ordinator and the good support of classroom assistants.

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

12 Pupils' attitudes to school and to their lessons are very good. At the time of the previous inspection pupils' attitudes were positive, they were well motivated and had good concentration. This situation has been maintained and pupils show considerable enthusiasm for learning, are interested in what is being taught and enjoy coming to school. In the majority of situations pupils work purposefully and have good concentration skills. They rise to the occasion when teaching is demanding, settle quickly to tasks and are keen to do well. Pupils' very positive attitudes were noted in virtually all lessons and this enhanced their learning. Inspectors saw notable examples of independent, concentrated work by pupils in Year 5 working on river features and Year 4 pupils studying symmetry using mirrors in a mathematics lesson. Pupils in Year 3 were seen handling equipment and resources sensibly during an art lesson and confidently producing a sketch of their partner. A good example of boys and girls working together co-operatively, helping each other and taking turns was seen during a Year 6 mathematics lesson. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree their child likes school and the inspection findings confirm their views.

13 At the time of the last inspection, pupils were said to behave very well. This situation has been maintained and inspectors saw consistently very good behaviour in classrooms, in the playground and in the dining hall. The very good classroom behaviour has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour 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 standards of behaviour in the school are good. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

14 Pupils respond willingly to opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school. The majority of pupils have responsibilities within their classroom 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 register monitor. Older pupils have responsibilities throughout the school and pupils' good sense of responsibility is carried through into the quality of their work. Year 6 pupils greet visitors, assist in assemblies and welcome parents on parents' evenings. They come into school early each day to help prepare classrooms and distribute milk for younger pupils. Pupils enjoy being members of the school council. They are involved in fundraising activities during the annual Lenten collection. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and carry out them out reliably and efficiently. Inspectors found pupils polite, friendly and interesting.

15 Relationships in school are excellent and a strength of the school. The respect shown by pupils for the feelings and values of others is very good and no incidents of bullying, unkind or racist behaviour, between pupils were seen. Inspectors saw kind and caring attitudes between pupils of the same age and between older and younger pupils. Pupils understand the consequences of unkind behaviour or bullying. Bullying is discussed during assemblies and has been on the agenda of the school council and pupils know to approach staff, Year 6 leaders or council members. Pupils form excellent relationships with teachers and other adults, including parents and grandparents helping in the classroom and with the school's cook and her staff. 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. Pupils work and play together collaboratively and in pairs. This was seen during lessons in physical education, science and at playtimes.

16 At the time of the last inspection, attendance at the school was very good. Attendance is now satisfactory, with figures similar to those of other primary schools nationally. Unauthorised absence is consistently low. Figures have been affected by a small number of families who do not co-operate as well as they might in helping the school improve the situation or fulfil their responsibilities by ensuring their children arrive promptly. However, the majority of pupils are keen to come to school and are generally punctual. This enables lessons to begin on time and the school day to get off to a good start.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

17 The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. In the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) and junior classes it is good, whilst in the infant classes it is very good. Three quarters of all lessons observed during the inspection period were judged to be good or better. Overall, 99 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and just one per cent, one lesson, was judged to be unsatisfactory. In this particular lesson there was an inappropriate match of work provided for pupils' levels of ability and the pace of the lesson was too slow; this resulted in unsatisfactory learning by too many pupils. The most effective teaching and learning takes place in Years 1 to 3. Almost all the lessons observed were good, with 57 per cent being very good. It is in these year groups that pupils are making most progress in their learning. In the majority of subjects, teaching and learning are good but in English, science and ICT they are particularly strong in the infant classes. However, there is evidence of some good teaching being delivered in every class in the school from nursery through to Year 6.

18 The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection when weaknesses were identified in the juniors. The present inspection findings show that two thirds of lessons are now good at this stage. Other minor criticisms of teaching have also been addressed properly. There is a well-organised system for setting homework and this makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics. There has also been a greater emphasis on the use of investigation or problem-solving activities in teachers' methods. In science, this approach is proving successful in raising pupils' attainment levels. Overall, since the last inspection the percentage of good or better teaching has increased by approximately 10 per cent and unsatisfactory teaching has fallen by 4 per cent.

19 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. However there are inconsistencies between classes. While teaching in the nursery is mainly satisfactory with some good lessons, teaching in the reception classes is mainly good with some very good lessons. The best teaching is well structured with a clear focus on basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. It includes well planned opportunities for children to explore and investigate with the effective support of classroom assistants. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good the structure sometimes lacks flexibility so that children waste time waiting their turn and opportunities for developing independence are missed.

20 In general, teachers have good subject knowledge of the whole range of curriculum areas. They relay accurate information confidently to pupils and use the vocabulary of each individual subject to build up pupils' knowledge. By choosing relevant examples within pupils' understanding, they stimulate their interest and thirst for learning. In a very good Year 3 lesson, based on the immediate school environment, the teacher's own knowledge of the locality was used very effectively to answer pupils' questions and give worthwhile examples of particular features that spoil the surrounding area.

21 The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, especially in the infant classes. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' basic number bonds and learning multiplication tables in mathematics. In English, the skills of breaking down words into syllables and using punctuation correctly in sentences are taught well and this enables pupils to become more proficient in a range of other subjects. The fundamental skills needed to enable pupils to become confident in the use of ICT are developing steadily as pupils and staff become more familiar with the new technology.

22 Teachers plan lessons thoroughly with a clear view from the outset of what they want pupils to achieve in the lesson. They are well organised and provide materials to enlarge pupils' understanding, such as number fans and apparatus in mathematics sessions. Most lessons follow the pattern set by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and close with a concluding review of what pupils have learned. This is usually successful in consolidating learning and enables teachers to discover how much progress pupils have made.

23 One of the key components in the very good teaching observed in Years 1 to 3 is the high expectations that teachers have for the pupils in their classes. They want pupils to reach their full potential so they set well matched but challenging tasks within their capabilities and give them encouragement to achieve at a higher level. This was illustrated in a very good physical education lesson in Year 2. The teacher made clear the expectation that landings and the end of sequences would be well controlled and that arms and legs would be stretched tightly in balances. Good performers were selected to demonstrate and photocopied sketches of pupils holding stretched shapes were provided to show pupils the high standards that can be achieved. Most teachers set appropriate standards in the presentation of pupils' work but there are examples in exercise books of unfinished and untidy work, especially in the upper junior classes.

24 Relationships within the school are excellent. This is epitomised in the way in which teachers show respect for their pupils. Teachers manage their classes very well. They explain quietly and carefully how they expect pupils to behave. On the rare occasions when pupils become restless or noisy they apply fair and suitable sanctions to re-focus their attention. This results in interested and well-motivated classes who want to learn and can be trusted to work with a good degree of independence. In an art and design lesson in Year 1, for instance, pupils were given opportunities to choose their own materials and create their own designs. They were encouraged to be creative and experiment with materials within a well-ordered lesson framework.

25 Teachers use a range of methods to stimulate pupils and advance their learning. Explanations at the start of lessons are clear and good questioning draws out the extent of pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Years 1 to 3 teachers' approaches are more imaginative and they use learning resources more effectively to enliven lessons. Most lessons move along at a relatively good pace, but in less successful lessons teachers spend too long on the introduction and find that pupils do not complete sufficient work in the time allotted. Learning support assistants provide valuable support, especially for lower attaining pupils but there are times when they could be more involved, especially during the early part of the lesson.

26 Generally, teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and make positive comments or provide rewards to increase pupils' confidence and self-esteem. In Year 3, where the quality of marking is particularly good, teachers give detailed comments and indicate how pupils might improve further. Some marking is superficial and does not pick out fundamental errors in spelling and basic sentence construction. During lessons, teachers monitor pupils'

performance by moving from group to group, checking progress and assessing levels of performance. A number of teachers are setting simple targets for improvement, particularly in English, for pupils to achieve. These are displayed clearly on their desks to remind them of the next step in learning.

27 Pupils with special educational needs are taught as part of the whole class group or in small groups when specific targets in their individual education plans are covered. The quality of teaching they receive is good. Individual education plans contain well-thought-out targets for improvement that are clearly devised to meet the needs of each pupil. The targets move pupils forward in small, manageable steps that allow them to achieve success. Within lessons, teachers try to involve pupils with special educational needs as much as possible. For example, in a history lesson with seven-year-old pupils, the teacher sat by a pupil and helped him think of words to describe a candleholder so that he was able to join in a class discussion. Classroom support staff are used effectively, which has a positive effect on learning and helps these pupils make good progress.

#### **Main points for development**

- Ensure there is a consistent approach to marking.
- Improve the presentation of work in upper Key Stage 2.

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

28 The curriculum provided for the pupils makes a satisfactory contribution to the standards achieved, although there are some aspects that need further thought. The range of learning opportunities is broadly based and relevant, though a little out of balance. For example, there is a lack of breadth in ICT, which means that pupils have insufficient opportunity to cover all aspects of the subject. The same is true to an extent in geography, and is even more marked in DT, where planned units of work are not all delivered. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been successfully introduced, although it is delivered more successfully in reception classes than in the nursery. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully established and are helping to raise standards in English and mathematics.

29 The curriculum weaknesses highlighted by the previous report have been dealt with successfully. There are schemes of work for all subjects, mostly based on national guidelines. This has made planning more consistent and ensured that there are clear learning targets. The use of the National Numeracy Strategy, supported by other materials, has improved the mathematics curriculum and is part of the reason for improved standards. Most pupils are confident in handling number operations and understand what they are doing; the challenge now is to apply these skills more widely to solve problems, and to use them in more open-ended investigations. Numeracy could also be further developed through more carefully planned opportunities to use pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects.

30 Personal, social and health education is addressed through a variety of approaches. The very nature of the school, and the expectation that all members of the school community will try to fulfil the mission statement through their actions, is the basis of encouraging the pupils to become good citizens. An overall policy and action plan is being drawn up with the support of an advisory teacher. Sex education is planned for, and parents are made aware of the provision and have the opportunity to see the material used. There is at present no formal policy for drugs awareness, although the governors are reviewing the matter, with the intention of consulting parents next. 'Circle time', where pupils discuss



important social and moral issues, takes place in some classes, but is not an integral part of the school's provision.

31 There is a good range of sporting and other after-school opportunities for pupils, available to both boys and girls and to most year groups, which are well supported by both pupils and staff. Competitive sport is part of this, and the school is currently very successful in inter-school competitions, although it aims to develop sporting behaviour and enjoyment as well as skills. Various visits and visitors to the school enrich the pupils' experience, including a residential trip to Alton Castle. Able pupils selected by the school attend Solihull's Year 6 enrichment project on Saturday mornings.

32 Community links with the parish are strong, through class masses and celebrations such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Pupils sing in church, and also for groups such as senior citizens. Fundraising for charities is well established, with the responsibility placed on the older pupils to plan and organise their own events, which they do very successfully. There are also links to the local community: for example, the pupils' work on the environment is usefully linked to the local residents' association 'litter pick'.

