

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODTHORNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104354

Headteacher: Mr R Bray

Reporting inspector: Mrs S E Hall
21750

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th May 2003

Inspection number: 246373
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woodthorne Road South Tettenhall Wolverhampton West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Talbot
Date of previous inspection:	19 th January 1998

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9333	Mr K Schofield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19765	Mrs P Shannon	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
25771	Mr P Sandall	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	
27369	Mrs C Sandall	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Religious education	
8710	Mrs J Moore	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Music	
21816	Mrs B Thomas	Team inspector	Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodthorne Primary School is on the urban edge of Wolverhampton, close to the Staffordshire border. There are 413 pupils aged from three to eleven, which is larger than average. The 15 per cent of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is higher than in most schools, with many of these pupils of British Asian heritage. Four pupils are at an early stage in learning English. About nine per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is well below the number found in most schools. There are two pupils with a statement of special educational need. Approximately seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The attainment of pupils on entry is above average in all recognised areas. Pupil mobility in and out of the school is below average except at the end of Year 4, when the school loses up to a quarter of the pupils into the Staffordshire middle school system. The school was amalgamated in 1995 from an infant and a junior school and is on a split site. It suffered a fire in 2002 when parts of the infant school and school office were destroyed. The newly appointed headteacher has been in post for exactly a year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that is highly regarded by pupils and parents for providing a happy and caring education for its pupils. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good. The leadership of the school is good and the management is efficient. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards the pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is very good.
- Curriculum planning, including that for personal development, is good and extra-curricular activities are very good.
- The pastoral care of pupils is good.
- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The new headteacher provides good leadership and is supported in an effective manner by senior staff.

What could be improved

- The assessment of pupils' progress and the use of such information to support planning, except in English and mathematics.
- The direct involvement of all staff in subject co-ordinator roles and in monitoring planning, teaching and learning.
- Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and the use of computers to support day-to-day learning across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory overall improvement since the previous inspection of 1998. Overall standards and the quality of teaching and leadership have largely been maintained. In the last inspection several areas were identified for development. Whilst changes have been made, the rate of progress has been slower than it might have been and not enough improvement has been made in important areas which remain as key issues. There has been satisfactory improvement in development planning through setting targets and taking the action necessary to achieve improvement. There has also been satisfactory improvement in raising standards in religious education by extending teachers' subject knowledge. However, the school has been slow to address some important issues. The school has not yet fully established the roles of subject co-ordinators and has only partially succeeded in making better use of assessment to inform future planning, in subjects other than English and mathematics. However, the newly appointed headteacher has recognised these issues and has begun to address the inequitable

distribution of subject co-ordinator responsibilities. The deputy headteacher has recently taken over the role of assessment co-ordinator and there are agreed plans to develop assessment routines.

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

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

The attainment of the children when they start the nursery, whilst very mixed, is generally above average for their age in all areas of their early learning. Most are quite confident and have well developed skills of communication, language and literacy, although a significant minority do not. In the Foundation Stage and in the infants children learn well. The 2002 national test results showed that at the age of seven standards in reading and mathematics were above the national average and those in writing well above average. However, when standards are compared to schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals the picture is more mixed. Whilst pupils still did very well in writing, attainment in reading and mathematics was only average. Inspection findings are that current standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at the age of seven.

The 2002 national tests at eleven showed that when compared to all schools standards in English and mathematics were above average and those in science were average. However, when the standards are compared to those in schools with similar features, whilst attainment in English was average, standards in mathematics and science were below average. This indicates that some pupils at Woodthorne did not achieve what might have been expected of them. The tests also showed that boys did not achieve as well as girls to a greater degree than is seen nationally. There appears no specific reason for this. An unusual feature of the school is that up to a quarter of the pupils leave at the end of Year 4 into a neighbouring middle school system. This means that not all the pupils who take the national tests at eleven are the same pupils who took them here at seven. The schools' targets for 84 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected Level 4 in English were slightly exceeded, whilst the same target in mathematics was not quite achieved. Inspection findings are that standards in English, mathematics and science are currently above average at the age of eleven.

Standards in history, geography and music are above average throughout the school, as they are in design and technology in the juniors. Standards in all other subjects, including religious education, art and design and physical education are generally average at the age of seven and eleven. Whilst the majority of pupils achieve average standards in ICT, there are weaknesses and pupils do not always achieve what they are capable of because of limited access to computers to support day-to-day learning. Pupils learn well because of the good quality of teaching. Higher attaining pupils, including those recognised as gifted and talented, do well and achieve high standards. Pupils speaking English as an additional language achieve as well as other groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve what they are capable of. However, occasionally pupils in the middle range of ability are not challenged sufficiently. Whilst overall achievement is satisfactory, some pupils are capable of making more progress in some subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and the large majority try hard with their work and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well, which has a positive impact on the way lessons are conducted and upon their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Strong relationships exist between pupils and with adults. Where there are opportunities pupils accept responsibility readily, although there are few opportunities to show initiative.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils attend school regularly, and arrive punctually although a minority are late for the start of school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning in each phase of the school is good, as it was in the previous inspection. Staff have developed warm and friendly relationships with pupils that encourage them to behave well and try with their work. All pupils are valued for their efforts; staff praise pupils well, which raises their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers explain things effectively and use a good mix of whole class, group and individual methods to interest the pupils. Teachers usually provide a good level of challenge, especially in English and mathematics where teaching is good. This meets the diverse range of both higher and lower attaining pupils well, although occasionally more could be expected of the pupils in other subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, as are the planning and organisation of lessons. Teachers are well supported by learning support assistants, as effectively illustrated in the nursery. Resources are generally used well to interest pupils although not enough use is made of computers throughout the school to support learning. Pupils learn well and make progress that is at least satisfactory as they move through the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Generous amounts of time are allocated to the teaching of English and mathematics but there are weaknesses in the coverage of some aspects of the ICT curriculum. Extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs fully meets requirements and pupils are supported well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils have good support from their teachers and learning support assistants. They learn and achieve as well as their classmates.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The provision for moral and social development remains good; that for cultural development has improved and is also now good. Whilst provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, staff miss opportunities to develop spiritual awareness further.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pastoral care of pupils is good and they are cared for well. The procedures for assessing the progress pupils make are informal in most subjects and are unsatisfactory overall. Information is not used to plan for the highest level of challenge in several subjects.

Parents' views of the school are very positive and they make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The newly appointed headteacher has a good grasp of areas for development. Senior staff are developing their roles well but not all teachers have roles as subject co-ordinators which limits their knowledge of standards across the school and places an undue burden on those who do carry such roles. Day-to-day administration is very welcoming and efficient.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and are keen to establish closer involvement in day-to-day activities. The chair of governors is effective but carries responsibility for all committees, which is very onerous and fails to involve others actively in such roles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is beginning to identify more accurately its strengths and diagnose areas for development. While there are some procedures to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning, these are quite recently introduced, do not cover all areas of the curriculum and lack the necessary rigour to move the school forward.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is carefully considered and managed well. The principles of best value are appropriately applied to purchases, and resources are generally used well except in ICT. The school is well staffed. The accommodation is satisfactory, although requiring a rolling programme of refurbishment. Resources are generally good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions. • That pupils are happy. • That the quality of teaching is good, as is the progress pupils make. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more systematic use of homework. • A greater range of activities outside lessons. • More information about how their children are getting on.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents but believe the range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The use of homework is satisfactory as is the information parents receive, although both areas could be extended and used to greater effect to inform and involve parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school nursery from the age of three with attainment that, whilst wide ranging, is generally above average for their age in each of the recognised areas of their early learning. These judgements match those of the previous inspection. Many of the children are confident and have good personal and social skills. They communicate well for their age both with adults and with other children. Children achieve satisfactorily in the nursery and do well in the reception classes where there is an effectively planned range of activities that stimulate and challenge them. Children enter Year 1 with skills that are above the recognised national targets of the Early Learning Goals. They are well settled to school routines and have positive attitudes to their learning.

2. Standards in speaking and listening are maintained at above average levels throughout the school, as they were at the previous inspection. Many pupils speak confidently and with a wide vocabulary relevant both to specific subjects and in general discussion. This supports their learning well across the curriculum. Pupils are often eager to share their thoughts and knowledge with their classmates and most are happy to speak to others without inhibition.

3. The previous inspection report indicated that at the age of seven the great majority of pupils achieved standards that were higher than the national average in all aspects of English and in mathematics. The national tests of 1999 largely supported these judgements in the following year. However, since that time there has been more variation year on year in the standards achieved and no notable trend of improvement until last year.

4. The National Curriculum test results of 2002 (the most recent year that national data are available) showed that standards in reading for pupils aged seven were above the national average. The tests indicated that there was a considerable range of attainment within the year group, with both more pupils exceeding the national target and conversely more not achieving the national expectation, with less in the middle bands of achievement than is often seen. When reading standards are compared to those in schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment in 2002 was average. Inspection judgements are that standards in reading at the age of seven are similar to last year and above the average for the age of the pupils. Most pupils read well and use a good range of strategies to work out words they are not familiar with.

5. The 2002 tests indicated that at the end of Year 2 pupils did particularly well in writing, with standards well above both the national and similar schools averages. This showed a notable improvement on the previous two years when writing standards were below average and the 2002 results are easily the highest achieved by the school in the writing tests. In Woodthorne three times the national average of pupils achieved the higher levels in the writing test. The school has allocated additional time to the teaching of writing skills in a carefully planned manner. Current standards in writing, whilst not at quite the level of last year, nevertheless are above average at the age of seven. The majority of pupils write quite imaginatively and make good use of their widening vocabulary.

6. In the 2002 national tests in mathematics at the age of seven, attainment was above the national average, whilst average when compared to schools with similar features. The trend in mathematics has generally been upwards, apart from a big dip in 2000. National tests indicate that pupils have a good grasp of number, algebra and shape and space but

until recently their skills in using and applying mathematics have been more limited and this has been a focus for the school. Current standards in mathematics are above average and problem-solving skills are improving well. Pupils have a secure understanding of number, which they often use confidently in mental calculations.

7. Teacher assessments in science in 2002 indicate that standards were above average at the age of seven. However, as in mathematics, pupils did not make as much progress in experimental and investigative activities as in other aspects of the curriculum. This has been an area the school has identified and begun to tackle well. Inspection findings are that standards are above average for the age group. Many pupils have a lively interest in the world around them.

8. The previous inspection indicated that standards in English and science were well above the national average at the age of eleven and those in mathematics were above average. These standards were not reflected in the 1999 national test results, which were average except in science, where they were below average. This was followed by significant improvement in 2000, when attainment was well above the average in all three subjects and the highest that the school had previously or has subsequently achieved, especially in mathematics.

9. In the 2002 national tests at eleven, standards were above the national average in English but average when compared to those in schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. The number reaching the higher standards was above that seen in most schools. Inspection findings largely reflect this position and indicate that standards in English are above average. Most pupils continue to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills well.

10. In mathematics tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 standards were above the national average but not so high when compared to schools with similar features, where they were below average. A small percentage of pupils achieved the very high Level 6 in the national tests indicating the school identifies and supports pupils who are gifted and talented well. Current standards in mathematics largely reflect last year's results and are above average. A small number of high attaining pupils are being supported effectively and are on line to achieve well in the national tests. Most pupils make good progress in using their knowledge of numbers to make quite speedy mental calculations.

11. In the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds, standards in science were average when compared to all schools but below average when compared to those with similar features. Inspection findings are that, because of the school's focus on investigative and experimental science, standards are slightly higher than last year and are now above average. In 2002 the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend.

12. Standards in geography, history and music are above average throughout the school. Standards in design and technology are above average at eleven and average at seven. Standards in all other subjects, including religious education, art and design and physical education, are average throughout the school. Standards in ICT are broadly average throughout the school but pupils do not always achieve what they are capable of, as they do not have enough regular access to computers.

13. Whilst there is only an average proportion of pupils moving in and out of the school overall, there are more in the upper years as pupils leave to join the local middle school system whilst others take their place. These changes of school can affect the progress pupils make and this is an area the newly appointed assessment co-ordinator will monitor.

14. National test data indicate that boys do not do as well as girls to a greater extent than is seen nationally. This is an area the headteacher has identified, that the staff are now focused upon and that the school is beginning to monitor carefully. Currently there appears no specific reason why this should occur. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve standards that are at the same levels as many of their classmates. Their starting points are lower than others are when they join the reception class, but they make good progress overall throughout the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs attain suitable standards in relation to their prior attainment. Their individual education plans are clearly focused and as a result they make good progress, both in lessons and over longer periods of time. Targets are met successfully. Detailed and comprehensive records of attainment and progress are kept, and these are used effectively to inform teaching, target setting and planning.

15. Because the quality of teaching is good, pupils throughout the school learn well and achieve at least satisfactory standards. Higher attaining pupils generally achieve well, particularly in mathematics, because the school ensures their learning needs are identified and a good level of challenge is provided. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have their language needs carefully assessed when they enter school and a good programme of support is available where necessary. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well as their needs are identified and support is provided.

16. The achievement of the large majority of average attaining pupils is satisfactory. However, over time some pupils in the middle groups of attainment have not always achieved what they are capable of, as they have not been consistently stretched to reach their full potential. This is a situation the new headteacher has identified and has tackled through the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher as assessment co-ordinator. Parents indicate that differences are most noticeable in Year 3 but inspectors note that, whilst not a major concern, to some extent this lack of the highest challenge occurs in several year groups, particularly in non-core subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and show great enjoyment of their lessons. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to improve this aspect of school life. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a credit and their behaviour both in and out of classrooms is very good. Pupils with English as an additional language are well behaved and they enjoy their activities. They try hard and this helps them to learn well. Pupils with special educational needs like school and they demonstrate very positive attitudes to their lessons. This is because they are well taught.

18. Relationships throughout school are very good and very well supported by the emphasis that teachers place on pupils' personal development. These factors contribute directly to the positive learning environment that exists and they form a major strength of the school. The school's aims and values are clearly reflected in the pupils' behaviour when they are both at work and at play. Relationships amongst all members of the school community, regardless of social background, are very good. They are founded on a combination of mutual respect and trust.

19. Staff members, including non-teaching personnel, know each individual very well and provide a good level of pastoral care. As a result, pupils are confident to speak to adults about personal issues or to share any worries they have. Pupils respond very well to the care and consideration they are shown, demonstrating a healthy respect for the rules that exist. For example, when teachers signal that it is time to come into school, pupils immediately stop

playing and line up quickly and quietly, without any need for further prompting by adults. Pupils have an obvious pride in their school and in all they achieve. To their credit, they take very good care of the building, property and resources.

20. During lessons pupils are well motivated, work hard and respond very positively to encouragement. They share resources readily, listen to each other thoughtfully and offer constructive suggestions. From the time that they enter school, pupils follow instructions carefully and set to work quickly. Very good levels of concentration are evident and pupils persevere enthusiastically with tasks that they find challenging. The caring attitude of the teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all pupils receive a high level of support. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs respond very well to the tasks and challenges presented by the teachers.

21. Pupils have a mature sense of self-discipline and this creates a calm, pleasant atmosphere throughout school. When working on group assignments pupils collaborate very effectively, willingly offering help where needed. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' organisational skills. For example, at the end of lessons pupils usually tidy resources away quickly without being asked and often leave the classroom as tidy at the end of the day as it was in the morning.

22. Pupils demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the impact that their actions have on others. They consider each other's space when playing boisterous games and make sure that all who want to take part are included. Bullying is not a significant problem in the school, although lunchtime supervisors and members of staff are continually vigilant and deal with any very rare incidents quickly and effectively. For example, during one lunchtime, a case of inappropriate behaviour was seen to be resolved quickly and effectively.

23. Attendance rates are close to the national average and there have been no exclusions. For the great majority of pupils, punctuality is good. However, a small number of pupils arrive late for school and this has an adverse affect on their education as well as disrupting the start to the school day. Occasionally classes start late and overrun the allotted time.

24. Parents highly commend the staff for their success in developing very good attitudes in the children. In returned questionnaires, the vast majority agree that their children like coming to school and express their belief in the high quality of behaviour. At the meeting with parents, the same agreement was strongly expressed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, as it was in the previous inspection. In the 79 lessons observed the balance of teaching that was very good, good or satisfactory, whilst varying slightly from class to class, was similar in each phase of the school. During the inspection excellent teaching was observed in just over one per cent of lessons, very good teaching in 22 per cent, good teaching in 49 per cent and satisfactory teaching in 28 per cent of lessons. In the previous inspection almost ten per cent of teaching was deemed to be unsatisfactory; in this inspection no lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory, which is an improvement.

26. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage of learning is good overall, whilst being slightly stronger in the reception classes than the nursery. Staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of young children and in the reception classes there is a good range of activities that guide the children through well-structured, teacher-directed activities. In the nursery there is a well-planned learning environment but too much emphasis

on child-initiated play and not quite enough on teacher-directed activities to ensure all children take the full benefit from what is available.

27. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the different subjects and of the learning needs of the particular age groups that they teach are good, with particular strengths in music in the infants. There are also strengths in subject knowledge in the teaching of English in Year 6 and occasionally teaching is excellent when 'memory scraps' are used to choose significant recollections that can be used in stories. Where teaching is most effective teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, as seen in a very good Year 5 lesson on the circulation of blood. The teacher made imaginative use of plastic hoops, marker discs and beanbags on the hall floor to illustrate how blood is pumped towards and away from the heart. When the pupils walk around the 'parts of the body' and exchange the colour of their beanbag they recognise the direction of the blood flow and how this changes colour when oxygenated.

28. Staff teach the range of basic skills well and this is particularly effective in the teaching of reading, writing and number. Teachers of the younger pupils are competent to teach phonics and the effective teaching of literacy skills has been a main focus of the school with additional time allocated to this area. Staff have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and their teaching shows a clear awareness of the progressive acquisition of skills. Where pupils encounter difficulties most teachers are quick to use these opportunities to make teaching points and clarify any misconceptions.

29. Teachers plan their lessons well and planning reflects long and medium-term policies and schemes of work. In most lessons staff share the aims of the activity with the pupils, which gives them a good focus for the lesson and helps them develop a clearer knowledge of their own learning. Planning usually takes account of the differing needs of pupils, particularly in English and mathematics and separate but linked tasks are set for higher, average and lower attaining pupils. The planning of lessons often clearly identifies the role of support staff and how they are to assist learning.

30. Teachers' expectations are usually good. The needs of high attaining pupils are identified well, especially in numeracy and literacy lessons. Additional support is also provided for some activities, which ensures that gifted and talented pupils achieve their potential, particularly in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are also identified and supported well and the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff work closely together to provide work at a suitable level. Whilst the level of challenge for most pupils of average ability in each year group is appropriate, pupils are not always challenged consistently in subjects other than mathematics and English. The newly appointed headteacher has identified the needs of the average attaining pupils as a priority and this is now identified in the recent School Improvement Plan.

31. The school is aware that attainment in national tests is not high in comparison to schools with similar features. Whilst this is not a major concern in the majority of lessons observed, the school needs to extend assessment procedures to monitor such areas.

32. Teachers generally employ a good range of teaching methods. Where teaching is most effective, as seen in lessons that were judged to be excellent or very good, there is a clear balance between teacher exposition, paired work, individual work and follow-up discussions that allow pupils to interact with each other. In the most successful lessons, including a Year 2 music activity, tasks were well linked together and the use of musical vocabulary, voices and instruments extended learning well. Occasionally where teaching is not as effective teachers talk for too long and do not make enough use of directed questions to involve the quieter pupils. The school has recently recognised the need to extend open-

ended learning so that pupils take part in a wider range of problem solving and investigational tasks. This is beginning to have a positive effect in both mathematics and science. However, occasionally the organisation of lessons is less secure. This was seen in a Year 2 science lesson where investigational work of which materials soaked up most liquid was narrowed by the teacher's choice of pre-chosen and cut materials.

33. Teachers manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour. As most pupils in the school are naturally well behaved this is not difficult to achieve. Nevertheless staff have developed warm and supportive relationships with most pupils, which motivates pupils to try hard and raises their self-esteem.

34. The use of time is generally good. Lessons are structured so that different but linked activities flow from introductory explanations. In the most effective lessons time targets are set for pupils so that they know what they have to achieve in a given period. This gives the lessons a sense of pace and most pupils are keen to achieve these targets. Support staff are highly valued in the school and are deployed well. This is seen to particular effect in the nursery and reception classes where staff have a good grasp of their roles and sometimes play an equal part in teaching the children. In the nursery the support assistant worked on a focused activity where the children made, tasted and discussed what happened to the three bears' porridge when cooked in a microwave. This effective work enabled the teacher to supervise other children. Resources are used well throughout the school.

35. The quality of feedback to the pupils is good. Staff explain to pupils what they have done well and what they need to improve. Whilst the marking of pupils' work is variable, it is generally good and there are examples of very perceptive marking that helps move learning on well. The use of homework is satisfactory. Parents indicate this is sometimes unsystematic with no work arriving home for some time, followed by several pieces at the same time. Inspectors note that pupils' books show evidence that this work is satisfactory overall but could be monitored to ensure more even flow of homework.

36. Pupils with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress as they move through the school. They get good support from their teachers and the learning support assistants. Work is pitched at the right level, and their progress and attainments are securely charted in the main subjects. This is why they progress as well as they do. Overall, the teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers' plans identify interesting and challenging activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching and support staff make sure that pupils are fully included in all learning activities. The quality of the support staff is good, and is used well to support pupils in their learning. As a result pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

37. Pupils learn well because teaching is good. Pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding that are appropriate to their age and ability. Most pupils show intellectual, physical and creative effort in their work. They concentrate well and where opportunities arise they work independently. Because of the high priority given to the development of English, pupils learn to read well and this, together with their speaking skills, has a positive effect in all areas of the curriculum. This boosts pupils' learning well.

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

38. The school provides a good curriculum, which offers effective learning opportunities for its pupils. It is broad, balanced and relevant and meets the statutory requirements for all subjects in the National Curriculum. Total weekly teaching time meets the national

recommendations and religious education now complies with the locally agreed syllabus. The time allocated for the teaching of English is generous and ensures that there is depth to this teaching which helps support good standards throughout the school. However, there is less time allocated for the teaching of non-core subjects than often seen and this does not support standards so effectively. Whilst the school broadly complies with the requirement to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum the actual time pupils spend using computers is very limited because of both a lack of resources and the inefficient use of classroom computers.

39. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides a broad range of activities across all the areas of learning. The outdoor curriculum is provided in two separate areas. Although small the reception class area is used imaginatively. The nursery area has wheeled toys, but the tarmac area is cramped and there is insufficient space to ride around the garden. Good attention is given to all the 'stepping stones' stages of learning. However, work is planned separately by staff in each year group and does not flow in a continuous way. There is good provision for the wide range of children's abilities. The organisation of the curriculum and the teaching and assessment arrangements for the nursery and reception children is undergoing a period of change as identified in the School Improvement Plan. Throughout the two year groups activities are well resourced, thoughtfully planned and provided, but more focused use of these resources needs to be made in the nursery.