33 There are close links with the local Catholic high school, Archbishop Grimshaw, to which most pupils transfer. As well as the usual visits by parents and pupils, there are useful initiatives such as projects that the pupils start in their primary school, and finish when they arrive in high school.

34 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is a strength of the school. Pupils are given the same opportunities as others. There are clear guidelines for responding to the needs of these pupils. They are very well supported within the classroom and when withdrawn in small groups. The work they are given is linked very well to the targets identified in their individual education plans as well as to work being done by other pupils in the class.

35 The school lays a strong emphasis on meeting individual needs and making sure all pupils are included in all activities. This is at the core of its aims and informs all its work. Consequently no pupils are debarred from any activities and all receive appropriate support to enable them to be successful in the tasks they are given.

36 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and one of the strengths of the school. There have been some significant improvements since the last inspection. Provision for social development has improved from very good to excellent, while cultural development has improved from satisfactory to good. The school's very strong Christian ethos lies at the heart of everything it promotes and permeates all aspects of its living and being.

37 Spiritual development is very good for all pupils including those with special educational needs, and is especially promoted in assemblies, acts of collective worship and on occasions such as 'circle time', although opportunities are not specifically included in teachers' planning of lessons such as art, music and literacy. Teachers establish a very positive atmosphere in assemblies by good use of suitable music, songs and readings. Lighted candles are used to focus pupils' attention. All pupils are given very good opportunities to pause and reflect on the chosen theme. For instance, Year 2 pupils carefully prepared a very special celebration based on the theme of 'Beauty in God's World' using their skills in singing and reading to very good effect. In an assembly, older pupils reflected upon the statement 'Don't judge a book by its cover'. They have opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the feelings of others through studying Martin Luther King's speech beginning with the famous words 'I have a dream.' The school provides very

good opportunities for spiritual development through an art club when pupils make lovely underwater pictures using batik. Visits to places of interest also help. For example, a trip to a zoo enabled pupils to handle snakes and observe very large spiders at close quarters.

38 Particularly good opportunities for spiritual development were planned for Year 6 during a residential visit to Alton Castle when they were given time to meditate in silence amongst the trees of a forest. One pupil recorded his feelings afterwards: 'I specially liked the meditation. It was relaxing, and soothing. I really enjoyed it.' Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to express their feelings about the natural world around them in a special circle time, when a lighted candle is passed from pupil to pupil around the circle. Every pupil has a chance to express their feelings about the wonders of nature around them.

39 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. Teachers and other staff set excellent examples of care and respect for others, listening carefully to pupils' contributions and genuinely valuing their views. They have established first-rate systems such as stickers from the headteacher, behaviour charts, house points and writing their class rules together. The headteacher uses lunchtimes to acknowledge pupils who have achieved well, not only academically but because of qualities such as care for others, perseverance and good behaviour. Year 1 pupils agree their class rules that include 'Love everyone' and 'Always be honest and truthful'. Year 3 pupils identify the five main skills they need to make circle times successful: thinking, listening, watching, speaking and listening. Pupils show that they have acquired values that reflect thought and responsibility for others in the community. For example, they demonstrate their care for the elderly by singing carols for them, and show they are mindful of their responsibilities towards the environment by taking part in an annual litter-picking campaign. In lessons, too, they show an acute awareness of their responsibility towards each other and their community. For instance, they understand that some stories like fables carry meanings called morals – 'Be happy with what you've got – don't be greedy,' writes a pupil after reading the fable of the dog and the bone. They care for the world around them as they study what they can do to protect it, and what materials they can recycle and why. A pupil in Year 3 writes: 'We can walk to school more to keep our air clean.'

40 The excellent relationships between all staff and the very strong sense of teamwork set the tone for pupils' excellent social development. Teachers provide many very good opportunities in lessons for pupils to work together in pairs, groups and teams. They encourage pupils to listen to each other with courtesy and to show respect for the views of others in lessons, in circle time and at meetings of the school council. Throughout the school there are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. For instance, Year 3 pupils have a list of jobs to be done entitled 'Helping Hands', such as collecting in or giving out books and taking registers to the office. They undertake these duties very seriously and show commitment to their role. Pupils get along together very well. They show care for one another, and work side by side in lessons harmoniously. On their residential visit to Alton Castle, Year 6 pupils have excellent opportunities for their social development. One pupil acknowledges the importance of working together, writing, 'We had to use teamwork. Rock climbing was very challenging for me.'

41 Provision for cultural development is good overall. Good use is made of the locality to raise pupils' awareness of their own culture through visits to places of interest. Very good use is made of the church nearby. Pupils learn about the lives and times of the Victorians, experiencing what it must have been like as they dress up in the costumes of those days, and do the washing using a mangle and a poss-stick. They gain an understanding of Victorians' pastimes such as visiting the seaside. The specialist music teacher has made a very valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development showing pupils musical

instruments from countries such as Brazil and Africa. Pupils enjoy taking part in productions at Christmas, and in musicals featuring other parts of the world, for instance, about life in a rainforest. Some enjoy Irish dancing, and some are beginning to learn to play the guitar and the keyboard. There are limited opportunities for pupils' cultural development in art, although teachers make very good use of a range of masks from other countries such as Egypt and Indonesia in Year 3. Pupils have contributed to large art displays in the hall featuring the festivals and celebrations of world faiths such as the Hindu festival of light, and the special items used by Jews on their Sabbath. However in conversation, few pupils in Year 6 recalled their knowledge and understanding of world faiths, the names of any composers or instruments of the orchestra, and their knowledge of artists and their styles was not secure.

### **Main points for development**

- Ensure that all aspects of ICT and all units of DT are covered.
- Provide more opportunities for the study of art, drama, literature and music from a wide range of cultures.

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

42 St Anne's school takes very good care of its pupils. The school's atmosphere is supportive and happy and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal progress. 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 and gives staff first aid training on particular topics such as dealing with allergic reactions. 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 a 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 three members of staff qualified in first aid and the majority of 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, safety and security audits are carried out in the school with governor and parental involvement. The school has clear policies for ensuring the safe and sensible use of the Internet. Governors are aware of the need to provide a safe environment for pupils and staff.

43 Supervision at lunchtime is very well organised through a rota of six supervisors. Lunchtime is a very happy and orderly occasion as pupils behave in a mature way and take responsibility for their own discipline. Supervisors make positive comments for good behaviour and attitudes directly to the pupils and pupils treat supervisors with politeness and courtesy. There is useful daily contact between the supervisors, the headteacher and the class teachers. With the help of Year 6 pupils and members of the school council, supervisors manage the distribution and use of the popular playground equipment. Lunchtime makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

44 There has been a slight drop in attendance figures since the time of the previous inspection. However, the school has very good procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting punctuality. 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 the small number of parents who fail to communicate the reasons for their children's absence,

so that for most pupils unauthorised absence is minimal. Parents are aware of their responsibilities in meeting the school's expectation that pupils will attend regularly and arrive on time.

45 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school gives a very high priority to the expectation of a good standard of behaviour that is consistent throughout the school. The level of behaviour expected is clearly understood by pupils and parents. There are no whole school rules although a number of classes display their own appropriately worded class rules and have their own reward systems. Inspectors saw the consistent good behaviour of individuals and groups rewarded with praise, effort points and house points so that pupils were encouraged to work hard and succeed. Pupils say there is no bullying in school and that if they were worried about the prospect of it they could confidently talk to staff who would sort things out. As one pupil put it, "The head sorts things out for you if you're worried".

46 Good work, effort and behaviour are valued by teachers and rewarded publicly during the weekly 'Offerings Assembly'. Awards for pupils' achievements during activities undertaken outside school are presented during this assembly. 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.

47 Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well. The school makes good use of outside support agencies, such as the Learning Support Service. Pupils in need of special help are identified from the results of teachers' assessments and tests. Many are identified at an early stage in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers monitor the progress of all pupils closely and the school intervenes at an early stage when teachers or parents express concerns about a pupil's progress. Parents are kept fully informed of pupils' progress, are made aware of the targets in pupils' individual education plans and asked to help with homework.

48 The school has improved its systems for assessing pupils' academic progress since the last inspection, and procedures are now good. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science have an assessment week at the end of each half term, when teachers check pupils' understanding. There is also a weekly assessment in literacy, numeracy and science against one of the week's learning objectives. Planning is highlighted to show pupils' achievement, and also to indicate areas that have not been covered, so that it can help with future planning. There is a detailed tracking process, which predicts pupils' likely future attainment and is adjusted in the light of experience. Analysis of test results is used to focus on areas where pupils do not perform so well. Regular meetings of senior staff look at trends over time. The assessment co-ordinator is well informed and the school is developing a very clear picture of pupils' attainment. All teachers have comprehensive assessment folders that are monitored regularly by the assessment co-ordinator. History is the only subject apart from English, mathematics and science to assess pupils at the end of each unit of work, although there are plans to improve this situation in the near future.

49 The use of assessment to decide the next step for the teacher, or to help pupils to see what they need to do to improve, while satisfactory, is not so well established. Able pupils in Year 6, for example, are not sure how well they are doing in mathematics, or what they need to get better at. Teachers do not regularly use the group targets in pupils' literacy and numeracy books as incentives to move pupils forward, and the pupils themselves are not familiar with them. There were few examples during the inspection of teachers adjusting their planning because pupils had performed better or worse than expected. There were also occasions, in mathematics for example, where teachers pitched the work at an inappropriate level for the ability of the pupils.

### **Main points for development**

- Develop manageable assessment systems for those subjects without them.
- Make more effective use of assessments to help to plan future work.

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

50 The school has continued to work hard to build on the good and effective partnership it had with parents at the time of the previous inspection. Parents' opinions of the school are very positive and there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. The school works well with parents in a relationship of mutual respect. A significant majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that the school works closely with them. Parents receive very good quality information that is presented in a friendly and readable style. There is a well written and illustrated prospectus containing essential information including statements encouraging regular attendance and punctuality. Newsletters of a very high quality are sent home on a regular basis. Newsletters provide parents with information on events such as class and school masses and are used as a means of advertising vacancies in the school for lunchtime supervisors.

51 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 masses and to the leavers' assembly for Year 6 pupils. Inspectors saw approximately 40 parents and grandparents attending a short presentation of Victorian songs by Year 2 pupils, held in the middle of the school day. Each class teacher provides a curriculum overview sheet for parents listing some of the key areas that are going to be covered in their children's class during the term. The pupils' targets in mathematics are sent home so that parents are aware of what their children are aiming at. Each half term practice test papers are also sent home indicating the levels that children are working at. Parents and grandparents are part of the small but loyal group of parents who help in the school on a regular basis. They hear children read and make a useful contribution to practical activities. The majority of parents have signed the home-school contract and comply with the requirements it contains. Each year the contract is distributed to reception and other new parents and has strengthened co-operation between parents and staff.