40. There are good policies, which have been implemented for all subjects. The school has responded well to the National Literacy Strategy and to the National Numeracy Strategy. The Early Literacy Support, Additional Literacy Support, Booster classes and Springboard mathematics have been introduced effectively to support different groups of pupils. The schemes of work of all other subjects of the curriculum have been improved, including that of design and technology, with the help of the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This has in turn resulted in better long and medium-term plans, with improved lesson planning. However, there are still insufficient opportunities for the subject leaders to disseminate good practice in planning.

41. Health education, including sex education and guidance about the dangers of misusing drugs, is planned and taught as part of the science and religious education provision. Family life and healthy eating are planned and taught within the geography and history curriculum as well as through the very good personal, social and health education programme.

42. Woodthorne Primary is a fully inclusive school. Every pupil has full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and its day-to-day life generally. Pupils of all capabilities have the right kind of support that enables them to achieve well. In the main subjects work is pitched at the right levels because pupils' progress and attainments are tracked and charted accurately. Formal assessments are not in place in the non-core subjects, but teachers' informal assessments guide their planning, enabling them to provide suitable activities so that many pupils make good progress. The pupils who move in and out of the school each year, but particularly those who enter after Year 4, are well integrated and the school strives to meet their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and they make good progress in developing their spoken English. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all school activities. They have full access to the complete range of National Curriculum activities, and all the additional activities that the school offers to all its pupils.

43. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include orchestra, hand-bells, recorders, choir, gymnastics, ballet and dance, cross-country, six-a-side football, athletics, netball, tennis and computer club. Visitors to the school also enrich and add breadth to the curriculum. Visits and residential stays are an important part of school life and effective use is made of local places of geographical and historical interest and places of

worship when these match the pupils' areas of study. As yet the school has only satisfactory links with the local community. Outside agencies provide clubs for dancing and football coaching. Good links exist with other local schools, particularly the adjacent secondary school, enabling pupils to transfer to the middle school or high school with confidence.

44. Good provision is made overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. There has been an improvement in the cultural provision and this is now good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development remains satisfactory and moral and social provision is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

45. Values and beliefs are well taught in religious education lessons. There is no specific planning for this aspect, but elements are evident in the curriculum. The school values pupils both as individuals and as part of the community. One example is the respect pupils have for each other both in and out of the classroom. Pupils are prepared to challenge anything they feel inappropriate or anything they consider contrary to their own and others' beliefs. Important issues are taken as the theme for assemblies, but there are not enough opportunities for reflection at this time. Daily acts of collective worship fulfil legal requirements and encourage consideration for the feelings and values of others, although generally assemblies lack an immediate focus, such as a striking visual image.

46. A good moral code is part of the ethos of the school and an intrinsic part of pupils' personal development. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Class rules are discussed and prominently displayed and each class has a system of rewards and sanctions, which are very effective. The school promotes a strong sense of trust, honesty, fairness and respect for others. Most members of staff are good role models for these values. Pupils are taught to distinguish clearly between behaviour that is right or wrong. They are given good opportunities to reflect on and discuss inappropriate behaviour in classes.

47. All pupils have chances to exercise responsibility, and these are extended in Year 6. Teachers encourage their pupils to show courtesy and awareness of others; it is an expectation rather than something to be continually applauded. Very good relationships are fostered in lessons, with boys and girls working well together. There are frequent, planned opportunities in many subjects for pupils to work and discuss together in pairs and small groups. These activities work well because pupils are interested in each other and relationships are so good. There is a good response to collections for charities that focus pupils' attention on people in need in the wider world.

48. The school actively encourages its pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity around them. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when this area was found to be satisfactory. Pupils study several major religions and visits are made to a variety of local places of worship. Different aspects of culture, both past and present, are reinforced through literacy and history lessons, art and music, supported by visitors to school and visits outside school. Displays of pupils' work, pictures and artefacts support this work well. The Kings High School supports the cultural curriculum whenever possible and a local artist has invited the school to contribute to the Wolverhampton market project, producing attractive glass panel designs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring welfare are good. The whole staff team strive to create a safe and caring environment that is socially and academically inclusive. Using effective procedures and involving the whole school community, Woodthorne Primary School has promoted a caring way of life. Since the last report, the school has continued to maintain high standards for pupils' care and welfare.

50. There is very good management of child protection, with the designated person having received the appropriate, advanced training. All adults in school are up to date with recently amended procedures and are clear about their responsibilities. Procedures for accidents and emergencies are very good, with three key members of staff fully trained in first aid. Fire drills and evacuation exercises are regularly practised and the governors are kept informed through reports from the headteacher. Health and safety reviews, together with risk assessments, are carried out for every aspect of school life, both on and off site. The school has adopted an appropriate Internet safety policy. Teachers are active in promoting good safety practice and a member of the governing body supports the school by participating in frequent risk audits.

51. The school building and grounds are well cared for, with the interior maintained in a clean condition. All areas are considerably enhanced through good quality displays of pupils' work and achievements. A good range of healthy and appetising meals is served in hygienic conditions.

52. Processes for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school carefully monitors attendance and there are effective procedures in place to deal with cases of late arrival and frequent absence. Prompt contact is made with parents in case of an unexplained absence.

53. Procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are very good and reflected in the high standard of behaviour seen. Staff members have high expectations of behaviour and adopt a consistently positive approach that is built largely around pupils taking responsibility for their own actions. The emphasis on social and moral development permeates every aspect of school life. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for jobs around school, which significantly contribute to developing their maturity. All pupils know that bullying will not be tolerated. Lunchtime supervisors and members of staff are continually vigilant about care and pupils are confident in talking to adults about any problems they may have. There is not an issue in school regarding oppressive behaviour. Nevertheless, there are clear guidelines for dealing with any incident that may occur.

54. Parents have a very positive view of pupils' conduct as shown in the pre-inspection questionnaires. Parents are well informed about the behaviour policy and support the weekly assembly for merit awards, which congratulate pupils on thoughtful actions or hard work.

55. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Staff members strive to sustain high levels of learning and achievement. Pupils are able to contribute their ideas by using a suggestion box scheme. They have shown initiative such as organising fund-raising activities by collecting stamps to contribute to funds for 'Dogs for the Blind'. For older pupils, a good range of after-school clubs adds to pupils' social skills' development.

56. Educational and personal support is good. For example, for pupils who experience emotional or social difficulties, all staff members are kept informed through staff meetings, so that they can provide appropriate care. Such meetings include the school nurse, who provides a positive link with the health services. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by the special educational co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants who all provide high-quality guidance. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting the small number of pupils who may otherwise have difficulty with tasks in the classroom. The overall result is the creation of a very pleasant social atmosphere both in lessons and at playtimes.

57. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. While there have been improvements in some areas, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, there are currently few or no systems to monitor pupils' progress in other subjects, and there is therefore no record to refer to, whether for groups or individual pupils. Some teachers make effective written evaluations of their lessons, but this does not provide information about the progress of individual pupils. There are examples of good and constructive marking in pupils' books, but this is not consistent; for example, in mathematics, homework is set but there is sometimes no evidence that it has been marked, either individually or as a class.

58. The recent introduction of individual targets in mathematics is beginning to have an effect, although their use is not yet consistent through the school. The '55' club, which challenges pupils to know their multiplication tables, is working very well, and pupils talk enthusiastically about their successes. It is a good example of the progress that can be made when pupils are really involved in their own learning. The use of optional tests in English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5 is helping teachers to track pupils' achievement from year to year, and the whole-school focus on writing with key objectives is raising standards.

59. The school is aware of the issues surrounding assessment, and has made it a focus in the current School Improvement Plan; the deputy headteacher has recently taken on the role of assessment co-ordinator. Using computer-based programs to track individual progress is intended to give information in a more helpful form. Subject co-ordinators need to be involved in creating and monitoring assessment and recording systems in their own subjects, so that they have a clear view of attainment and progress throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Parents have a very positive view of the school and it is confirmed that the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The great majority of parents believe that their children make good progress. Almost all parents accept that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to sustain the strong links with parents. Parents of pupils speaking English as an additional language are involved in their children's education and this helps the children to be well motivated. Parents attend open evenings and school functions and they contribute to the day-to-day life of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education. They regularly meet with staff so they are kept well informed of progress and attainment.

61. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Parents are made welcome in the school and the school values the relationship. The significant number that help in school do so enthusiastically. In addition, many parents are available to accompany pupils who participate in visits outside school.

62. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is good and a home-school agreement is in place. Parents know that the school expects their children to work hard and are keen to support their children's learning at home. Parents said that they would like to have more meetings that explain what their children learn. To help parents understand what is being taught, the school sends home a summary of planned teaching topics at the beginning of each term. In the past the school has organised curriculum evenings and recognises the importance of having similar events in the future.

63. The parent-teacher association regularly engages in social events, providing very good community contacts and fund raising. For example, in the last year, the association

raised a significant amount of money to purchase lighting and staging for the juniors' hall. The association has also generously supported the cost of photocopying and school visits.

64. Parents express confidence in the school's ability to sort out concerns quickly. In the returned questionnaires the great majority of parents agreed that they were well informed about how their child was getting on and a significant majority believed that the school works closely with parents. However, at the parents' meeting, there was concern about the transfer of children from the infant area to the junior part of the school. The school recognises the problem about having two separate buildings and groups of staff and is striving to enhance the integration of the two parts of the school. To some extent, the integration of the two parts of the school has been hindered by the extensive rebuilding work caused by the fire earlier in the year.

65. The school provides a great deal of good quality information for parents, such as the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, which are well presented and informative. There are good explanations sent to parents about joining the school and transferring from the infant to the junior part of the school. Parents receive regular newsletters to keep them abreast of school activities.

66. Annual reports on academic progress, which provide an insight into the work done by individual children during the current academic year, are satisfactory. However, targets for improvement are not sufficiently identified. Except for English, mathematics and science, comments are chiefly about what has been covered in lessons rather than the individual pupil's achievements. This is compensated somewhat by the three consultation evenings per year, which provide opportunities for parents to review their children's progress and be involved in the setting of new targets. It was reported that consultation meetings are very well attended.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are good. The new headteacher has used his first year well to establish good relationships with the pupils, staff, parents and governors. He provides vision and a clear sense of direction for the school and has a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. The headteacher has a collegiate leadership style and has put in place mechanisms for fully involving staff, governors and parents. This is appreciated by governors and parents who view him as friendly, accessible and caring. The head and the deputy have formed an effective partnership and are supporting staff in taking the school forward. Leadership and management were good at the time of the last inspection, although shortcomings were identified in the role of curriculum co-ordinators and in the school improvement plan. The school has been quite slow to resolve some of these issues.

68. The way the school responded to the very challenging circumstances of a recent fire is a credit to the strengths of the headteacher, senior management team, staff and governors. Great efforts were taken to ensure that the children's learning did not suffer and that staff were well supported at a very difficult time.

69. The vision of the headteacher, governors and staff has been jointly agreed, with an appropriate set of aims. The school is committed to establishing a socially inclusive curriculum that values all its pupils. Pupils understand and like the school's reward system. The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis. The school staff work together as a community, and care for the pupils, although not all procedures are consistent and 'whole school', which is an issue for further development. The school administrator is very welcoming and, despite being in separate temporary accommodation, plays a full and very

effective part in school life. Both office staff are extremely efficient in fulfilling their responsibilities.

70. The headteacher's delegation of management responsibilities is satisfactory, although some staff carry very heavy burdens of responsibility. He has worked closely with the senior management team and has extended their involvement in decision making. The team work effectively. Together with the head they maintain a close overview of the standards the school achieves. They had a major involvement in updating the school handbook and implementing the teaching and learning policy. The head has begun the process of extending the management team to include all staff with responsibility allowances.

71. The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory. The school is beginning to identify more accurately its strengths and diagnose areas for development. The head and management team are beginning to evaluate the school's performance systematically and some effective strategies have been put in place to improve identified weaknesses. There are appropriate systems for assessing the academic performance of different groups especially in English and mathematics, with some pupils given targeted support.

72. While there are some procedures to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning, many of these have been introduced recently. They do not cover all the areas of the curriculum and systems are not yet securely established throughout the school. Currently the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are unsatisfactory. The role of subject co-ordinators needs further development. Some co-ordinators manage their subject well; however, several are in the early stages of co-ordinating their subjects. Some have begun to take on aspects of monitoring but it remains a patchy picture. Not all teachers have roles as subject co-ordinators. This limits their knowledge of standards and affects their ability to influence curriculum decisions. This also places an undue burden on those who do. For example some members of senior management, including the head, carry too much responsibility for individual subjects. The head has identified the need to spread responsibilities more widely and has begun the process.

73. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to improve many aspects of this key stage but she has other extensive responsibilities that involve a considerable amount of management time, together with a full-time Year 2 teaching commitment. Reception class staff have reviewed many aspects of the curriculum provision and have planned the necessary developments accordingly. These plans demonstrate a good awareness of the needs of young children.

74. Overall, provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress, like their classmates. A number of these pupils are in the highest attainment bands, especially in Years 3 to 6. Their teachers and the headteacher oversee their work carefully. Progress and attainment are checked at regular intervals, and external support services are brought in to help where they are needed. This system works well in ensuring that no one slips through the net.

75. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is the right kind of support that enables pupils to meet their targets successfully. The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator had only been in post for a few days prior to the start of the inspection. She inherited a well-organised and managed system. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and their support is managed well. Funds are used to support learning effectively. Progress and attainment are checked and monitored at regular intervals; gaps in learning are identified and tackled well. This is one reason why pupils learn successfully.

76. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties in a satisfactory manner. Governors are supportive of the school and have a good level of educational and business expertise that is very useful in carrying out their duties. The new chair of governors has a good grasp of the role but unusually carries a very onerous burden as chair of all the governor committees. This not only puts a lot of responsibility on one person but also limits the direct involvement of other governors and the opportunity for them to extend their levels of skill to take on future responsibilities. Historically there has not been a programme of governor visits to monitor and evaluate any given area of school life and this has limited the day-to-day knowledge and understanding of the quality of provision and the achievement of pupils. Previously many governors have been dependent upon members of their family or the headteacher for information. The chair of governors wisely acknowledges the benefits of a programme of governor visits and specific subject or class links to ensure information is gained at first hand.

77. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is satisfactory and improving. Until recently the senior staff drew the School Improvement Plan together and it was then presented to the governors for discussion. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, staff, governors and parents have all been involved in discussions before the plan has been formulated. This has ensured that governors are much more involved in the process of drawing up and monitoring the plan. The weaknesses identified in the school improvement plan at the time of the previous inspection have been fully addressed. It is now a useful tool, linking priorities to standards and staff training. Governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is also satisfactory, although they tend to focus more on the successes rather than digging more deeply to identify areas for improvement.

78. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is in place. The school is committed to the high quality support and training of all staff and is in the process of being assessed for 'Investors in People' status.

79. The school has good financial procedures and supports educational priorities through careful financial management. Whilst there is nominally quite a large carry-forward the school has historically had a tight budget. This is affected each year by the 'claw-back' of funding for the unknown number of pupils who leave after Year 4; for instance this year the amount is very nearly a fifth of the monies carried forward. The school has also had to plan carefully following the recent fire, which accounts for almost 15 per cent of the carry-forward. These situations make financial planning difficult and, especially in the first year of headship, the headteacher has had little room for manoeuvre in school budgeting. The school has drawn together a good new School Improvement Plan, which clearly identifies the priorities for expenditure. The principles of best value are firmly established and day-to-day administration of the school is very efficient.

80. Where specific grants are available, such as that for the National Grid for Learning, monies are used in a satisfactory manner. However, there are less computers available than is usually seen for the number of pupils and this limits the quality of their learning. The school's overall use of new technology is satisfactory. Senior staff are beginning to make efficient use of laptop computers to support planning and administration duties. However, not all assessment procedures are yet supported by technology although there are clear plans to achieve this.

81. The school is well staffed. There is a well thought out induction programme. New staff are quickly made to feel valued members of the team. There is generally a good team spirit amongst the staff and a shared commitment to succeed although in many respects the school still functions as separate infant and junior schools. The non-teaching staff provide effective support for different groups of pupils, and work closely with teachers. They support

pupils well with their learning and are positive role models. Learning resources are good. They are good in many subjects and satisfactory in the rest, except in ICT. The number of computers available for pupils to use is very low compared to the national average. There are good resources for supporting children in the Foundation Stage, pupils with special needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

82. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although having two buildings separated by a car park presents some challenges. The junior block is accessible for pupils with disabilities and further plans are in place to make the infant block accessible. The junior department has more room for its book provision than at the time of the previous inspection. However, because the ICT suite and library are in the same room, neither the library nor ICT is fully in use. The ICT area is too small for a full class at a time and this adversely affects the time pupils have to develop their skills. The school makes good use of a separate music room, which, although rather dilapidated, is used effectively.

83. The school has efficiently tackled the major issues of the fire last year. However, work remains to be completed, for example on the administration block. The school grounds are limited but this is compensated for by the adjacent secondary school that makes available an additional grass area and the use of extensive playing fields. The playground areas are not stimulating for the pupils. Both have very limited seating, faded markings and no shelter. Parts of the external building also appear shabby and are in need of repainting and a rolling programme of maintenance.

84. Overall, the leadership and management by the head and key staff are good. Governors are supportive of the school and ready to extend their monitoring role. The governing body and school are committed to improvement, with the capacity to achieve their goals. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall in supporting the children's education. As a result the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85 In order to continue to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and where appropriate the governors should:

1. Implement and use consistently systems of assessing and recording pupils' progress in all subjects to support future planning and the setting of targets for improvement, both for groups and for individual pupils (paragraphs 31, 57-59, 80, 143, 147, 158, 163, 168, 175, 187, 190).
2. Clarify and extend the role of subject co-ordinators by:
 - ensuring an equitable distribution of subject co-ordinator roles so that all teachers are appropriately involved (paragraphs 67, 72);
 - extending the co-ordinators' involvement in monitoring and evaluating planning, teaching and learning in areas for which they hold responsibility (paragraphs 67, 72);
 - carrying out regular and rigorous evaluations of the work of the school using recognised criteria (paragraphs 151, 158, 163, 168, 175, 181, 187).
3. Ensure that a full and suitably challenging range of ICT activities is provided continuously for all by:
 - maximising the use of the computer suite to teach all aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth (paragraphs 12, 119, 129, 143, 150, 158, 163, 174, 176);
 - increasing the number, quality and use of classroom computers (paragraphs 38, 80, 81, 169);
 - linking the use of classroom computers to those in the computer suite (paragraph 176);
 - providing better control technology software (paragraphs 38, 176).

86 Minor issues the school should consider:

- Develop policies, procedures and day-to-day practices that are corporate and consistent and which ensure that the school works as a cohesive whole (paragraphs 69, 72, 181).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	39	22	0	0	0
Percentage	1	22	49	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	390
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	32

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	65

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.62
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	28
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	51	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	90 (86)	93 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	29
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	54	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (87)	93 (89)	97 (90)
	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	26	26	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	24	21	23
	Total	45	42	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (86)	81 (73)	88 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	22	24
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	44	45	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (82)	87 (80)	92 (86)
	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	254	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	14	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	10	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	65	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	22	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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)	16.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	152

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	895,779
Total expenditure	839,786
Expenditure per pupil	1,953
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,484
Balance carried forward to next year	94,477

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	413
Number of questionnaires returned	131

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	48	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	57	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	45	15	2	5
The teaching is good.	48	50	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	46	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	34	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	49	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	60	9	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	48	47	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	53	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	41	15	5	15

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

87 Since the previous inspection in January 1998 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'. The previous inspection mainly focused on the nursery together with a small number of reception children who were less than five years old. The findings of this inspection differ to that of the previous inspection as judgements of children's levels of attainment are now made at the end of the reception year.

88 The nursery and reception classes are attractive and stimulating, providing a warm and inviting atmosphere. At the time of the inspection there were 49 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis and 54 children in the two reception classes. Children are admitted to the nursery on or following their third birthday. Depending upon places available, most children spend between three and five terms in the nursery before transferring to the reception classes. Most children transfer to the two reception classes in September or January, depending when they were born. A gradual introduction to the nursery through meetings, home visits and visits to school, together with helpful information given to parents, ensures children make a good start.

89 Children enter the nursery with above average levels of attainment. This reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. By the time they reach Year 1 a significant number of children have made steady progress and exceed the expected levels nationally in all six areas of learning. Children are identified as having special educational needs at an early stage and these children receive good support and make the same progress as their peers. Those children requiring support in English as an additional language make similar progress, also through good support. Children make satisfactory progress overall but this is better in the reception classes where teaching is more focused and the assessments of children more clearly identify where the children are and what they need to do to improve.

90 The quality of teaching is good overall but this varies between year groups. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and sometimes good. In the reception classes teaching is good overall and frequently very good. Teaching in the nursery consists of a shared team approach, which provides the children with an imaginative range of experiences. All areas of learning are taught but there are missed opportunities for 'seizing the moment' as an opportunity for teaching. Activities to initiate investigative and creative experiences are planned but these lack a clear focus both in the learning and consequently in the assessments of the children's various stages as they progress through the Foundation Stage curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities for children to plan or consolidate their learning, for example at the end of a lesson.

91 The planning for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is well structured and they benefit from good and well-focused support. In the reception classes teachers have high expectations of children's achievements. The stimulating and enquiring environment, together with good structure in each session, promotes secure and well-focused learning with good attention being paid to the teaching of basic skills. The way in which staff ask questions plays a significant part in the way in which the children think and learn. The ongoing daily assessments are a very good feature and enhance the planning, ensuring that it is well matched to each child's individual need.

92 The well-qualified and experienced support staff play an important role in the development of children's learning in both year groups. They skilfully make a considerable contribution in all aspects of the curriculum. Parents' contributions are a regular feature in many lessons and also provide valuable support to children's learning. Children enjoy coming to school. In both the nursery and the reception classes they are happy and settled into a secure routine.

93 Assessment procedures are good but there are inconsistencies in the way this information is collated and compiled between nursery and reception classes. Day-to-day informal assessment is good overall but more pertinent and relevant in the reception classes where it is linked to the teaching and learning, both in the planning and in the classroom. In the nursery there is less focus on specific 'stepping stones' to focus the teaching and assessments. The assessment profiles record a continuous build of skills and knowledge to the early levels of the National Curriculum, creating a natural flow of assessment information. All staff know their children well and information is regularly shared and recorded but separately, in year groups. Planning together would enhance children's learning and produce a more continuous and relevant curriculum and assessment profile overall.

94 The recent rebuilding of the reception classrooms has created considerable disruption but this is now complete. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is good overall although the nursery room is small. The resources are also good, attractive and of good quality.

Personal, social and emotional development

95 Most children enter the nursery class with above average skills in their personal, social and emotional development. They make satisfactory progress, so that by the time they leave the reception classes, they exceed the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Teaching overall is good in the Foundation Stage.

96 Although younger children do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence in the planning and organisation of their work, and in their selection of resources, they are secure and confident in their understanding of the daily nursery routines. They share and play happily with each other, for example as they play in the 'three bears' cottage'. Children behave well and are clear about what is expected of them throughout the sessions. Children mostly concentrate and work hard, both in activities with staff and when choosing their activities. They cope with dressing and matters of personal hygiene during the nursery day. Throughout the Foundation Stage children 'self register' when they arrive at school, with older children matching their names to their photographs. Good, established routines are a feature. They encourage older children to develop a good level of independence throughout the sessions, and relationships in the Foundation Stage are very good.