52 Some parents responding to the questionnaire felt they were not well informed about how their child is getting on at school. The inspectors disagree with them. There are three formal parents' meetings each year held on two consecutive evenings. A significant number of parents attend these meetings. At the second meeting, held during the spring term, pupils' targets for the next term are discussed along with progress made during the previous term. A sample of reports scrutinised by inspectors contained a thorough and systematic record of pupils' progress and achievements. Appropriately worded and 'user friendly' comments on pupils' personal and social development are included throughout the report in all subjects and, more specifically, in the 'general comments' section. Reports include two or three targets for development and a sheet for pupils to comment on their academic and personal progress and set their own targets for the following year. The arrangements for the setting of homework and the types of tasks pupils may be expected to do at home are usefully included as part of the curriculum overview sheets given to parents. Inspectors saw good practice in homework being set in line with this information and good use being made of homework diaries in Year 6 by pupils and parents. A display of good examples of investigative work done at home by pupils in projects based on history and geography topics was seen in Year 4.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53 The quality of leadership and management has been maintained since the last inspection. The headteacher provides excellent leadership based upon a very clear vision for the future of the school. Rooted in an extremely caring Catholic tradition, he has established a school where each individual is recognised as unique and important, whatever their background and needs. This vision is reflected in the school mission statement and aims and permeates everything the school does. He conveys this vision to the rest of the staff and is ably supported in his leadership role by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators, who fully subscribe to the whole school ethos. Parents and pupils also speak highly of the caring and nurturing nature of the school under the head's leadership. Management is good overall. The head has developed some very good management systems over the years to ensure the smooth running of the school. Among these is his system for school development planning which ensures that everyone knows precisely what needs doing by whom each term. It lays down in a very logical and systematic way the particular tasks to be achieved. Some of these are regular ongoing issues that crop up each term or year and this system ensures that they are not overlooked. Others are more developmental and relate to specific priorities in a given term or year. The criticism of this system is that it does not sufficiently distinguish between ongoing management and administrative issues and significant improvement priorities. Consequently as a management tool to ensure the smooth running of the school and that everything is done on time it is second to none but as a method of setting measurable targets for improvement it lacks precision. The same criticism applies to subject action plans as these too lack measurable improvement targets based upon raising standards through accomplishing tasks. They focus primarily upon accomplishing the tasks themselves rather than on how this will help to raise standards or improve progress.

54 All those with a leadership and management role have clear job descriptions outlining their roles and responsibilities. However, subject co-ordinators and senior managers do not take an active enough role in monitoring all aspects of their subjects and areas of responsibility in order to have a very clear view of how well the school is doing in their specific area of responsibility. Many subject co-ordinators are new to their posts and still finding their feet within their new roles and as they grow into them could cope with stronger management responsibilities through more effective delegation. This would improve further the school's good systems for checking how well it is doing. Currently this monitoring of performance is heavily based on English, mathematics and science and makes extensive use of information from assessments and national test results. The school analyses test results to identify what went well and where it could improve and to set targets for future national tests. It enables the school to track the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school and to predict the likely outcomes of future national tests. However, the greater involvement of all those with leadership and management roles would ensure that all subjects and areas of the school were monitored more effectively and efficiently and that all aspects of provision were checked more closely. For example, there is little evidence of co-ordinators systematically checking pupils' work across the school in subjects other than English, mathematics and science to see if standards are high enough, that pupils are progressing fast enough by building on what has gone before, or that classes are covering all aspects of the planned curriculum.

55 The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the provision for special educational needs very well. She monitors pupils' individual education plans thoroughly and works alongside teachers to write the plans. Plans are reviewed regularly and parents are given the chance to be involved at every stage. The system of ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are taught once each week by the special education needs co-

ordinator has two benefits. It enables her to see what progress the pupils make; but because the pupils are taught by their own teacher for the rest of the week, they are included in all class activities and the class teacher takes responsibility for most of their education.

56 The school governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities very effectively. They are fully committed to the school, work hard to support it and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They have very clear views of the school's strengths and the areas for development and make a significant contribution to setting the caring Catholic ethos upon which the school is founded. Governors have a very clear understanding of the information they receive about how well the school is doing in the national tests and list as one their priorities a need to raise the numbers gaining the higher Level 5 in the tests for eleven-year-olds. They have very clear structures for ensuring that they conduct their business efficiently and effectively including committees with terms of reference and delegated powers. They know their school and the community it serves very well and are fully committed to both. They are fully involved in identifying priorities for improvement and in developing policies covering all aspects of the school. They share the commitment of the staff to ensure that all pupils, whatever their background or needs, are fully included in the life of the school. The school has clear policies on race equality and supporting those with disabilities. It has adopted a detailed and thorough policy that provides full information about its strong stance on these important matters. Its aims include many references to its intentions and hopes for every child in the school, irrespective of race, colour, religion, nationality, gender or disability. For instance, the school's agreed aims include clear intentions 'to make everyone feel valued and happy, promote the principles of fairness and justice for all, and ensure that all people have equal access to the full educational opportunities provided by the school'. The school has established a register to ensure that any pupils who are in need of extra care receive guidance and support for however long that that is needed.

57 The school has good procedures for inducting and supporting new staff and for performance management. This is evidenced by the quality of the team spirit in the school despite nearly half of the teachers having been appointed in the last two or three years and so many subject co-ordinators having taken on their responsibilities very recently. Staff work very well together and classroom support assistants are an integral and essential part of the whole staff team and make a significant contribution to its work. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff to reflect its policy of trying to avoid mixed age classes and to keep class sizes as small as possible. This is one of the key elements upon which the school budget is based. The governors and senior staff set clear priorities for the year and set the budget to meet those priorities. They ensure that all funding granted for specific purposes, like that for pupils with special educational needs, is allocated appropriately. The school is committed to providing good quality resources and is prepared to accept the extra costs involved to ensure that the quality is good enough rather than being tempted to cut costs by going for poorer quality resources. Spending is based very much on perceived needs and is challenged rigorously to ensure that it is appropriate. For example, the decision to establish a series of mini-computer suites to support work carried out in the main suite came after thorough debate about the alternatives, including the use of laptop computers and wireless technology. Consequently resources are satisfactory in all subjects except for geography and music and are good in science, PE and ICT. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology with some particular strengths like the library system that involves bar codes and the computer recognising pupils' thumb prints so that they do not need traditional tickets. Further evidence of the outcomes of the school's policy on providing quality resources is seen in the improvements to the outside play areas. The relatively new adventure play equipment is of high quality and durable and the new willow tunnel is an admirable way to provide shade for pupils in the summer as well as being rather a lot of fun in itself and enhancing the look of the play area with its sculptural effects. The quality of the

accommodation overall is good. While in the main there is plenty of appropriate accommodation and the school benefits from extras like a separate dining room and plenty of shared areas for technology or art, it does lack a separate outdoor play area for reception children. The very good systems for allocating funds to the school's priorities and very effective day-to-day financial management by the office staff ensure that money allocated for a given year is used in that year and that only an appropriate amount is carried forward to the next one. Overall the school provides good value for money.

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

58 In order to raise standards further, the school should make more effective use of subject co-ordinators and senior managers to:

- Monitor all aspects of provision in their subjects and the areas for which they are responsible, including standards of attainment, teaching and learning; (Paragraphs 54, 94, 103, 104, 115, 116, 124, 125, 129, 130, 137, 143, 148, 157, 164.)
- Ensure that all aspects of each subject, particularly DT and ICT, are given enough time and emphasis to enable all pupils to build effectively upon their learning and achieve higher standards. (Paragraphs 28, 126, 130, 148.)

### **Minor issues**

The governors may also wish to continue to seek ways to provide the reception children with adequate and appropriate outdoor play facilities. (Paragraphs 57, 80.)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	22	33	17	1	0	0
Percentage	4	29	43	23	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### 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)	19	320
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
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	24	28	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	19
	Girls	26	26	24
	Total	46	46	43
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (96)	88 (94)	83 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	23
	Girls	26	24	26
	Total	47	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (94)	88 (100)	94 (100)
	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	15	26	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	13
	Girls	22	18	25
	Total	35	29	38
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85 (80)	71 (70)	93 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	23	19	23
	Total	36	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	88 (83)	78 (80)	90 (80)
	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	253	0	0
White – Irish	7	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	5	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)	14.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	24.4

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	188

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.25

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	729596
Total expenditure	722264
Expenditure per pupil	1979
Balance brought forward from previous year	(25074)
Balance carried forward to next year	(32406)

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	339
Number of questionnaires returned	129

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	32	9	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	5	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	40	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	43	9	2	10
The teaching is good.	57	32	9	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	40	16	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	33	7	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	42	43	13	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	36	5	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	36	16	5	12

## **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**

59 Since the previous inspection there has been a change in the education provided for nursery and reception children nationally. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes replaces the previous curriculum for the 'early years'. Where the early years section of the last report focused on the nursery together with a small number of reception children who were five years old the Foundation Stage report in this one covers the nursery and both reception classes. Overall progress is good, though it is better in reception than in nursery where it is largely satisfactory. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.

60 The environment for children in the Foundation Stage is mostly attractive and welcoming. Children are happy to come to school and leave their parents knowing they are secure and well cared for. At the time of the inspection there were 37 part-time children in the nursery attending either a morning or an afternoon session and 37 children in the two reception classes. Few children benefit from pre-school education and almost all children transfer to the reception classes from the nursery. A gradual introduction to the nursery through meetings and visits to school, together with brief information given to parents, ensures children make a sound start.

61 Children enter the nursery currently with below average standards. They make satisfactory progress in nursery in all areas of learning and by the end of their first year standards remain below the expected level. By the end of the reception year, however, children's progress improves significantly, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. As children enter Year 1, achievement is average in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. They make good progress by the end of the reception year. Children are identified as having special educational needs throughout the two years and these children receive appropriate support and make the same progress as their peers.

62 The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory in that it covers all the areas of learning. However, children make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in the nursery because of the way the curriculum is organised and taught. The objectives for planned sessions are not sufficiently linked to the national guidelines and do not reflect the needs of all the children. The way the curriculum is organised means there is insufficient structure to ensure that all areas of learning are provided and receive the necessary attention to promote children's learning. In the nursery the Foundation Stage curriculum, together with the stages of learning known as the 'stepping stones', are insufficiently understood by staff. Nursery and reception staff do not plan together across the whole Foundation Stage on a regular basis although, long-term planning does cover a two year period and the recent medium-term planning focuses on learning intentions more effectively. There is a new co-ordinator in the Foundation Stage so leadership is in its early stages and regular planning meetings are not yet established, so there is not yet a cohesive whole team approach to provision.

63 Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but the day-to-day recording of children's achievements in the nursery is not sufficiently focused on the Foundation Stage curriculum in order to use them to plan ahead. A very brief early assessment is made of children as they enter the nursery, and another as they enter and leave the reception classes. Good use is made of these results in the reception classes to ensure that children

are taught at the right level. Staff know their children well, but there is some lack of insight when considering this important stage of children's education in the nursery.

64 The quality of teaching is good overall but inconsistent between classes. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and sometimes good in whole class lessons such as 'story time'. Teaching in the reception classes is nearly always good and sometimes very good. The teaching in the nursery is based on a 'plan, do, review', model and consists of a shared team approach. Time here is not used effectively enough, as children sit and wait to 'plan' and ultimately 'review' in turn so children do not learn as much as they could. The main focus of the lesson is often interesting and stimulating but opportunities to visit other areas of learning during the session are limited by the 'planned choice', the activities provided, and the organisation and general order of the room. Staff are unable to interact in children's play such as the home corner because they are engaged in planned 'focus' activities. Day-to-day planning is not linked closely enough to the 'stepping stones' to ensure that lessons and activities are pitched at the right level and expectations of children's achievements are too low. Resources are tired with many being both insufficient and inaccessible; this is partly due to the recent building work but mainly due to the general organisation and storage of materials receiving insufficient attention over time. In other sessions, such as physical development or in storytime, teaching is good and the lessons sensitively taught. Support staff make a significant contribution in all sessions.

65 In the reception classes the good structured sessions promote secure and well-focused learning with good attention being paid to the teaching of the basic skills. The quality of teaching for the reception children is good overall. Opportunities to extend children's learning in reading, writing and mathematical development are well planned, together with other areas of learning, around a central theme. Within the range of experiences provided, there is good emphasis placed on communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and the teaching of basic skills and letter sounds. Opportunities for exploratory and investigative experiences are planned effectively for children. In these activities support staff play an important role. At the end of a lesson, good use is made of sharing information and consolidating children's learning. At times opportunities are missed to extend children's learning or develop their independence.

66 The overall assessment of children is satisfactory. The procedures to track children's progress through the Foundation Stage are effective. However, assessments in the short term are not sufficiently based on day-to-day recording in order to ensure that each child makes sufficient progress. Early levels of attainment are not used to ensure that the curriculum provides appropriately for the all children, particularly in the nursery.

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

67 Most children enter the nursery class with skills that are below average in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the nursery year children make sound progress with attainment remaining below the expected level. Reception children make good progress so that by the end of the reception year they achieve the expected levels in this area of learning. Teaching is good overall although insufficient emphasis is placed on developing children's independence.

68 Children make a sound start in the nursery. They begin to plan and organise their work independently but for many this task is too demanding and they do not understand the process. Younger children sit together at the beginning of the day, and teachers show examples of activities available. Their choices are recorded on labels worn by the children denoting choices made. This inhibits children's progress because there is insufficient access to all areas of learning throughout the day. Many children are unable to remember what is

written on their labels or choose an activity not previously identified. In their recall session many cannot remember where they have been or what they have done. This type of organisation, although encouraging children to think and talk, is not appropriate to their level of understanding. Nursery children behave very well although they are not sufficiently confident to seek other children in order to share their activities, for example in role-play or in the construction area. Reception children are involved in teacher led sessions and make choices in their selection and use of activities. Independence is encouraged in the reception classes in children's choice of independent activities but there are missed opportunities for children to plan and take responsibility for their learning. Snack time is a good feature in both the nursery and the reception classes and children benefit from this social occasion.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

69 By the end of the reception year standards overall are in line with the expected levels in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and children make good progress in the reception classes in relation to below average standards achieved by the end of the nursery year. Teaching, overall, is good.

### *Speaking and listening*

70 In the nursery few children play in the role-play 'home corner' to act out their experiences. Children join in with repeated rhymes such as 'seven days in a week' and respond well to very simple instructions. Planned opportunities for children to speak are missed in both the directed activities and in the planning sessions. In the reception classes children have many opportunities to talk in the course of a session. Support staff play an important role here, interacting with children, and developing their language. When there is staff involvement in role play, as in the 'baker's shop' for example, children, including those with special educational needs, extend their vocabulary while listening and talking to others.

### *Reading*

71 Children in the nursery recognise their names each morning and listen and join in with stories both in large groups and sometimes individually. They are interested in both pictures and print in 'big book' sessions with the teacher. However, few know their favourite book and they do not often look at books in the library area. The books provided for children in the 'book box' are very limited, focusing only on the 'theme', such as 'Traditional Tales'. However, a wide range of books is available and stored until the appropriate topic is taught. This results in children not using the small library area on a regular basis because the range of books available does not sufficiently interest or fire them with enthusiasm. Reception children identify their names each morning and take books home on a regular basis. Children have a book trolley and a specific area where they can 'read' and enjoy books. They learn about 'Traditional Tales' and are happy to share their ideas and say which story they prefer. Children use letter sounds in their reading and writing activities to decode and write new words.

### *Writing*

72 Some children in the nursery practise their writing independently using the materials provided. However there are insufficient opportunities to learn the basic skills of writing and practise them through regular involvement, for example in painting activities on a daily basis. In the reception classes letter shapes are practised frequently, together with painting skills, enabling children to become confident early writers. The story of *Cinderella* forms a link with other areas of learning including creative and written work as children send 'invitations to the ball'. Reception children concentrate for short periods of time; they make good progress because teaching is well structured.



## **Mathematical development**

73 By the time they reach Year 1 children have made good progress in the reception classes and standards are average. This represents good progress in relation to the below average standards on entry to the school and those achieved by the end of the nursery year. Teaching is good overall.

74 In the nursery children count and sort bears, matching by colour and size. They name the three bears' furniture in terms of size and talk to nursery staff about the three bears' 'removal box' saying, 'There's a big box and a little box here'. Children share their dough in an activity and recognise that four cutters are sufficient for four children. They count to three and some children recognise the numbers using a teddy bear number line. Assessments by the end of their nursery year show that children's attainment is still below average. By the end of reception year, however, most children are able to 'count on' beyond ten and are able to write numbers accurately. The more able and average children understand one more and one less to five using a number line and less able children count to five. In their books there are examples of the other aspects of mathematical development such as in shape and space in examples of long and short and matching pairs.

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

75 Children reach standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the end of the reception year in this area of learning and children make good progress. Teaching is good overall.

76 On entry to the nursery children need encouragement to explore and investigate. This develops as a result of sound teaching from the nursery team. Children gradually develop their curiosity and interest in the world around them, for example when tasting porridge and various breakfast cereals as part of the nursery topic. They learn about living and growing as they look after their friendly rabbits and plant bulbs in the nursery garden. Reception children focus on the senses, using a magnifying glass to look at pictures in detail. Work in their books shows examples of different types of weather and names of different parts of the body. The central area between the reception rooms enhances this area of learning as the weekly focus is developed through a range of structured activities involving interesting, appropriate and well-planned resources.

77 All children use construction apparatus to build. Nursery children build independently, selecting from a narrow range of resources. Older children plan, design and make a mask to wear at 'Cinderella's ball'. A sense of time and place is developed through pictures about winter in the nursery and the recording of a walk around the local area in the reception classes. Various cultures and beliefs are less well represented in the Foundation Stage. The focus on Christianity includes a visit to the local church to see a christening, which represents a good level of involvement, both from the school and local clergy.

78 Children begin to develop their ICT skills in their use of the computer and 'mouse'. Reception children successfully use the 'roamer' in a planned lesson focusing on giving instructions. This was well supported by learning assistants.

## **Physical development**

79 Children's progress is satisfactory in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, standards are in line with those expected for children of their age and teaching is good overall.

80 Children practise their climbing and balancing skills both indoors and outdoors and have planned opportunities to use large and small apparatus such as a climbing frame, bikes and wheeled toys in the nursery play area. The nursery area is safe and secure, providing for a range of curriculum opportunities. Although receiving good attention in terms of understanding, the reception children do not have the same opportunities as the nursery children in that they have no access to an outdoor area where they can experience safe, adventurous play in line with national guidance. In the hall session, nursery children respond well to their teacher and run, hop and jump confidently. Reception children practise their dance for 'Cinderella's ball' and enjoy the sequencing of movements. Children use tools such as scissors with care and developing control in various activities in all classes.

### **Creative development**

81 Children achieve standards that are in line with the expected levels by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are good overall.

82 In the nursery children paint pictures of themselves and their Christmas presents, many of which are still displayed. Painting opportunities are not regularly available nor are many of the other aspects of creative development. Resources cannot be accessed independently due to the cluttered 'creative area' and there are insufficient opportunities for children to use their imagination in a creative way. Nursery children use dough and describe it as, 'very sticky' and use boxes to make the 'three bears' chairs'. They pass the tambour around in a circle and play it in turn, gaining confidence through good support from staff. In the reception classes children experience 'wax-resist' in portraits of their friends and experiment with musical instruments to create a range of sounds. Reception teachers plan an interesting lesson involving the use a range of percussion instruments to interpret 'giant' music and movements like giants, in time to the beat.

83 In role-play some nursery children use their imagination and 'pretend', acting out real life events in the home corner, although this does little to encourage and extend language development because of the limitations of the planned resources. In the reception area children dress-up and visit the 'Fairy Tale Forest' to have a picnic and the baker's shop at 'Old Mother Hubbard's' house. This provision is good. Resources are imaginative, well planned and enhance the creative development of the older children, resulting in good progress.

84 In order to improve standards further the school should:

- Improve the planning in the nursery so that it provides for the needs of all the children;
- Ensure that all children in the nursery are taught at the right level by improving assessment;
- Ensure a consistent approach to planning together by nursery and reception staff;
- Seek to provide an outdoor play area for the reception children.

### **ENGLISH**

85 Standards in English are average for both seven and eleven-year-olds. This indicates that satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Results in reading by the age of seven have varied slightly in the last three years but have remained about average in comparison to all schools. Over the same period, there was a slight fall in standards in writing in the national tests in 2002, when results were below average. However, inspection evidence shows that standards in writing are now about average in Year 2. By the age of eleven, results in English dropped below average in 2000

but rose above average in 2002. On the basis of evidence gained during the inspection, standards at present are typical of most other schools.

86 Standards in speaking and listening at the time of the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, based on teachers' assessment, were average. Inspection evidence supports this judgement. Pupils are given many opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills. For example, in an English lesson in a class of nine-year-olds, pupils were drawn into a discussion about how to write a *cinquain*, a poem of five lines and twenty-two syllables, freely discussing the number of syllables contained in the words and phrases they wanted to use. The discussion was prompted by the teacher's very good use of questions to draw information from pupils. Similarly, the high expectations shown by the teacher of a class of seven-year-olds meant that pupils were expected to take an active part in class reading sessions and answering questions. They responded well, listening carefully to what was said and speaking clearly. In some lessons, teachers miss opportunities to encourage some groups of pupils to speak. In a class of eleven-year-olds, the higher attaining pupils were left out of a discussion about changing the tense of verbs. These pupils were reluctant to put up their hands to offer answers. A similar reluctance to speak and examples of indistinct speech were noted when some pupils of this age were asked to say what they thought of their school and talk about books they had read.