Communication, language and literacy

97 Children make sound progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills, reading and writing, starting from an above average level, and teaching overall is good. Children with special educational needs, and those who speak a language other than English at home, are identified, provided for appropriately, and make good progress. Children's progress in this area is measured through the following three aspects.

Speaking and listening

98 In the nursery and reception classes, children enjoy listening to stories both in large groups and individually. In the nursery, children talk and listen to each other in their activities, especially as they pretend, for example in the café and in the 'Garden Centre'. They initiate conversations such as, "I have roses at home, no, not in the garden, inside" and talk to the staff and each other in their activities but do not have the opportunity to share their experiences and explain what they have done at the end of a session. There are good role-play activities such as the 'builder's yard' in a reception class, and puppet theatres are used to stimulate children's language development. In the reception classes, children are encouraged to question, think for themselves and develop a good level of investigation and experimentation. When looking at animals from hot countries one child said that a particular animal was a "dangerous species" and another said, "A puma lives in a hot land and drinks blood – Ugh!" At the end of each session reception children are encouraged to explain their activities and share their achievements, extending both their confidence and oral language. This is a good feature of the teaching for the older children in the Foundation Stage.

Reading

99 By the end of the reception year, many children know their initial sounds and use them in their reading. Most children know the books they like most and name the title of a favourite book or magazine. They recognise familiar words both in their books and in captions around the room. Children identify their names each morning and all children borrow library books, with some visiting a local library on a regular basis. The older children use comfortable reading areas, but in the nursery book boxes are not incorporated into an area where children may sit and read. In both the nursery and reception classes, children listen to and join in with stories and rhymes. They enjoy books and are interested in the stories and pictures, which are available throughout the nursery and reception classes. Reception children make a good attempt in their recognition of letter sounds and rhyming words, encouraged by games and stories. They understand the difference between a fiction and non-fiction book and use simple information books to find out about animals.

Writing

100 There are good opportunities provided in both the nursery and reception classes for children to develop their writing skills. Younger children practise their writing in a variety of ways, for example when they use paintbrushes carefully to paint pictures of their teddy bears or to take orders in the garden centre. Older children enthusiastically practise their writing in the writing areas and when note-taking in role-play activities. They write an invitation to a party and a menu in the café. All children have writing materials that are within easy reach. In the nursery and reception classes there are good planned opportunities to practise the basic skills of writing such as patterns, tracing and drawing. Many children make good attempts at writing their own name. Children write their names on all their work from an early age, including paintings etc. and 'record' in a variety of ways what they want to say. Teachers have a good level of understanding and high expectations of what children can achieve.

Mathematical development

101 By the time they reach Year 1, many children have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and make sound progress through the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good overall. In the nursery, children experience a range of mathematical experiences such as counting along a teddy bear number line and spotting the errors. They measure the height of their teddies using cubes, counting the number of cubes in twos.

However, there are missed opportunities to extend aspects of children's mathematical knowledge in an incidental way, such as counting at 'snack time' for example.

102 In contrast, reception class children are exposed to a wide range of mathematical experiences throughout the day. They count the aprons and hats prior to an activity, they estimate the numbers of mathematics apparatus in a bag to decide whether there are more or less than a given number. They count on and back to both ten and twenty and use a 100 square grid to count in 5s and 10s. In an animal game children add and subtract to 20 and others play hopscotch to practise their numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

103 Children come to school with a good knowledge of the world around them. From this beginning, children make sound progress and reach levels that are above those expected by the end of the reception year. Teaching overall is good. Children develop their curiosity and interest in the world around them. Nursery children 'investigate' in the three bears' cottage as they make porridge with their teddy bears and enjoy tasting it, choosing from a range of toppings and being supported well by nursery staff.

104 In the reception rooms children focus on 'hot and cold' as they investigate materials as part of their topic this term. They have ice cubes in the water play and time how long it takes for the ice to melt. They decide that the ice melts more quickly in warm water. By the time they start Year 1, they are well prepared for studies in science because their skills of enquiry are well developed. In the nursery, children's work is recorded by means of a digital camera and staff use the microwave with the children to cook porridge. All children use the computer and operate the 'mouse', most with understanding and accuracy. Reception children draw and write in their activities involving various computer programs. These experiences prepare them well for design and technology, and information and ICT.

105 The younger children focus on learning about their families in the world around them asking, "Where do you live?" in order to extend their knowledge and understanding and to develop a sense of place. Older children broaden their experience by learning about countries that are hot and cold and the animals that live there. Planning and photographs show that a focus on old and new was used to develop a sense of time and children learn about and celebrate the main religious festivals. They appreciate that there are differences as they gain an awareness of the cultures and the beliefs of others, including celebrations such as Diwali and Christmas. Children have opportunities to share events and 'special times'.

Physical development

106 Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, children have exceeded the levels expected for their age and teaching overall is good.

107 All the children have opportunities to practise their skills outside and climb and balance using climbing apparatus. The small outside areas give the children opportunities to control their bikes and to share games that need more than one to play in the nursery, although the paved area is too small to negotiate wheeled toys with any expertise or imagination. Reception children move well in activities in the hall. They use dance movements in an imaginative response to a poem while younger children practise the skills of throwing and catching, demonstrating a good level of control. All the children help to clear away at the end of lessons and use tools, such as scissors, with care and developing control and independence.

Creative development

108 The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year they exceed many of the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is good overall.

109 'Teddies' is the current focus for work in the nursery, where children paint by looking at their teddy carefully and painting what they see, some with very good attention to detail. There are examples of dolphins representing shades of blue and drawings of children's homes. In the reception classes, children have a wide range of opportunities to choose from a variety of materials to make models, to draw and paint and to try different colours. They also make good progress in other aspects of this area. Children sing a range of songs and rhymes on a daily basis throughout the Foundation Stage, some linked to the themes such as 'The house of the bears' and 'Opposites'. They play percussion instruments both in a group and independently. Through the good attention given to role-play, children extend their language and creative development significantly. They pretend and re-enact situations on occasions, supported by adults. They use their imagination in dance and drama and, because of the accessible resources in the reception classes, opportunities regularly evolve through good teaching.

ENGLISH

110 Standards are above average for the seven year olds and the eleven year olds in speaking and listening, reading and writing as they were in the previous inspection. This also broadly reflects the results achieved in the national tests in 2002¹. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The school allocates an above average amount of time to the teaching of English. Standards remain at about the same levels overall, but the results mask an increasing number of pupils who are attaining higher levels, especially at the end of Year 6. The higher attaining readers in Years 1 and 2 now have a suitable range of reading materials, and pupils in Years 1 to 6 successfully use their literacy skills in the other curriculum subjects. Less progress has been made in developing pupils' skills when they are using the library. These remain unsatisfactory, as they were at the last inspection. The recent fire has held back progress in this aspect of the school's work.

111 Standards are above average in speaking and listening for the seven and the eleven year olds. In Year 2, pupils listen attentively for sustained periods of time. They are adept at asking questions and listening to each other, as when putting forward their ideas about a rhyming poem. When the teacher asked a specific child, "...what have you spotted about this poem?" the pupil's response was "It all rhymes, well.... The day we went to the sea, the day we went to the sea. It repeats, like the next verse."

112 By the time the pupils are eleven the higher attaining pupils are attaining high standards, most of the other pupils are attaining standards that are above average. Several of these pupils have moved into the school during the junior years, as there are significant numbers who opt to attend a nearby middle school in another authority, and they leave at the end of Year 4. This movement of pupils can affect overall standards, but the staff work hard, and successfully, to ensure that this does not happen. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress both in lessons and over longer periods of time. There is always a sharp focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers' high expectations about pupils always using the correct vocabulary, and using these words when replying to specific questions, mean that pupils readily respond to the challenges set for them. Standards continue to improve all round as pupils have many carefully crafted opportunities to talk, listen and respond to adults and to each other.

¹ The most recent year that national data are available.

113 Reading standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Progress is good, with a greater number of pupils attaining higher levels, and fewer pupils attaining lower levels. This is because teachers make good use of their time in all literacy sessions, listening to pupils read in a group so that difficulties can be diagnosed speedily and support provided to help pupils overcome them. All pupils read at home on a regular basis, and parents are fully involved in helping their children to enjoy books and reading and to improve their reading skills. The pupils' reading records are accurate and up to date with helpful comments from parents and staff. By having these regular times to practise reading, pupils' skills are honed and developed consistently, pushing up standards and enhancing their overall progress. Much work has been done to make sure that all pupils have a wide range of reading experiences. This is well thought out and is paying dividends in good results. An area that is under-developed is the school library. The co-ordinator is aware of the problem, and now that the library is up and running again plans are in hand to improve its use. Pupils' library skills fall short of expectations for their age.

114 Teachers know their pupils well, and their progress and attainments in reading are securely tracked. This helps staff to identify gaps as well as charting progress. Across the school most pupils are willing to have a go at identifying unknown words in their books. They use a range of strategies successfully, and these include looking at the first sound in the word, checking out the context and having a stab at reading the word. Higher and average attaining pupils, in Year 2 for example, can quickly read words such as *where* and *without*, as well as reading complex sentences fluently and accurately. Lower attaining pupils find this difficult but they are confident at having a go. They too read accurately; they are not so fluent but their understanding is good. Letter sounds and blends are taught effectively in Years 1 and 2, and pupils use these skills in their reading and their writing.

115 By the time they reach the upper juniors pupils can discuss clearly and concisely, demonstrating how authors use language to create different ideas and impressions in their books. In a good example in Year 6, a lower attaining pupil explained how the poet in *The Seal Hunter* used specific words to create an impression of the atmosphere in the frozen north. Higher attaining pupils read texts such as *Tom's Midnight Garden*, responding to questions about the literal and metaphorical meaning of words and phrases. Most pupils are especially good at using the appropriate expression in their voices when reading aloud. They take notice of question marks as well as using dialect where they feel that this would add to the author's intention. Humour is enjoyed, and pupils have a genuine love of books and literature.

116 Standards in writing are above average for both the seven and the eleven year olds. Most pupils write in lively and exciting ways, using a range of vocabulary and making sure that their stories have an appropriate structure. Progress is good. Average attaining Year 2 pupils make good use of adjectives such as *wonderful*, *happy* and *youngest* to liven up their work. Presentation has improved during the year and is satisfactory overall. Pupils use their dictionaries to check spellings, and new words are tried in their wordbooks. This helps them to understand the conventions of spelling, which they are taught in a structured way. Standards are good, although some parents feel that spellings in Year 3 are not as challenging as they had been in Year 2. Little evidence was found to support this, but a minority of lower attaining pupils in Year 3 make erratic progress in their written work over time.

117 One issue for the school to tackle is the inconsistency in handwriting styles across the school. In the better examples writing is well presented, using a joined script. Letters and words are correctly formed and spaced. In the unsatisfactory examples (a small minority) letters and words are uneven and untidy. Print is used instead of a joined script and the general impression is of pupils' lack of pride in producing work of quality.

118 Year 6 pupils are competent and capable writers and they have made good progress over the year. In an excellent Year 6 lesson the pupils were developing their writing techniques by focusing on the work of the author Betsy Byars. By focusing on the idea of 'memory scraps' the teacher encouraged pupils to create their own 'memory map' of significant memories that could be used in their own writing. This challenged pupils of all capabilities, but by demonstrating her own 'memory web' the pupils speedily understood what was expected, producing their own short extracts of a story by the end of the lesson.