87 By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' reading is typical for their age groups. Pupils make good progress with their reading. Higher attaining six-year-olds use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them pronounce unknown words such as 'wanted' and 'cornflakes' but average and lower attaining readers often do not recognise when they have made mistakes. By the age of seven, many pupils read fluently but without much expression so that the full meaning of what they are reading is lost. Most pupils have no difficulty reading a large number of the words in their books. Pupils take note of punctuation such as full stops, commas and question marks when they read. However it is only the best readers at this age who read passages spoken by characters in books with expression. In the best example heard, the pupil read with great fluency, acting out the story as it progressed and conveying its full meaning. For example, the pupil looked ahead in the story as she read so that she whispered what one character said before coming to the description of how the character spoke. Sound teaching of the National Literacy Strategy means that pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'title' and 'illustrator', and use the contents and index pages to find information. They enjoy reading and name their favourite books. Pupils know the names of authors such as Michael Rosen, Jill Murphy and David McKee, who they know wrote the 'King Rollo' stories.

88 By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in reading is what would be expected for their age. They use their understanding of the story to work out the meaning of words such as 'brandishing'. Most pupils, including some lower attaining pupils read fluently but do not read expressively. This means that their reading lacks interest and they do not make full sense of the story. They do not, for example, try to read speech with expression. However, a higher attaining reader paid good attention to punctuation and used her understanding of the story to read sensitively about Eva, a Jewish girl in Germany during the Second World War. Pupils find information from non-fiction books using the contents, index and glossary pages. They use skills such as scanning to find information on the printed page quickly. However, pupils do not know how to use the library classification systems of coloured stickers and numbers, with which all non-fiction books in the school library are marked, to find books. This is because the books have been put into subject groupings and pupils seldom use the non-fiction library to look for books themselves. Pupils confuse the colour coding on non-fiction books, which refers to subject categories, with the coloured stickers on reading books, which show the level of difficulty of books. By the age of eleven they choose

their own reading books, confidently recording their books on computer using a thumb print and bar code recognition system.

89 By the age of seven, pupils' writing is typical for their age. Nearly all pupils use full stops and capital letters correctly and write in sentences that move their stories forward logically. Higher attaining pupils are starting to use punctuation accurately to show when people are speaking. Pupils with special educational needs need much help from adults to put down their ideas, which are often expressed only as simple thoughts and short phrases. They have difficulty spelling words of more than two or three letters. Lower attaining pupils have a limited vocabulary, using words and phrases such as 'then' and 'I really like' too often in short, simple sentences. However, average and higher attaining pupils enliven their writing with words such as 'horrible', 'rough' and 'massive'. They write imaginatively to introduce atmosphere into their writing when they write:

*'The forest was dark and crunchy in the night.'*

Pupils benefit from exercises designed to teach words containing the different ways of pronouncing the 'oo' sound, as in 'book' and 'pool'. This means that, although average and lower attaining pupils do not always spell words correctly, their efforts are recognisable. Most pupils have made good progress with their handwriting since the start of the school year. Pupils with the neatest handwriting form letters well and space words out correctly. Some high attaining pupils are beginning to join their letters. Average and lower attaining pupils, however, still form some letters incorrectly.

90 Teachers encourage pupils to be adventurous in their choice of vocabulary and this helps pupils to make good progress in writing in the junior classes. Pupils plan their work well and practise writing the beginning, middle and end of stories. They write in a variety of styles and for different audiences, for example, compiling letters, reports of trips, re-telling folk stories and writing imaginative stories. Eight-year-olds re-tell stories well, including words such as 'scuttling' and 'relaxed'. Nine-year-olds use alternatives to 'walked', such as 'stomped'. They use words effectively to show sarcasm when they write, 'You decided to rescue your precious little brother, did you?' Higher attaining eleven-year-olds make better than expected progress because of the high expectations some teachers have of them. These pupils learn to punctuate speech and use commas accurately. This enables them to write imaginatively and precisely in complex sentences such as, 'But, despite all my shivering, one thing caught my eye.' Average attaining pupils use words written in capital letters for emphasis and build suspense into their stories by substituting rows of full stops for missing words. However, the same pupils sometimes use inappropriate colloquial expressions, such as 'like a lemon'. Lower attaining pupils write simple sentences, too frequently joined with 'and' and 'then' and their choice of vocabulary lacks imagination. By the age of eleven, pupils' handwriting is usually well formed but many do not regularly join their letters.

91 Teaching is very good in the infant classes. It is good overall in the junior classes with some very good teaching in Year 3. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers use the introduction to lessons well to ensure that pupils know what they have to do and to check how much they remembered from previous work. They use questions well to check what pupils know, how well they are learning and to improve their understanding. In a good lesson with eleven-year-olds, the teacher asked pertinent questions which helped sharpen pupils' powers of deduction and made them think more deeply about an author's intentions. The best lessons stand out because of the level of challenge in the work presented to pupils, the brisk pace of the lessons and the very good relationships where learning becomes a real partnership between pupils and their teacher. Imaginative approaches adopted by some teachers help with this. For example, in a very good lesson with seven-year-olds, pupils gasped with joy and laughter when the teacher produced dolls representing the characters in the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. This led to

very good discussion about a modern version of the story, as a consequence of which both teacher and pupils agreed they preferred the modern story because the granny did not get eaten. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills by encouraging discussions in groups and pairs. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively included in lessons by being asked questions suited to their level of understanding.

92 Teachers mark work regularly. Their comments on pupils' work often suggest ways that pupils might improve their writing. However, although they congratulate pupils on good work, they seldom tell pupils why their work is good. Teachers do not pay enough attention to the quality of pupils' handwriting or to neat presentation, too often accepting handwriting that is untidy or badly formed without comment. The handwriting of some teachers does not present a good role model for pupils to follow. Teachers make good use of the introduction to lessons to make sure pupils know what to do. Sometimes, introductions to lessons are too long so that pupils become restless. In a very good lesson with seven-year-olds, the teacher broke up the introduction so that pupils returned to their desks to do some writing before receiving more instructions. This meant that pupils were kept active and alert. Teachers make good use of classroom support assistants to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. However, they do not involve the assistants sufficiently in the introduction to lessons. Teachers use other subjects, such as history and science well to develop pupils' English skills. They do not make enough use of the school library to teach pupils how to carry out research nor do they use ICT effectively enough to support English lessons. The school has taken the decision to separate the reading session from English lessons to allow more time for writing. Teachers make good use of the reading sessions to help small groups of pupils improve the way they read. However, not enough thought has been given to what the pupils who are not working with the teacher do during this time when pupils are left without guidance.

93 Teachers make very good use of their assessments of how well pupils are learning. All pupils have individual targets based on these assessments. The individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs contain many targets related to English and the targets are precise and easily measured. These pupils receive weekly help from the special educational needs teacher and their needs are taken into account in teachers' planning. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.

94 The subject co-ordinator has not long had responsibility for the subject. She is developing a view of what needs to be done to raise standards and to support her colleagues. Her analysis of teachers' training needs has led her to arrange training in the teaching of grammar. Currently, the co-ordinator does not check teaching and learning in lessons. She has identified the need to make regular checks of the work in pupils' books and to start a collection of pupils' work so that teachers can judge more easily the standards that pupils reach. Overall, resources for English are satisfactory. The school has built up a good stock of reading books, all of which are graded according to difficulty.

95 In order to improve standards further the school should:

- Provide more opportunities for, and guidance in, the use of the library for research and independent study;
- Raise the quality of handwriting and presentation of work;
- Ensure that all pupils make effective use of the reading sessions.

## MATHEMATICS

96 The national test results in 2002 showed standards in mathematics to be well below average at the age of seven and below average by eleven. Inspection judgements indicate that currently standards are better than this, with pupils' attainment being below average at seven but broadly average by the age of eleven. As the current Year 2 pupils started school with limited mathematical knowledge, progress is good throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection standards by the age of eleven were judged to be well below the national average, so good improvement has been made. The school is on track to meet its target of 80 per cent of eleven-year-olds gaining Level 4 in the 2003 national tests.

97 The school makes effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to ensure that pupils are confident with number operations. Lessons regularly start with pupils practising mental calculations. This works well where there is a challenge, whether in a Year 5 game for pairs of pupils, in Year 1 where there is a real emphasis on pace ('Fast, fast, fast!') as pupils double numbers, or in Year 4 where pupils use individual whiteboards to solve word problems. It is less helpful when the whole class recites 'times tables', particularly as this gives little indication of which pupils have sound knowledge, and which are being carried along by the others.

98 The work in pupils' books, as well as discussions with pupils, shows that they are generally able to calculate accurately. Older pupils understand how to estimate a likely answer, using this to check their results, and the variety of methods used demonstrates sound, and often good, comprehension of the task. The school has produced a useful guide to calculating for all year groups, so that pupils are taught consistently and build on their skills from year to year. Teachers explain methods and procedures carefully and as a result pupils of all abilities, including lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress in this area of mathematics.

99 Pupils also show good knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes. Year 2 pupils grasp the principle of lines of symmetry and are able to apply this to different shapes. In a Year 3 class they name different three-dimensional shapes, including challenges such as a hexagonal prism, and are able to sort them by properties such as the number of faces or edges. By Year 6 most pupils measure angles accurately using a protractor, and the more able understand how to calculate the perimeter and area of a rectangle. In comparison, work on handling data is patchy. Only one year group has produced a graph, in geography, and there is little evidence of pupils extracting or interpreting data from different sources. Able pupils in Year 6 are uncertain of the meaning of terms such as 'mode', 'mean' and 'median', although they have heard them, and very few know the number of millilitres in a litre. Work in numeracy in other areas of the curriculum is, in the school's own word, 'accidental' rather than systematically planned.

100 Overall there is a satisfactory balance between the various aspects of mathematics, except that there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their investigative and problem-solving skills in meaningful contexts. Efforts are being made to address this lack of balance, such as homework tasks and problem-solving challenges in the classroom, but these are too recent to have had much effect. Further consideration needs to be given to linking the good teaching of skills to opportunities for pupils to employ them. Where tasks are set, they are usually to practise the skill, rather than open-ended investigations that encourage pupils to think and question for themselves.

101 Teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. It is more consistent for younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, where all lessons seen were judged to be good or better, but junior pupils also benefit from some good and very good teaching. The management of

pupils, and relationships in general, are a strength, which means little time is wasted and effective learning is taking place. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and have clear expectations. Occasionally these are inappropriately high, as when Year 4 pupils, including those with special educational needs, tried to calculate the areas of rectangles and triangles; work better suited to able Year 6 pupils. Tasks are carefully explained, and as a result pupils know what they have to do and get on with it. They behave very well, and are usually very interested in what they are learning. In discussion they demonstrate mathematical understanding as well as knowledge, indicating that there are good foundations to build on. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, despite a lengthy explanation by the teacher, a significant number of pupils failed to make progress in their understanding.

102 Work in pupils' books is marked, but there are few comments that help pupils to understand or challenge them to use their thinking skills. Teachers sometimes write 'see me' when pupils make repeated mistakes, but there is no evidence of further work to check that they now know how to do it. Exercise books have target sheets pasted in the front, with the current targets indicated, but pupils are not very aware of what they are. Only in one class is there evidence of them being discussed with pupils and highlighted as they are achieved, so that the pupils are becoming involved in assessing their own progress.

103 Mathematics is well led. Good use is being made of analytical data from tests to indicate areas that are weaker, although this is not yet having enough impact. The co-ordinator has not yet had sufficient opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, either through working in classes, observing lessons or looking carefully at pupils' work.

104 In order to improve standards further the school should:

- Be more rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning;
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils know how good their work is and how to make it better;
- Plan more opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills within other subjects;
- Continue to raise standards, particularly at seven.

## **SCIENCE**

105 The school's assessment of Year 2 pupils in science in 2002 shows that pupils reached average standards. Almost all pupils gained an average level but there were no pupils at the higher Level 3 grade. In Year 6, the National Curriculum test results for 2002 show that pupils also reach average standards overall. Inspection evidence supports test results and assessments from 2002. It shows that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are attaining average standards. Compared with schools, where pupils are drawn from similar social and economic backgrounds, standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. There are no significant differences in the standards reached by boys and girls.

106 The school has maintained its good position in science since the last inspection. Over the last five years, standards have improved steadily from 69 per cent of pupils reaching at least average standards in 1997 to 93 per cent of pupils reaching at least average levels in 2002. Pupils throughout the school generally make good progress because curriculum provision is good and there is good leadership and good quality teaching in the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. They often receive well-targeted support from learning support assistants in lessons. However, in the junior classes, teachers do not always match the written tasks closely enough to the abilities of lower attaining pupils and, as a consequence, some find it difficult to complete the work set.

107 By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a sound understanding of how to find things out by using a basic scientific approach. They take systematic steps, make predications, investigate materials, record results and then draw conclusions. Pupils describe the uses of electricity in the home for light and power, listing appliances such as computers, televisions and microwaves. In practical sessions, they construct simple circuits and know that the bulb will light up when the circuit is complete. The higher attainers realise quickly that a bulb holder is not necessary, providing a good contact can be made with the battery, metal part of the bulb and the end of the wire; whereas the lower attaining pupils are unsure of how bulbs can be lit without a bulb holder. Pupils distinguish between man-made and natural items successfully but are occasionally confused about some clothing materials such as those of shoes.

108 By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the life processes of living things. In annotated drawings, they identify the main parts of a plant using the correct terminology. They describe how seeds are dispersed and name the conditions required for germination. Most pupils understand how the sun forms shadows and why they can be seen to change position during the day. However, many cannot explain why shadows increase in length as the sun wanes towards the end of the day. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the physical processes such as electricity. They assemble circuits confidently and explain the reasons why light bulbs become dimmer and brighter by varying the components. Most recognise all the symbols accurately in diagrams of circuits and only a small number fail to identify the bell and the buzzer symbols.

109 Pupils throughout the school make good progress because they are given ample opportunity to experiment and think for themselves along systematic guidelines laid down by the teachers. Results are recorded properly and conclusions drawn, which develops good scientific reasoning skills in pupils. Pupils are also exposed to accurate terminology in lessons and are encouraged to use appropriate terms in their written and oral work. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but in Years 1 to 3 very good teaching is delivered consistently and this results in high quality learning.

110 Pupils concentrate and show considerable interest in their work because most lessons are stimulating and include some elements of investigation, using a good range of equipment. Pupils are required to apply themselves, to reason for themselves and draw logical conclusions. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks to extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Classes are very well managed and organised. Restless pupils are soon re-focused by the teacher and very good relationships are promoted. Clear learning outcomes are identified and appropriate materials selected to support pupils' learning.

111 Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain clearly what pupils are expected to do and check progress and understanding during the lesson. Often misconceptions are picked up as teachers circulate around the class whilst pupils are working. This was illustrated well in a very good Year 2 lesson on electricity when the teacher noticed that not all pupils understood how to make a suitable contact on the base of the light bulb. She clarified their understanding by questioning and suggesting an alternative approach. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well by teachers in science lessons. Pupils record their results in written form and offer reasons for the outcomes. However, there is also evidence in pupils' exercise books of text merely copied from reference books and worksheets. There is also some evidence of pupils using graphs and tables to record their results. ICT is increasingly becoming integrated into pupils' science work as staff become more confident and suitable software is made available.



112 There are a small number of weaknesses in teaching which, if rectified, could improve learning further. Some marking, especially in upper junior classes, is superficial and does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve. The presentation of pupils' work is untidy in some classes because teachers do not insist on high enough standards in setting out work. Although most teachers provide an appropriate match of work for pupils of different abilities, there is some evidence of a mismatch of work for lower attaining pupils in junior classes at times. This results in unfinished work and a loss of confidence amongst this group of pupils.

113 Pupils have very positive attitudes. They are keen to learn and make good progress in their learning. They work very well together and form very good relationships with each other, especially in investigative activities. Behaviour in lessons is usually very good; only when lessons are lacking in interest does behaviour decline, though it is always at least sound.

114 The science curriculum is well balanced and pays particular attention to scientific enquiry in order to build up pupils' skills in investigation. All pupils are fully included in lessons and are given appropriate encouragement.

115 Assessment procedures are good and used properly to chart pupils' progress and define what needs to be taught next in teachers' planning. The science co-ordinator is well organised and knowledgeable and gives good leadership. However, there have been insufficient opportunities to monitor standards throughout the school and analyse the test data. This is a weakness in the management of the subject which hampers informed long-term development. Staff work well together and learning resources are adequate and well organised and used effectively to improve standards.

116 In order to improve standards further the school should:

- Monitor standards of pupils' work, especially in junior classes;
- Develop a more consistent approach to marking and presentation;
- Analyse test results more closely in order to elicit weaknesses in curriculum provision.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117 There were limited opportunities to observe art lessons in the infants during the inspection, but in all lessons seen, through looking at junior sketchbooks and displays, in discussions with pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and with staff, it is judged that standards are average. In lessons during the inspection all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress as a result of both good and very good teaching throughout the school. This represents an improvement in the teaching and learning for the older pupils since the previous inspection.

118 While overall standards are average it is clear from talking to pupils that there are gaps in their knowledge of the many techniques in art, and skills have not been developed as effectively as they could have been in some aspects. For example, older pupils are unable to explain the style of Pablo Picasso's paintings, discuss line, tone and texture in their work, explain perspective or primary colours. Younger pupils are unable to explain 'a pattern' and describe texture as 'the middle bit', with primary colours explained as 'the brightest'. At the time of the last inspection lessons were described as 'over directed'. Pupils are now more independent and have more opportunities to develop their creativity. There is now more emphasis on teaching skills in art and design, along with the creative elements, than when the school was last inspected.

119 Five lessons were seen during the inspection, with only one in the infants. In Year 1, pupils learn the names of famous artists and develop good observational skills as they use a 'window frame' to draw a chosen section of a painting in detail. Because the teaching is very clear and the objectives of the lesson revisited frequently most pupils make good or very good progress. There is very good emphasis on the basic skills and resources are used well. The teacher's good subject knowledge extended children's learning as they used crayon and pastel to represent what they could see in the 'frames'. A skilful support assistant adds a further dimension to the art curriculum by supporting in lessons and holding a popular art club. Good examples of 'Picasso's pets' in Year 2 create a striking black and white display, incorporating the techniques of line and tone using charcoal and pencil. This and other good examples include displays from the 'art club' and are positive features through the school.

120 Teachers provide lessons that are interesting and contain elements of challenge. For example, Year 3 pupils copy their partners designs on their faces to represent a disguise and Year 4 pupils create a design that reflects their personality and interest to decorate their chairs. This particular task incorporates a range of other skills including ICT and laminating their final design. Pupils in Year 6 work on a range of ideas in their lesson towards a final 'personal self-portrait'. The pupils use a digital camera effectively to help with their work. Useful cultural and historical links are made in this unit as pupils look at the design of a Victorian sampler and a montage representing aspects of France and other European influences as part of their research.

121 Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and capacity to work well together. Consequently attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils develop their ideas and say what they like in discussing their own and their friend's work. All pupils work together sensibly, resulting in good contributions to the lessons.

122 Art and design is taught in 'blocks' of time. However, this appears to be a very flexible system and time allocated to art is sometimes stretched in order to complete a unit of work, resulting in less time for other subjects, usually DT. There are some good examples of art being used in other subjects such as pencil drawings of Alton Castle drawn as part of a history focus in Year 6, examples of 'collage' in Year 4 illustrating the wives of Henry VIII and examples of Aztec jewellery in Year 4/5. In Year 3 pupils create interesting designs drawn on to a digital photograph of their face, to test and practise their ideas. Research into the lives of some famous artists such as John Nash and Paul Klee involves aspects of ICT and literacy as pupils acquire various pieces of relevant information. Collage is used very well in geography and science and in a display in Year 1 involving a large picture to represent the local environment entitled, 'At the Park'. The large display in the hall entitled 'The Work of His Creation' is a good example of the whole school contributing to a finished piece of work with an RE focus. Additional displays depict other major world faiths, representing good links between art and RE.

123 Sculpture and examples of three-dimensional work are not in evidence around the school and pupils have little recall of past examples, although there is planning which identifies this unit. Pupils benefit from a range of experiences but a more systematic development of skills and knowledge would enhance standards in art and support pupils' creative ideas.

124 Resources for the subject are satisfactory and support creativity both in range, quantity and availability. The subject manager has recently been appointed, and, although aware of the need to provide a more structured approach to the teaching of art, has so far had insufficient time to implement many changes. The monitoring of teaching and learning has not been possible other than through displays and sketchbooks. There are no formal

procedures for assessment of pupils' standards in art. The school has plans to establish a portfolio of pupils' work to support teachers in their understanding of what pupils should achieve in each year group.

125 In order to improve standards further the school should:

- Monitor teaching, learning and standards of work more effectively;
- Build systematically upon the basic skills in art throughout the year groups;
- Increase the opportunities for three-dimensional work in art and design lessons;
- Develop assessment and recording systems including a portfolio of pupils' work to guide the teachers.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

126 Too little evidence was found during the inspection to be able to make secure judgements about standards, teaching or learning in DT. However, discussions with staff and pupils indicate that it is unlikely that pupils cover the subject in enough depth or breadth to make enough progress to reach satisfactory levels. There is a scheme of work which follows the national guidelines for DT and an overview of the planned curriculum showing what is to be taught in each term within each year group. However many of these units of work do not appear to be covered in practice as other subjects seem to take priority. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were said to be in line with national expectations. The lack of evidence currently would indicate that progress since then has not been satisfactory.