119 Higher attaining pupils use different writing styles to create feelings of tension and to develop the personality of various characters. Language is used effectively in the different genres, and pupils are good at sustaining ideas and organising their writing. Good use is made of paragraphs to structure their work. Average attaining pupils are not quite at this level. Full use is made of grammatical styles and conventions, and passages are well structured and organised. That said, better use could be made of paragraphs. Lower attaining pupils produce neat work that is well presented. Many of them use correct grammar as they justify their ideas and responses, as in a piece of work based on autobiographical writing. ICT is being used to support learning in English, but there are inconsistencies across the school which need to be tackled if all pupils are to benefit from using ICT.

120 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress, like their classmates. Work is planned at different levels for them, and the learning support assistants are well briefed, enabling them to give properly targeted and effective support. Teachers frequently work with pupils with special educational needs. Some pupils are withdrawn for extra support, including additional literacy support, and this is beneficial too.

121 Good progress is being made in tackling the gender issue. Over time, girls have been achieving higher results than boys have. Teachers are aware of this and they use a range of successful strategies to engage boys more fully in the learning process. These include changing the teaching arrangements for Year 6 pupils, purchasing suitable reading materials to motivate boys more speedily, and ensuring that boys are asked appropriate questions about their work. All of this is improving standards and the boys are starting to catch up. No differences were observed during the inspection.

122 Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. One of the main strengths in the teaching at Woodthorne is the effective way that teachers structure their questions, checking pupils' understanding or extending their knowledge just that little bit further. This strategy is extremely effective for pupils whose first language is not English as it enables teachers to focus on developing their spoken language and understanding within each lesson and subject.

123 Teaching is good overall, and this is one of the main reasons that pupils are so eager and keen to learn. English is enjoyed. The National Literacy Strategy is being used well to plan work and to promote progress. Teachers are flexible in their approach, and they adapt their teaching methods to their particular groups. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in their own class in different groups according to their capabilities. This works well and progress is good. In Years 3 to 5 pupils are taught in different sets² according to their capabilities, and in Year 6 they are taught in parallel sets. This is to make sure that boys and girls experience a suitable gender and ability mix in their literacy sessions. This is working well, and the school's own monitoring shows that boys' standards are improving and they are catching up with the girls.

² A set is a larger (class-sized) group of pupils that are all working at similar levels

124 There are good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainments and progress, and teachers use the information gained from these assessments to set pupils' targets and to plan their future work. This helps the pupils to be focused on what has to be done if their attainment is to improve. The vast majority of teachers have high expectations about what they expect pupils to achieve in both work and behaviour. Pupils successfully rise to the challenges set for them, and this is one of the main reasons why they do so well. Every pupil at Woodthorne is fully included in all aspects of literacy; no one is left out.

125 In the small number of weaker lessons, which were satisfactory overall, learning slowed for small groups of pupils when their teacher was working with another group. This usually happened when the pupils were working independently and they needed an adult on hand to guide their learning. Usually this was spotted and dealt with speedily. When this did not happen pupils lost interest and were disengaged for a time and their progress slowed.

126 The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator. She has excellent knowledge of the subject and this is a significant asset as she guides the staff and the pupils towards greater achievements. Standards, teaching and learning are monitored effectively, and the good analysis of all the data about the school's work in English means that gaps are quickly identified and tackled. The next stage is to develop closer links between all the staff so that everyone can benefit from an improved understanding of teaching and learning in the different age groups.

MATHEMATICS

127 The school has made sound improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection in 1998. Inspection evidence shows standards to be above national averages for pupils aged seven and eleven, and this is borne out by the most recent performance in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests. Standards achieved by eleven year olds have remained consistently high for the past three years, and have improved for pupils aged seven. The target set for the percentage of pupils achieving at least Level 4 in Year 6 is suitably challenging and generally met. Pupils' performance is broadly the same as that found in schools judged to have a similar background. Observation of lessons confirms the school's own research, indicating that boys and girls do equally well in relation to their ability.

128 Comparing pupils' results at seven with those achieved four years later indicates steady progress, although pupils who leave at the end of Year 4 affect this to some extent. Pupils of all abilities make sound progress, due to both the quality of teaching and the organisation of pupils into ability sets. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are usually well supported and tackle work at an appropriate level. Pupils with a particular gift for mathematics are encouraged to work at a demanding level. While higher attaining pupils achieve as well as the school expects, they themselves feel that at times they are not sufficiently challenged. Inspection evidence indicates that these pupils are very able mathematicians and are not always extended by their work.

129 Important areas identified for improvement by the previous inspection were pupils' ability to apply the skills they learn and the development of ICT skills in mathematics. Progress in response to these issues is mixed. The school teaches pupils techniques for solving word problems on a regular basis, and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 decide on possible continuations for number sequences, showing some sophisticated reasoning. In conversation, both Year 6 and Year 2 pupils have a positive attitude to the subject, displaying good reasoning skills when faced with unfamiliar topics. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are very impressive, in both their range of knowledge and speed of mental calculation. There is, however, very limited evidence of pupils using ICT skills either to solve problems or to display conclusions. At times what is done is pointless, as when a Year 6 pupil created a copy of the

worksheet using a computer program and filled in the answers, with no mathematical benefit, but some waste of time.

130 Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that all areas of mathematics are covered at a suitable depth and to an appropriate level. Pupils of all abilities get most of their work right; where they do not, teachers usually offer guidance through their marking, which is often both positive and helpful. However, while pupils complete a fair amount of homework, there is some variation in the quality of marking and some of this is cursory. This diminishes its value and is unlikely to encourage pupils to complete their homework. While numeracy skills are employed in other subjects, this does not form part of teachers' planning, so that there is no way of checking on consistency of practice or the building of skills through practical application.

131 Teaching is good throughout the school, confirmed by lessons seen, the work in books and pupils' attitudes to mathematics. Almost all the teaching in lessons was good, with very good teaching in both Year 4 classes. As a result, pupils in both ability sets learn well, with lower attaining pupils showing as much interest and enthusiasm as those who find the subject easier to understand. With the exception of a lesson in Year 1, where a significant minority were unable to cope with the work, teachers set tasks that challenge pupils at an appropriate level. They have good expectations to which pupils readily respond. Pupils understand what they have to do and settle to tasks well, whether individually or when working in pairs.

132 Planning is thorough, and carefully linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. There is an appropriate focus on mental and oral mathematics, and pupils are encouraged to explain their reasoning for both right and wrong answers. There is evidence of teachers carefully evaluating their lessons, and adapting future teaching in the light of pupils' understanding, which is good practice. Target setting for individual pupils has been introduced too recently to evaluate its effect, but pupils' books suggest that at present it lacks consistency. While pupils talk animatedly about their success in meeting the challenge of the '55' club, they often cannot remember their targets, where they have any.

133 The small amount of mathematics displayed around the school is disappointing, and does little to build the subject's profile or celebrate pupils' efforts; indeed, there is no pupils' work to be seen in the majority of classes. Only in Year 2 and Year 4 are there attempts to involve pupils in mathematical challenges, with one Year 4 display being particularly inventive and clearly used by the pupils. Given the positive attitude of most pupils, these are missed opportunities to encourage mathematical thinking through the setting of problems and brainteasers. It would also offer the challenge that some higher attaining pupils, particularly older ones, feel they are lacking.

134 The co-ordination of the subject is good because the co-ordinator's current role means that he teaches in most classes, giving him experience of all age groups and a useful over-view of teaching and learning. However, his own involvement precludes the level of analysis available from more focused observations. There has been scrutiny of pupils' work to ensure consistency of practice, and this needs to become a regular occurrence. Assessment is generally good. The transfer of records to computer systems will make the analysis of progress of both cohorts and individuals more helpful and informative, and support the setting of carefully focused targets for individual pupils, so that they know exactly what they have to do to become more successful.

SCIENCE

135 Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 in the most recently published national test results of 2002 were well above average compared with the national picture. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, make good progress. While attainment is high in most areas of science, pupils attain less well in investigative skills although these skills are improving.

136 Standards achieved by the end of Year 6 in the most recent published national test results of 2002 were in line with the national average. Although these results are lower than similar schools, there needs to be some caution in interpretation as the school is adversely affected by some pupil mobility. While attainment was above average in most areas of science, pupils attained less well in investigative skills. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' investigative skills throughout the school and has made a good start in addressing this issue. Pupils currently make good overall progress.

137 The previous inspection report indicated that standards at the age of seven were above average and at eleven were well above average. Overall the findings of this inspection indicate that the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are attaining above the national average, with improved results in investigative science. There have been a number of improvements since the time of the previous inspection. The school has purchased a range of materials from a number of schemes to strengthen the teaching of investigative skills. Resources are better and pupils across the school now have many opportunities to work together, which was an area of weaknesses.

138 There is much good and very good teaching and learning across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questions effectively. Overall the teaching is good, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Only one lesson was judged to be satisfactory, because some pupils were not sufficiently challenged, which restricted their progress. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils make consistently good progress over the year and achieve satisfactorily from the time they enter school.

139 Teaching in the infant department is good. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enjoy their science activities and usually make good progress in lessons because teachers are well prepared and use good quality resources. Activities are practical and fun. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils in small groups. They encourage pupils to observe carefully, explore and then talk about what they are learning. For example in a particularly effective lesson in Year 1, pupils were encouraged to look carefully at plants and record their findings thoughtfully, with useful word charts to guide them. Scrutiny of work confirms that the teachers are teaching the planned curriculum thoroughly. There is an emphasis on simple clear investigations in both year groups. For example, in a lesson with some good features, pupils were encouraged to think as scientists and make simple predictions. By the end of Year 2 good principles are established and pupils have a secure understanding of fair testing. The regular use of recording formats helps pupils to document their findings.

140 Teaching in the junior department is never less than good and at times very good. There are a number of strengths that account for pupils' good progress in lessons. For example, teachers take turns to teach whole year groups, thus ensuring consistency. A strong feature is the emphasis teachers place on pupils using correct scientific terms. They encourage pupils to explain their ideas to each other, which helps them clarify their thinking. Lessons are interesting. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson, complex aspects of the circulatory system of the heart were taught in a really imaginative way using hoops and bean bags. This really captured pupils' imagination. This was demonstrated very well the following day when a pupil's response to falling over was to comment proudly, "Look, my blood is bright red because it is oxygenated!"

141 As a result of this good teaching, pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy science and work hard during lessons. They show interest, are enthusiastic and respond well to the teaching they receive. Their very good behaviour and positive attitudes mean that they work very well together and handle equipment safely and sensibly.

142 Scrutiny of work shows that there is an even balance between each strand of science being taught. The school has responded to the need to increase pupils' use of scientific enquiry. There is evidence in workbooks of pupils having regular opportunities to develop these skills. However, the skills record in use has been introduced quite recently and is not yet used systematically. While pupils have opportunities to observe, plan, predict, measure and record, they need more consistent experiences of devising their own procedures and posing their own questions.

143 Across the school, good use is made of literacy, numeracy and art skills, with speaking and listening skills very well promoted. However, some opportunities are missed to use ICT to support science. Teachers have taken steps to address some differences in attainment between boys and girls. For example, teachers ensure boys and girls are equally included in questions and review time. Marking is positive and usually refers specifically to any scientific misunderstandings and points pupils clearly in the right direction. Assessment, however, is largely unsatisfactory. This is because the assessment system is very recent and not yet embedded or effective in providing detailed records to help teachers plan for and target specific pupils.

144 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and health education through their work on the body and through the many opportunities for pupils to collaborate and share resources. Pupils' moral understanding is enhanced through coverage of environmental issues. Theatre company visits help bring topics such as *light* and *forces* to life. Regular use is made of the school grounds. Some attractive class displays also help children to remember what they are learning. There are some impressive examples of homework to support topics but it is not systematically planned across the school.