127 In Year 6, examples are displayed of 'shelters' in a unit of work to design, plan and make a shelter for a particular purpose. In discussion these pupils describe in detail the planning process and explain why different constructions and materials were used and how they were tested. They describe the tools used and how to measure, plan and mark out materials, and understand how to make a structure stronger. They use the computer to record any design changes and adjustments and provide a list of tools used in the construction. They agree that 'well designed takes time' and 'if a construction is not well made it could fall apart'. They are unable, however to describe any simple mechanisms or the use of electricity to light or power models and make them work.

128 Pupils in Year 4/5 have designed and made biscuits. Year 5 pupils planned to make bread but it failed to 'rise' to expectations. Year 2 pupils have made embroidery samplers but these are not identified on the 'overview' and are an art and design activity rather than a DT one. A discussion with Year 2 pupils revealed few skills and a lack of knowledge of DT. They have very limited understanding of materials, tools or different ways of joining materials together. When asked how to make a structure stronger they replied 'the teachers do it'.

129 There is an action plan for DT that identifies the intentions of the newly appointed co-ordinator. These include 'to become familiar with the policy' and 'monitor the planning in DT'. However the action plan lacks measurable targets focusing on raising standards and the subject has not been monitored effectively enough to alert the school to the lack of coverage in some year groups.

130 In order to raise standards and improve pupils' knowledge and skills the school should:

- Monitor the subject more effectively to ensure that enough time is given to cover all units of work so that pupils build successfully upon what they have already learned;
- Improve the subject action plan by including clear, measurable targets for raising standards and identifying the tasks needed to achieve this;
- Develop manageable assessment systems to ensure that pupils receive work well matched to their needs.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

131 Standards in geography are barely average at the ages of seven and eleven, a similar picture to that found by the previous inspection, indicating satisfactory improvement in that standards have been maintained. Progress in lessons is good, due to the quality of teaching pupils receive. This is true of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, as lessons are carefully structured and explanations are clear, often supported by teachers' good subject knowledge. Talking to pupils, and scrutiny of their written work, suggests that gains in geographical knowledge and understanding over time are less secure, due to some areas of the curriculum being covered less thoroughly and tasks which are not always effective in encouraging pupils to think, rather than just record information.

132 Pupils in Year 1 have a good level of knowledge about their locality, having recently walked round the area with their teachers. They comment on positive and negative features, such as wildlife and graffiti. Discussion with pupils in Year 2 reinforces this judgement, with pupils remembering their first-hand experiences well, but shows up other aspects of geography where knowledge and understanding are less secure. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have little idea of compass direction, for example, and are unsure about the use of globes.

133 By Years 3 and 4 pupils add more detail to their observation of the local environment, and are beginning to address who has responsibility for it (including themselves) and what can be done to make it a better and more attractive place to live. Pupils in the mixed Year 4/5 class are starting to compare where they live with the town of Stromness in the Orkney Islands. However, pupils who move straight to the Year 5 class from Year 4 do not have the opportunity to study this aspect of the geography curriculum, while the Year 5s who do will not study rivers, including first-hand experiences on a planned visit.

134 There are also curriculum issues relating to geography in Years 3 to 6. It is planned together with history, but appears as a main focus only half as often, indicating that much less time is spent on it. The amount of work in pupils' books tends to bear this out, as does conversation with higher attaining pupils in Year 6, who cannot remember comparing Chelmsley Wood with a locality in another country, are weak on knowledge of both Britain and Europe, have not used globes in school and have very limited mapping skills, being unable to explain the concept of scale, for example.

135 There was plenty of opportunity to see geography being taught, with a total of nine lessons in the course of the inspection. While the quality of teaching in lessons was good overall, with all teaching being at least sound and over half good or better, pupils' books and their knowledge and understanding of geography indicate that teaching over time is satisfactory. In Year 5 and 6 books, for example, presentation is careless, with poor handwriting and careless spelling. Some of the work is copied word for word, and good original research into rivers is presented in a way that makes it hard to see exactly what the

purpose was. Pupils' numeracy skills are not used as well as they could be. This contrasts with a display in a Year 6 class on the same topic, where the quality of work on the walls shows what can be achieved.

136 Pupils respond well in lessons, being well behaved and settling to tasks sensibly, even when these are fairly basic. Questions are used more to assess whether pupils have remembered what the teacher talked about, rather than challenging them to use this knowledge to show their understanding of geographical issues. Copying and then colouring in the 'water cycle' adds very little to the understanding of pupils in Year 6, while an 'extension' exercise which no-one completed, telling the story of the journey of a raindrop, would have assessed pupils' understanding while providing a valuable link to developing literacy skills.

137 The co-ordinator is new to the post and has not yet had the opportunity to influence development in geography, although he is aware of some of the issues. He is leading by example, for instance in his use of 'What's in the news' as a means of involving pupils in geography through current events, but his action plan does not encompass areas which clearly need boosting, such as mapping skills. Resources are generally adequate, although there are very few globes, but their use needs to be planned more constructively.

138 In order to improve standards in geography further the school should:

- Ensure enough time is given to it so that all pupils cover all aspects;
- Place more emphasis on the learning of geographical skills;
- Ensure that all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in their work and how they present it.

## **HISTORY**

139 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, both in infant classes. Standards by the age of seven are typical for the age group. Examination of pupils' work and discussion with pupils suggest that standards by the age of eleven are average. This represents satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

140 By the age of seven, pupils receive a good grounding in using objects to find out about the past. They look closely at objects such as a flat iron and candle holder, describe what they see, feel and smell and try to work out in which room of the house they would find the objects. Very good questioning by teachers enables pupils to concentrate hard on the task and they make many sensible suggestions. Pupils learn to be precise in their observations when teachers remind them that they must only comment on what they can see in front of them and not make assumptions from their experience. This helps pupils who have difficulty saying why they think the flat iron is old to concentrate their thoughts and they go on to draw comparisons between old and new objects used for washing clothes. Pupils discover some of the facts about Queen Victoria, finding out when she became queen, who her husband was and how many children she had. They learn about some of the advances that took place during the Victorian age, including the starting of the Royal Mail service, inventions such as the washing machine and telephone and the introduction of schooling for all children. Pupils have very good attitudes to history and enjoy their lessons. Their enjoyment is greatly enhanced when teachers link music and history lessons to teach pupils songs so that they can perform a Victorian music hall variety show for parents.

141 By the age of eleven, pupils study the Second World War. Pupils discover that people used gas masks and Anderson and Morrison shelters for protection. They learn why the German fleet tried to stop supplies arriving from overseas and the resulting rationing of food and clothing that this led to. Good links are made to English when pupils write letters

from evacuees to their parents. The reasons for bombing raids on large cities are brought home to pupils when they look at a map of Coventry and work out the targets that would be chosen such as the railway yards, electricity stations and factories. However, although pupils have a sound understanding of the facts surrounding the war, derived from pictures and artefacts, their knowledge of how historians find out about events and conditions further back in history is limited. Pupils in Year 4 study the Tudors. They learn about the sporting prowess of Henry VIII and about his wives. Pupils are presented with a broad picture of life in Tudor times. They carry out research using a video to find out the sort of food that was eaten in those days, how clothes were made and the unsanitary toilet conditions that prevailed. Pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of Caxton's printing press and that it was a Tudor mathematician, Robert Recorde, who invented the equals sign.

142 No lessons were seen in junior classes but the work seen suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers cover the subject in depth in the relatively small amount of time available. Some good and very good teaching was seen in infant classes. Teachers' planning is thorough and they know the subject well. This means that lessons are lively and interesting when teachers use objects from the past to catch the interest of pupils. They use questions skilfully to help pupils to use the objects to find out about the past. The questions provide a good level of challenge in the lessons, which pupils thoroughly enjoy and work hard at. Consequently, pupils make good progress. Teachers pay particular attention to pupils with special educational needs, helping them to think of words so that they can join in class discussions. Although the development of writing is usually well supported in history lessons, some teachers allow pupils to copy out pieces of work. For example, ten-year-olds copied out work describing the role of women in war. This does not make them think hard enough nor develop their own writing skills. In some year groups, teachers have different expectations of what pupils can achieve. One class of older pupils has been given small books with only half the page ruled for writing. This limits the amount they write in comparison to the parallel class, which uses larger sheets of paper. Teachers do not make enough use of ICT in history lessons.

143 The co-ordinator provides good leadership of the subject. The policy and scheme of work have been revised to take account of the needs of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has devised a very good system of assessment for history. The system is linked to teachers' planning and gives them a good picture of how well pupils learn. Although the co-ordinator checks teachers' planning, there is now a need for her to be given time to monitor teaching and learning during lessons. Resources for the subject are kept in collections for each topic and are about adequate. The school has recently been connected to the Internet and the use of the Internet for research needs incorporating into teachers' planning. However, teachers make good use of collections of objects borrowed from the library and visits to places of interest such Avoncroft Museum and Tamworth Castle.

144 In order to improve standards in history further the school should:

- Place more emphasis on teaching pupils the skills of historical research and enquiry;
- Make more effective use of ICT;
- Raise the expectations that teachers have of pupils so that they are consistently high throughout the school.

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

145 Standards in ICT are broadly average by Year 2 but below average by Year 6. This is the same as it was at the time of the last inspection, so standards have been maintained. By Year 2 pupils use computers to type up their work. They open the program, type in their text, change the size and colour of the text, and place it where they choose to on the page. The higher attaining pupils work with confidence while lower attaining pupils, including those

with special educational needs, succeed because of the very good levels of support they get from teaching and support staff. Pupils create simple pictograms to show the favourite fruits of the pupils in the class and use an art program to produce pictures and patterns. They confidently create pictures in the style of Mondrian, placing rectangles on the page, altering their size and position and filling them with colours of their own choosing. ICT helps pupils to develop their literacy skills as they type labels and questions for a classroom display, with a clear emphasis on correct spelling. Their work in numeracy is helped in ICT through tasks like finding people's favourite fruits, creating a tally chart to record their findings and then turning this information into the pictograms mentioned earlier.

146 Standards by Year 6 are below average. Most of the work seen during the inspection was word processing. Pupils access the program, type in text, change its size, colour and font, and add pictures and photographs taken with a digital camera. There is no evidence of pupils at Year 6 producing newspaper type accounts of their work or recent events, with text arranged in several columns, with headings and subheadings, bullet points, or frames. There is no evidence of them having incorporated charts and graphs into their writing. They do not develop the skills in word processing they learn in Year 1 and 2 far enough or fast enough. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that they do not know how to use spreadsheets, or databases and their knowledge of control technology is limited to having used a programmable robot some time in the past. Their experience of the Internet is limited, although a few do use it at home to access homework sites. There are signs that standards are likely to improve now that the school has a well-equipped computer suite. Pupils in Year 5, for example are learning to use spreadsheets. They know the correct terminology and the formula to calculate totals. Year 4 pupils know how to access the Internet and do so with support.

147 Teaching seen during the inspection was good overall, another indication that standards are likely to rise. Teachers are confident about what they teach so that pupils learn basic skills like opening files, saving their work and shutting down programs. They learn the importance of accuracy in typing in website addresses, as when Year 4 looked at one about the rain cycle, for example. At Year 5 they learn how to put information into the cells on a spreadsheet to find the totals. For example, they compare the costs of buying food and drink from different shops when planning a party. They learn how to put in the cost of each item, how many of each item they want and the correct formula to calculate the overall cost of the party. Effective use of the computers in the suite and of support staff ensures that all pupils meet with success. In Year 1, for example, all of the class successfully typed a correctly spelled label for a classroom display. In this lesson the teacher also identified those capable of going beyond the initial task and provided them with extra tasks to extend their knowledge and understanding. However, there was little real evidence in lessons or in the work seen of more able pupils being encouraged to develop and progress faster and in most cases all pupils had the same task to complete in the same way at the same time. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work in the computer suite and work very hard on the tasks they are given. Behaviour in most lessons is very good.

148 Although planning for ICT shows that pupils should cover all the elements of the subject there is little evidence of this balance of work in lessons or in the work seen during the inspection. However, given that staff have now had some intensive training in ICT, that the well resourced suite is in regular use and that more computers are being put into mini suites around the school, there are signs that this issue is being addressed. Assessment is currently unsatisfactory and there has not been enough rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning, standards, and coverage of all aspects of the subject to ensure that all pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6 achieve what they are capable of.

149 In order to improve standards in ICT, therefore, the school should:

- Improve progress in the junior classes by building upon the work done in Years 1 and 2.
- Monitor teaching and learning more rigorously;
- Develop and use manageable assessment systems to plan and set work that matches the needs and abilities of all pupils;
- Make full use of the mini suites once they are established to encourage pupils to build upon what they learn in the main suite;
- Ensure all pupils cover all elements of ICT in a systematic way.

## MUSIC

150 At the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations and their progress was judged to be good. Although this is still the case overall, there have been notable improvements in some aspects of the subject: for instance, in performing skills in Year 2 and in creating and developing musical ideas in Year 3.

151 Standards in music reached by pupils aged seven, while average overall, are good in singing. Standards reached by pupils aged eleven in singing are in line with national expectations. Standards in appraisal and composing at both seven and eleven are average. The high standards in singing in Year 2 are due to specialist teaching of an excellent standard. In Year 3 pupils reach high standards in their knowledge and understanding of conventional musical notation, and the elements of rhythm, pulse and *ostinato* due to excellent teaching.

152 By Year 2 pupils sing well. Their singing is strong and rhythmic with good attack at the beginning of lines and verses. They sing securely in tune, with considerable panache and very clear enunciation. Their singing is linked to their work in history about the Victorians and reflects the repertoire commonly associated with the music hall tradition, such as 'Oh I do like to be beside the sea-side' and 'My old man.' On a separate occasion, in celebration of 'Beauty in God's World', they sang with appropriate sensitivity and sense of awe. Year 3 pupils are mastering the skills of reading musical notation and correctly identify the names and values of notes such as crotchets, minims and semibreves. Working in groups, they follow a score inserting their rhythms accurately, securely sustaining their line as the music grows in complexity. In Years 4 and 5, pupils are beginning to distinguish the shape of a melody in Mozart's flute concerto, using their knowledge of pitch. By Year 6 pupils have consolidated their singing skills and have learnt to observe the musical elements of dynamics, rhythm and pitch, accurately inserting rhythmic phrases in to a recorded accompaniment, including syncopation. They use instruments to good effect accompanying their singing with *ostinati*, using a range of both tuned and untuned instruments such as maracas, xylophones and two-tone blocks.

153 In common with the school's very strong stance on special educational needs and equal opportunities for all its pupils, teachers ensure that their lessons provide many chances for all pupils to participate fully in all activities, including singing, playing and performing. Teachers also include many opportunities for the personal and social development of all pupils whatever their needs. For instance, in Year 3 the teacher made very good opportunities for pupils to work together in small groups discussing and planning their parts before they played them. Pupils' spiritual development is enriched in assemblies and other occasions of celebration when pupils have opportunities to listen to suitable music, and contribute by singing with appropriate respect.



154 The curriculum for music is well planned and includes an appropriate range of activities including singing, listening and playing. However, opportunities to study and appraise different types of music of other times and cultures are limited. For instance, pupils do not have enough opportunities to listen regularly to music, discuss what they have heard, what they notice about its structure and which instruments they recognise. There are not enough links with literacy and other subject areas such as art. For example, pupils have had limited opportunities to record their feelings about music either in writing or in painting. The school provides opportunities for groups of pupils to learn to play the guitar and the keyboard through specialist teaching, but at present there are no regular after-school clubs or activities in music. Choirs are established whenever the need arises, for instance when preparing for a performance or festival such as Christmas, or the end of year concert. Notable features of the school's provision are the Irish dancing which some pupils perform, and the contribution made by a specialist teacher who provides very good opportunities for pupils' musical experience to be enriched through musicals and productions. For instance he has widened pupils' awareness of instruments from other cultures such as Brazil and Africa by bringing exciting instruments for pupils to listen to and play.

155 Nearly all pupils have very positive attitudes to music. In the mixed class for Year 4 and 5 pupils, some do not listen attentively enough and their concentration slackens. In Year 2, their response is particularly enthusiastic as they prepare and perform a series of music hall songs for their parents. They concentrate extremely hard, listening closely to instructions and eagerly practising to improve their performance. They enjoy their music-making very much and their singing is energetic as well as tuneful. They throw themselves into the event with delight and give their very best. Year 3 pupils show similar determination and joy as they, too, willingly practise to improve their performance, correctly reading standard musical notation in a score of several parts. In Year 6 pupils' attitudes to music are good. They explore the musical feature of regular rhythmic pattern known as *ostinato*. They explore sounds and patterns to fit a previously learnt song, and perform their compositions alongside recordings. Their evaluations of their performances are honest and reflect the need for further refinement. In Years 2 and 3, pupils' behaviour is excellent because their concentration is intense and they have very clear incentives.

156 The quality of teaching varies. In Years 2 and 3 teaching is excellent because teachers have very high levels of expertise, very high expectations, make the learning objectives very clear and drive pupils' learning onwards using pace extremely effectively – there is not a wasted moment. Lessons have an irresistible momentum that pupils benefit from and enjoy. In Year 3 a notable feature is the excellent way the teacher builds up the challenges as the lesson unfolds. In other year groups teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. The better teaching comprises good preparation, a strong sense of purpose and very good management of pupils and time. However, some teachers' own knowledge and understanding of music is limited. Consequently they are not confident enough to develop pupils' learning as fast as they could in lessons, so, although pupils achieve well, they are not reaching the higher standards of attainment.

157 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and determined to improve standards throughout the school, by providing in-service training for her colleagues to improve their own knowledge and understanding of music. A review of the policy and the scheme of work are imminent, and the development of her role in monitoring the subject through scrutinising planning, observing lessons and providing advice is planned for the near future. The quality of resources is good overall but there are not enough musical instruments on those occasions when music is being taught in two classes at the same time, and there are some gaps in the types of instruments to support the study of musical elements. For instance there are not enough individual chime bars for pupils to study the element of pitch. In addition, teachers have to share handbooks, and the use of ICT is limited.

- 158 In order to improve standards further the school should:
- Improve class teachers' knowledge and understanding of, and confidence in, music;
  - Increase the number of instruments;
  - Ensure that instruments enable pupils to study pitch more effectively;
  - Provide enough teachers' handbooks.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

159 During the inspection period it was only possible to observe gymnastic lessons. However, information gained from discussions with teachers and pupils and a visit to an extra-curricular activity clearly shows that standards are average throughout the school. Overall, pupils make sound progress throughout the school. Those pupils with special educational needs also make sound progress, even though there is little support available from learning support assistants in lessons. Teachers ensure that they are fully integrated into lessons and that the tasks set are appropriately matched to their abilities. All pupils and staff dress appropriately for physical education activities. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Learning resources have improved and outdoor and adventurous activities have been introduced, but there is still some imbalance between the various aspects of PE in Years 3 to 6.

160 Year 2 pupils use space sensibly when undertaking floor activities. They show good levels of control when performing balances and begin to choose their own imaginative movements to develop simple sequences. Pupils evaluate their own performance maturely by discussing with their partners how movements can be improved. However, pupils have a limited understanding of how exercise affects the body.

161 Evidence provided by the school, and supported by pupils in discussion, shows that standards in swimming are good. All pupils swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6, which is regarded as the national average standard. Over half of these pupils swim distances beyond 400 metres and use a range of strokes, such as breast stroke and back stroke. They have a good understanding of water safety principles and have had experience of techniques in water survival. Pupils' skills in games are also well developed because the school places a high priority on this area of the subject. In an after-school netball club, girls demonstrate a high level of proficiency in passing and shooting. They show good control by hitting the target regularly in drilled practice designed to speed up their reactions and precision in ball handling. In gymnastic lessons, standards are generally average. Pupils build sequences using a variety of linked movements, but their levels of co-ordination are not always of a good standard and movements do not finish with a precise, well-controlled ending. Pupils have had little experience of dance in upper juniors and as a result standards are not as high in this aspect.

162 The quality of teaching and learning are sound overall but are stronger in Years 1 and 2 where teaching in gymnastic lessons is often good. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and construct lessons well so that pupils build up their skills, knowledge and understanding. They provide well-modelled examples of what is required either through good demonstration by themselves or by selecting good examples of pupils' performance. Classes are well managed and pupils show good levels of interest and concentration. Teachers in the infant classes, however, have higher expectations than their colleagues in the junior years of pupils' performance and ensure that pupils focus on the quality of control in gymnastic movement, especially at the beginning and end of a sequence.

163 Pupils enjoy lessons in physical education. They try hard and are usually well behaved. When moving apparatus they collaborate well and give each other advice on how to improve their movements. This is especially noticeable in Year 1 and 2 lessons. Towards the end of lessons, however, interest often tends to wane and pupils become more restless. This is a more common feature in lessons with juniors.

164 The curriculum covers a good range of activities. Games is a particularly strong area. The school competes successfully in many local leagues and competitions which enhance the quality of pupils' games skills. After-school activities are very strong. However, dance is not represented enough in the timetable of the upper juniors and this results in lower standards in this area. The enthusiastic new co-ordinator has not had sufficient opportunity to make an impact on the subject. Curriculum planning is an identified area which the school intends to improve. There is no structured programme of work that runs throughout the school. Teachers in each year group independently select topics from recognised local and national schemes so that there is no systematic approach to the building up of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. At present there is no monitoring of standards in the subject, either through assessment or through the observation of lessons. Learning resources are good. The school has good facilities and has a number of staff with good levels of expertise in the subject.

165 In order to improve standards further the school should:

- Build more regular opportunities for the teaching of dance in Years 3 to 6;
- Develop a structured scheme of work which builds on previous learning;
- Monitor standards throughout the school.