145 Leadership and management of the subject are good, with an effective partner system in place for additional support. Monitoring systems are established. The co-ordinator checks planning, has undertaken a scrutiny of the pupils' exercise books and has observed some classes throughout the school. Strengths and weaknesses identified have been fed back. Science has a high focus in the school improvement plan and the co-ordinator has drawn up an appropriate programme of action. This includes training in delivering scientific investigations and improving assessment and recording systems. Resources are good.

ART AND DESIGN

146 Standards of attainment by the age of seven and eleven are average in art and design. This represents a reduction in standards since the previous inspection when they were judged to be above the levels expected nationally. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, including those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

147 Since the previous inspection there has been less emphasis placed on art and design due to the greater emphasis placed on English, mathematics and science. The subject leadership has changed since the previous inspection and the headteacher has overall responsibility. A subject teacher is responsible for the leadership of Key Stage 2 but there is no one directly responsible for art and design in Key Stage 1. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory when they were previously judged to be good and assessment remains unsatisfactory. The national guidelines are now used as a scheme of work but aspects of art

and design including three-dimensional work and sculpture are not taught at the present time. There is no portfolio of levelled or annotated work to support teachers, guide teaching and learning and raise expectations, against which teachers can measure pupils' progress. There are no pupils' sketchbooks or folders to test and gather techniques and work samples.

148 In Key Stage 1, there are examples of pupils' ideas involving techniques, such as collage and observational paintings of daffodils. Younger pupils observe and draw plants, guided effectively by their teacher. By the end of Year 2, pupils use drawing skills competently to imaginatively extend a picture within a frame. Where the teacher displays a good level of expectation and expertise, makes suggestions and provides good encouragement, pupils work hard to complete their individual compositions. They are given the opportunity to evaluate their own and each other's work at the end of the session. These elements of good practice do not feature in all lessons. In some lessons the level of expertise is variable and opportunities to practise and try specific techniques before using them in a composition are insufficient.

149 In Key Stage 2 many of the art examples on display support another subject, such as historical portraits and a battlefield collage. Technical skills, although satisfactory overall, are variable. This was clearly evident in the lessons seen. The quality of teaching was at least good in two lessons seen, reflecting good lesson planning and subject knowledge. Here the informed teaching ensured pupils had a good breadth of experiences through which to develop skills using different media. For example, pupils in Year 4 successfully drew a chair for a special occasion. The good resources and well-focused teaching stimulated pupils' imagination. Some teachers plan opportunities to look closely at the work of famous artists, to appraise the quality of their work or emulate their techniques. By the age of eleven, pupils have experienced a collage in the style of Matisse and produced an attractive collage and painting to represent Van Gogh's sunflowers, well supported by a teacher from the nearby high school. Year 6 pupils are presented with a challenging task to produce a logo for the musical 'Bugsy Malone'. Through the use of interesting exemplars in the form of theatre programmes, pupils make a good attempt to design their own logos. Aspects of observational drawing are not well developed in Key Stage 2 and pupils in Year 6 recall very few examples of this aspect of art.

150 Pupils respond with enthusiasm, display good levels of co-operation and learn well. They behave well and take a sensible approach in the use of resources. The variation in standards is due to the fact that there have been some gaps in the curriculum in recent years. Pupils and teachers do not have a resource bank to develop ideas and techniques and ensure that art and design is taught in a continuous flow of skills and knowledge through each year group. For example, some Year 6 pupils did not know the primary colours. Sculpture and three-dimensional aspects of the curriculum and the use of ICT are areas requiring a greater focus.

151 The headteacher has ensured that the school has maintained a varied and interesting curriculum overall. In order to raise standards and improve pupils' rate of achievement, the main area for development is to appoint an overall co-ordinator in order that teaching and learning can be monitored together with planning to ensure that pupils steadily develop skills, step by step, as they grow older;

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

152 Standards achieved by the age of seven are average. All infant pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Some pupils produce work that is above expectation and make good progress. Standards achieved by the age of eleven are above average. All pupils, including

those with special needs and those who use English as an additional language, make good progress in the juniors.

153 There have been a number of improvements since the time of the previous inspection. Standards achieved by the age of eleven are now higher. Teaching has improved and as a result pupils make better progress. The weaknesses identified have been fully addressed as pupils have plenty of opportunity to develop their own ideas. No lessons were observed in the infant department during the inspection, therefore judgements about standards are based on samples of work provided.

154 Infant teachers successfully lay the foundations of each element of the design process. By the age of seven pupils have undertaken a broad range of activities and learnt how to handle equipment and resources safely. Their creativity is encouraged and they are able to make simple choices when designing and selecting resources. Good use is made of standardised recording formats. These help pupils design and evaluate their own work. In Year 1 links are made with health education when pupils design their own fruit bowls and try various fruit juices. Pupils apply their making skills to everyday experiences, for example when making cards with simple moving parts for Chinese New Year and Easter. In Year 2 pupils undertake the full design process when making puppets. The work on display shows pupils are encouraged to use their imagination and to work carefully. The end results are pleasing and creative. Appropriate use is made of pupils' literacy, numeracy and art skills to support their learning.

155 Teaching in the junior department is good. There are a number of teaching qualities that account for pupils' good progress. For example, teachers take turns to teach whole year-groups, which ensures consistency of delivery. In the lessons observed teachers were really enthusiastic. This motivated the pupils, who responded very well. There are good links with other subjects and pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and art skills. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils applied their knowledge and skills to include electrical circuits in their peephole rooms and lighthouse designs. Pupils had very good support from the teacher and teaching assistant, who encouraged high standards and individuality.

156 By Year 6 standards are above average because skills have been developed systematically and progressively through the juniors. Teachers have high expectations and as a result pupils produce work that is well thought through and constructed. Care is taken to provide a range of choices that appeal to boys and girls. For example, in a successful Year 6 lesson, all pupils were really excited and motivated at the prospect of designing and making moving vehicles and intrigued at the use of the computer to make the vehicles move.

157 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development, as they have plenty of opportunities to collaborate and to discuss their ideas in small groups. When pupils complete aspects of work at home, such as their picture frames in Year 3, these contributions are valued by the school and displayed attractively.

158 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator collects samples of work, organises resources and gives informal advice. However, there is no formal assessment system in place and she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. While the time allocation is low, staff make good links with other subjects. This ensures secure coverage of skills. Resources are good although not enough use is made of computers to support the design element of the curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

159 There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The school has adapted the new curriculum guidance, and successfully addressed the previous concerns of unsatisfactory teaching. All pupils develop good geographical enquiry skills through the use of a range of appropriate resources, visits and secondary sources of information. As a result standards of attainment in geography are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 for all pupils. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose home language is not English. All pupils achieve well in the subject.

160 Pupils in Year 1 have had many experiences outside the classroom. As a result they know what a map is, why we have maps and what they show. In order to make up a good ictional map pupils listen attentively to the embellished story of Goldilocks travelling to the house of the bears, or Red Riding Hood's visit to Grandma's house. They choose the story and successfully complete their own map to this place and most are able to understand and label the human and man-made features. Very good use has been made of globes, maps of the world and plans to identify a wide range of places the pupils have had the opportunity to travel to whilst in Year 2. By Year 3 pupils are able to identify hot and dry areas and hot and rainy ones and in Year 4 they are capable of planning their best route to Bangor, noting the distance, direction, co-ordinates, settlements and economic activities passed on the way. Visits like this enhance the curriculum and give pupils first hand information about a contrasting locality.

161 No lessons were seen in Year 2 but pupils' books show they have researched, using a good selection of resources, what life is like in the Arctic and Antarctic. As a result pupils know far more about the Polar Regions and the differences in landscape, animal life, climate and the type of people and whether they could exist there. In discussions with these pupils they know that the school is in Tettenhall in Wolverhampton, West Midlands, and can express their views well about these places. They are able to recall at least 20 countries and say whether these are hot or cold places, situated near the Poles or the equator.

162 The work in books and on display in Year 4, which is based on a village in Southern India, is good. Pupils have an insight into other people's lives and begin to understand the importance of water and how precious it is. This is developed well in Year 5 when pupils study rivers and understand why towns grew by them, for instance Bridgnorth. Year 6 pupils have enjoyed learning about coastlines and finding out how and why coasts change. The pupils work out the average loss of land between a village and the coast since 1086 and know that there is softer rock in Studland Bay and Swanage Bay and that rock is more resistant at Peveril Point. The pupils also learn how human geography affects the coastline of the South Downs.

163 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory with the subject leader supporting the co-ordinator. Staff are aware of all the changes in the curriculum and that as yet no assessment procedures are in place. The subject leaders currently have no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school and this makes it difficult for them to know if learning is consistent and progressive or to have an understanding of where improvements may be needed. The use of ICT in the juniors and the role of the co-ordinator are areas for development.

HISTORY

164 It was only possible to observe history being taught to the older pupils. Scrutiny of history work and discussion with pupils indicates that by the time the pupils are seven and eleven they are achieving standards above those found nationally. This matches the judgement made at the previous inspection, with some improvement made in planning, adapting some of the more recent curriculum guidance. All pupils, including those with

special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well.

165 The work in Year 1 is interesting and exciting, linking closely with the geography and religious education curriculum. This motivates the pupils well and they begin to understand the reason why people celebrate traditional activities around the world as well as beginning to understand different customs and beliefs. The infant pupils have enjoyed watching and learning about people and events from videos about Florence Nightingale, the Great Fire of London and the Gunpowder Plot. As a result the pupils are very enthusiastic about these events and know they had happened at various points in the past. They know they are themselves part of history and recall the date of their birth and changes in their short lives. Teachers plan good links with writing, for example letters from Billy, lying in the hospital, to Florence, the Lady with the Lamp.

166 Year 6 pupils celebrate history and successfully learn to become young historians. The work shows good overall use of historical terms and a good understanding of chronological knowledge. Enquiry skills are developing well. Pupils' books show very good progress in their understanding of life in Ancient Greece as a result of very good planning and teaching. There are good links with literacy – an extract from diary writing shows accurate details of living in an army barrack – and there are good, imaginative and detailed accounts of the battle of Marathon written from the Athenian point of view. This interests the pupils so that one higher attaining pupil writes, "I hope the battle never comes again, I'm sorry for Phidippides." "Despite the fact that the Persians were the ones who were the striking army they had quite a defensive style of fighting, whereas we had quite an offensive style of fighting," and "this ended a 10 year conflict--- defeated the Persians at last!!!"

167 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 study different historical periods. The Year 3 pupils' project on Invaders and Settlers has given them good insight into the lives of Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. There are good links with geography based on settlement and the basic needs of humans. The work in Year 4 shows how well pupils were inspired to do self-portraits after studying the portraits of the Tudor kings and queens and the wives of Henry VIII. The study of the Victorians has helped the pupils in Year 5 to learn about family life and what it was like to be a child living then. Pupils find out about the British Empire, assess the work of important people, including Lord Shaftesbury and Dr Barnardo and recognise characteristic features of Victorian buildings, for instance, the neo-classical, Greek and Gothic styles.

168 Visits to different places of historical interest all help to enhance the understanding of the periods being studied. A subject leader supports the subject. She has kept abreast of recent changes occurring nationally but as yet is not involved as a co-ordinator across the school and has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning to identify if they are consistent and progressive. She is aware that there is no assessment in place and that greater use could be made of ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

169 By the age of seven and eleven standards in ICT are broadly average for the age of the pupils and similar to those of the last inspection of the school. Whilst there have been some minor improvements in the subject since the previous inspection the school has not kept pace with recent changes in the use of ICT as a cross-curricular tool to support learning in other subjects. There are some weaknesses in provision both in terms of the coverage of the different aspects of the curriculum, and the use and availability of resources. The school is barely meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. For instance the subject co-ordinator has identified that the ratio of computers to pupils at 1:28 is way below the national average.

170 Many pupils have regular access to computers at home and some have good levels of skill in certain areas of word processing and data handling. However, the sample of pupils' recent work indicates quite a limited amount and range of activities undertaken throughout the school. In Years 3 to 6, for instance, there is very limited work in areas such as control technology. Relatively little work is seen in the subject at higher levels, indicating limited opportunities over a period of time. Given the innate ability and level of interest of many of the pupils, achievement is not as high as it could be and improvement is required in the subject. This is a key issue for the school to address.

171 At the age of seven pupils are able to use a computer art program at a fairly basic level. They select and use the appropriate tools, including a 'spray can', with an average level of skill to create a night and day scene through a window. They create geometric shapes, which they flood with colours and subsequently are able to create a picture in the style of Mondrian. Pupils make satisfactory progress when word processing by inserting and changing text when writing about 'My hero'. Several pupils in Year 2 also enjoy attending the 'Computer Wizards' after-school activity where they gain certificates for enhancing their skills in the use of art and word processing programs. Pupils in Year 1 make reasonable progress in programming a simple floor robot, realising how they have to sequence the commands they give to get it to turn or move backwards and forwards.

172 At the age of eleven pupils have an average level of skill when using word processing and art tools to create a poster for 'Comic relief'. They make satisfactory progress when using a data-handling package to produce a traffic survey. Pupils make progress when realising that for a survey they need to make most of the questions, such as "Is the street overcrowded?" suitable for a yes or no answer to make the data easy to handle. Pupils have also collected and recorded data on their height and shoe sizes and used this to develop hypotheses about whether the taller pupils will have bigger feet. Higher attaining pupils are able to explain confidently how they have had some access to the Internet and how they send emails, but would like more opportunities to extend their research across the curriculum. Whilst work is planned for older pupils to use control technology towards the end of the year there have been few recent opportunities for the pupils to enhance their learning in a continuous and progressive manner in this aspect of their work.

173 Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They happily share computers even in the very overcrowded computer suite where sometimes they have to sit behind each other when working. They share ideas and help each other readily without prompting. Most use the equipment with confidence. In discussion older pupils say that the worst thing about the subject is not having more chance to use the equipment, especially the Internet. Pupils extend their social skills well when sharing equipment.

174 The majority of pupils, including those speaking English as an additional language and those with higher and lower levels of ability, currently make satisfactory overall progress and

in some individual lessons this is good. This is because the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and during the lessons observed in the inspection was often good. Teachers have reasonable levels of subject knowledge and confidence. However, there are gaps in the learning of many pupils because of the limited opportunities to use computers over an extended period. The sample of recent work shows few opportunities for the specific teaching of skills that will move pupils' learning forward. For instance, pupils' ICT books often contain only about five pieces of work for two terms. Whilst other work has undoubtedly taken place, this has nevertheless not been on a regular enough basis to boost their learning beyond a rudimentary level. Many pupils are dependent upon the skills they learn and practise on computers at home.

175 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and with good potential to extend such work. The subject co-ordinator has a good level of teaching skill and subject knowledge and an enthusiasm to lead the subject further. However, due to circumstances beyond her control she has had few opportunities to monitor the quality of planning and little or no opportunity to work alongside colleagues or to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, especially in the infants. Because monitoring has not taken place this has allowed weaknesses to remain in the subject and a lack of rigour to develop in the teaching of skills. Whilst some staff are teaching the subject well, others are not teaching the subject effectively enough. Assessment in the subject is informal and does little to support future planning to ensure the highest appropriate level of challenge is provided on a regular enough basis.

176 An important influence upon the subject has been the inadequate amount and use of hardware and the limited amount of software for teaching the full range of skills, including aspects of control technology. The recent fire in the infant department destroyed some of the networking systems, which limits the effectiveness of some equipment. The ICT suite is extremely crowded and best use is not made of this. For most mornings the suite is unused or underused which means that pupils do not have regular enough access to the facilities such as the interactive white-board or Internet to enhance their learning. Similarly, whilst all classrooms have a computer, several of these were not seen in use during the inspection and at times were not switched on. Some pupils indicate infrequent use is made of class computers. Whilst there are some links with other subjects including mathematics, science and design and technology, these links could be extended much further. The school has adopted a suitable Internet safety policy but is aware there are some concerns over the filter used on some programs.

MUSIC

177 Attainment is above average for both the seven and the eleven year olds, as it was at the last inspection. Pupils, parents and staff are united in their opinions that music at Woodthorne is a strength. On the other evidence available, from video recordings, compact discs, tape recordings and lessons, this judgement is accurate.

178 Right from the start of their time in school, pupils at Woodthorne are encouraged to enjoy music, to sing and to play instruments and this helps them to do well. Teaching is good. Teachers are confident about the subject because the teachers with specialist skills help and support their colleagues effectively. A good example is in Years 3 to 6 where staff work together as a cohesive team, ably led by a specialist colleague. Singing is taught well. Pupils are taught the correct breathing techniques, for example how to use their diaphragm effectively, and as a result their diction is crisp and their pitch is accurate. During the singing and playing of a four-part round in Years 5 and 6, pupils of all capabilities were able to hold the beat, putting expression into their voices and successfully interpreting the mood of the music and the message in the song.

179 Instrumental work is taught successfully. Very little was seen, but discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their taped and filmed activities across the school indicate that standards are good and pupils achieve well. One of the main strengths is the accessibility of the music curriculum, which is open to all pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Both groups are well represented in performances and in the many out-of-school clubs and activities, which include orchestra, choir, hand-bells and recorders. Around 50 per cent of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 choose to have individual instrumental tuition, which is readily available to everyone and another reason why pupils achieve well.

180 In Years 1 and 2 the same team approach exists as in Years 3 to 6. Specialist staff guide and support the others, and in the one lesson seen the quality of teaching and learning was very good. In this lesson the teacher made sure that all the pupils were fully engaged throughout. There was a very good balance between all the different elements of the lesson so that each section built successfully on pupils' previous learning. As the lesson progressed pupils' skills improved as they adeptly read and interpreted different symbols, representing them through different sounds. Boys and girls of all capabilities were fully involved in creating their own composition, confidently using their own voices as well as playing a range of instruments. All of them were able to create and perform simple parts, successfully producing musical patterns with their voices and instruments.

181 The current co-ordinator is a fairly recent appointment and she manages the subject soundly, supported by a colleague in the junior department. This system appears reasonable, but it creates an unnatural division between the infant and junior departments that does not support a cohesive, whole-school approach to the subject. The co-ordinator has a heavy workload as a member of the senior management team, Foundation Stage co-ordinator and Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. These responsibilities are not fairly balanced within the school's overall management team. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards, teaching and learning, and, as yet, there are no systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in music. All these issues need tackling if the subject is to move forward from its position of strength.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

182 The school retains the positive approach and commitment to physical education identified by the previous inspection, and has made sound progress. Pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum, covering all aspects of the subject. Due to the limited number of lessons seen, particularly at Key Stage 1, there is little evidence on which to base a judgement on pupils' overall attainment, although all those seen were average, and in one Year 3 games lesson standards were above average. The planning and organisation of the subject suggest that pupils will make at least satisfactory progress. This represents sound improvement since the previous inspection.

183 Pupils in Year 2 can hold balances using different numbers of 'points' and 'patches' of their bodies. They confidently mirror their partner's body shape, and higher attaining pupils explore and link simple symmetrical sequences with increasing control and co-ordination. In a good Year 3 games lesson, all pupils make progress in their technique and performance when attempting standing long jumps. Their footwork skills, which are taught as a special focus, are above expectations, showing good dexterity in quite complex movements. By Year 6 most pupils throw and catch a small ball confidently, with many making visible progress due to the focus on improving skills. In the following game, however, the level of co-operation and teamwork is not very high, a missed opportunity to put these skills into effective practice.

184 There is a strong emphasis on taking part, with pupils of all abilities being fully involved. This is helped by the emphasis on competing against yourself, rather than other pupils, although in competitive games pupils show good attitudes whether winning or losing, and are very supportive of each other. The inclusion of two pupils from a special school in Year 3 games lessons brings clear benefits to all concerned. Physical education is also used to address social and moral aspects of pupils' learning, by encouraging fairness, with pupils sometimes agreeing their own rules for games between themselves, or devising strategies to overcome disputes.

185 The curriculum is planned following national guidelines and all aspects are covered. Swimming is currently taught in Years 4 and 5, and about 90 per cent of pupils achieve the national target of swimming 25 metres unaided, a good success rate. There is a good range of extra-curricular sport open to the older pupils, including cross-country running, football and netball, as well as some skill practice sessions at lunch time for pupils in Key Stage 1.

186 Four lessons were seen during the inspection. Teaching was always at least sound, and was good in two of the three lessons in Key Stage 2. The good pupil management and relationships seen in all lessons are especially important in physical education, where pupils have to be trusted to act sensibly in potentially dangerous circumstances. Teachers manage this well, showing good awareness of safety and making pupils aware of it too. Warm-up activities are well chosen and pupils are clearly familiar with these routines. There is an appropriate focus on skills in both planning and teaching. Where lessons were less successful, the organisation of activities did not always involve pupils sufficiently, and while use was made of pupils to give examples of good work, other pupils were not asked to comment on what made it successful.

187 The co-ordinator is experienced and has good organisational abilities. The quality of his own planning and teaching needs spreading more widely, particularly to Key Stage 1. While the co-ordinator teaches in several age groups, he has had no recent opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through the school, although he sees termly planning and staff evaluations. The lack of assessment opportunities and recording of progress is unsatisfactory, and has been so since the last inspection: this needs addressing as a matter of urgency.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

188 At the time of the last inspection, standards were below the expected level by the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. These standards have improved and are now in line with the agreed syllabus by Year 2 and Year 6. The policy has been up-dated and the scheme of work includes recent national guidance. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This is due to better understanding of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the efforts of the subject leader and all staff to raise standards. Overall there is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory and poor teaching was reported in Key Stage 1. Since the previous inspection resources have been improved and religious education is now a focus area in the School Improvement Plan.

189 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 display a satisfactory range of knowledge and understanding of Christianity but less about other faiths. The teaching is mainly focused on the Christian religion in the infants. This was demonstrated in conversation with Year 2 pupils as they explained clearly what Jesus did while He was on earth. They know a Christening as a birth ceremony but have no knowledge of birth ceremonies of other faiths. Pupils were unsure when asked what happens at Diwali, confusing the festival with the Chinese New Year. However, pupils in Year 2 recalled their visit to a synagogue and provided a good description

of many aspects of Judaism including the Holy Book. In Year 5 pupils' thinking is extended through good teaching, as seen in two lessons focusing on 'Who is your neighbour?' and 'As Christians they should love their neighbours as themselves.' These lessons moved at a good pace, were well organised and challenging and made a good contribution to literacy. The final part of the lesson was used well to consolidate the pupils' learning and revisit the aims and objectives. Year 6 pupils had been given a task with an Easter focus called 'Risen' to be completed independently using the computer. However, in conversation, a group of Year 6 pupils were unable to explain the meaning of harvest or famine, thinking that 'harvest' is when food is given to the poor.

190 Pupils' attitudes are good overall and in Year 5 they are very good. They listen carefully when relevant extracts of scripture are read, such as 'The Good Samaritan' in a lesson concerning 'Love thy neighbour'. Pupils handle artefacts with respect and listen as pupils from other cultures share their experiences of 'special places'. However, there are no assessment procedures to guide the teaching and learning in order to ensure that skills and knowledge are built in a continuous way.

191 The leadership is satisfactory but there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject. The subject leader has focused on improving resources and supporting teachers in their year groups. She has made a significant contribution to the School Improvement Plan.