

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wolverhampton, West Midlands

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 1104374

Headteacher: Mr Chris Breeze

Reporting inspector: Mr Glyn Gaskill
22951

Dates of inspection: 27th to 30th January 2003

Inspection number: 246375

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stafford Road,
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Wolverhampton,
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Cuthbert

Date of previous inspection: 8th December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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22951	Glyn Gaskill	Registered inspector	Science, Design and Technology.	How well are pupils taught? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31801	Yvonne Bacchetta	Team inspector	Art and Design, Music, History, Special Educational Needs, English as an Additional Language.	
25461	Joan Walker	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Mathematics, Physical Education.	How well does the school care for its pupils? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English, Information and Communication Technology, Geography, Educational Inclusion.	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
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?	12 - 15
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15 - 16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16 - 19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19 - 21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21 - 22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22 - 25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27 - 31
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32 - 50

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The terms “attainment” and “achievement” appear frequently in this report. Inspectors use the term “attainment” to indicate standards against national or local criteria. The term “achievement” is used to describe the progress pupils make compared to their prior attainment.

The term “Foundation Stage” refers to children in the nursery and reception classes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a large parish area in the northern part of the city of Wolverhampton. It is a large primary school for boys and girls from 3 to 11 years old. There are 328 pupils on roll, including 47 part-time children in the nursery. There is a similar number of boys and girls. Just over one-tenth of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the national average. A very small percentage of pupils are bilingual, with English as an additional language. Only one pupil, recently arrived at the school, is at an early stage of speaking English. About one-tenth of the pupils are from ethnic minorities with nearly all having a white background, a very small proportion being Indian. Seven per cent of the pupils have special educational needs but there are no statements of special educational needs. These figures are low for a school of this size. The general level of children’s attainment on entry to the school is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which gives pupils a very good grounding for living their life based on strong Christian principles. It is also an improving school, thanks to the excellent leadership of the headteacher and the overall good management of staff with whole-school responsibilities. The governing body is very effective and fulfils its duties well. Taking all National Curriculum subjects together, standards are satisfactory and there has been an improvement over the last two years. Children are given a good start in the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership with very good management by himself and the deputy headteacher. The governing body is very effective. This has produced a common purpose for the development of the school.
- Good teaching and the very effective learning support assistants, enabled by efficient management, contribute significantly to the very good capacity for the school’s development. Pupils’ respond very positively in lessons and at other times during the school day.
- The school’s provision for pupils’ personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, is very good. Pupils’ response to this provision is very good with high standards of behaviour, relationships and respect.
- The school’s strategies to promote pupils’ attendance are very successful.
- The care provided for pupils’ welfare and academic development is very good. This is supported by excellent use of new technology. Pupils benefit from this secure learning environment and learn well.
- By the time children leave the reception classes, most will exceed the majority of nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. At Key Stage 2, standards are good in mathematics, physical education and music.
- Parents have very positive views of the school. This includes the rich range of activities provided outside lesson time and the information they receive from the school.

What could be improved

- The quality of different forms of writing at Key Stage 1 is below expectations, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils.
- Whilst the provision for pupils with moderate special educational needs is appropriate, the needs of pupils with more specific learning difficulties are not sufficiently catered for. The school does not have effective systems to provide for those pupils who require specific help and external agencies are not sufficiently involved.
- There is no easily-accessible and secure outdoor learning area for the reception classes and that provided for the nursery classes is limited. The classroom space for all Foundation Stage classes is limited. These aspects are limiting children's physical development.
- The use of information and communication technology to control events and sense physical data, such as temperature, is a National Curriculum requirement at Key Stage 2 and is not being taught. The use of information and communication technology to promote learning across the curriculum is under-developed.
- Standards in geography at Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in December 1997, there were three key issues for improvement identified. The school has made satisfactory progress in putting these matters right. Improvement dipped after the last inspection, but the rate of progress has been very positive under the direction of the new headteacher. The school has timetabled the use of the library and all classes regularly use it for reading, but its use to promote pupils' research skills is under-developed. The school has done a great deal to strengthen links with parents who now have a very high regard for the communication and links they have with the school. The school has developed a homework policy, but it is over-ambitious and not consistently used. The school's development planning is now very good covering both the long and short term and setting appropriate priorities.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	B	C	C
mathematics	D	C	B	B
science	E	E	C	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

- In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress overall. Their attainment is mainly good and is satisfactory in their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Physical development is limited in the reception classes because of limited classroom size and lack of ready access to a secure outdoor learning area.
- Results in National Curriculum tests (SATs) for seven-year-olds have varied widely since 1998. In reading and mathematics, they have ranged from above to well below average. In writing, they have generally been below average.
- The average points score for all combined SATs results for eleven-year-olds has increased faster than the national trend. In 2002, it was slightly above the national average for the first time in four years.

- The school sets very realistic and challenging targets for its eleven-year-old pupils in their SATs. In 2002, these targets were marginally exceeded.
- Inspection evidence found standards of attainment at the end of both key stages to be satisfactory in English and science. Standards in speaking and listening are good in both key stages. Writing is unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. In mathematics, standards of attainment are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The inspection found satisfactory standards in all other subjects at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, standards are unsatisfactory in geography, good in physical education and music and satisfactory in the remainder of the curriculum.
- Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are making satisfactory progress, but those few with more severe problems are not having their special educational needs fully addressed and are not making appropriate progress.
- Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory.
- Pupils' from a bilingual background and who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.
- In previous years, girls have performed better than boys, particularly at Key Stage 2 in English. The school has implemented positive strategies to correct this difference and the inspection found no significant differences in the performances of boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils like coming to school. They are interested in and enjoy their lessons, activities and clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in and out of the classroom. The pupils understand the rules and sanctions and strive to meet the high expectations set.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils develop very strong relationships. They learn to take responsibility for themselves and for others
Attendance	Very good. The level is well above the national average.

- The very positive attitudes and values of pupils makes a significant contribution to the very good quality of life in the school and to their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2 [Key Stage 1]	Years 3 – 6 [Key Stage 2]
Quality of teaching	very 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 has improved since the last inspection.
- In all classes, teachers and learning support assistants work very well together.
- The quality of teaching of English is good at both key stages and for mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2.
- Teaching of pupils in ability sets is making a positive contribution to their progress and attitudes to learning.
- Teachers plan carefully using appropriate whole-school plans, but the content of lessons for classes containing pupils of the same age are not always consistent.
- Teachers make appropriate provision for pupils with moderate special educational needs, but lack guidance on teaching pupils with more severe needs.

- Good use is made of assessment to help pupils move forward, but the helpfulness of marking is variable.
- Pupils respond positively to what the school has to offer. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour are very positive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad curriculum overall, but breadth and balance is lacking in several subjects. The full National Curriculum requirements of information and communication technology are not being met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with moderate special educational needs is satisfactory, but for those with more severe special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only one of these pupils is at an early stage of acquiring English and appropriate support arrangements are being made. The remaining pupils are suitably provided for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good, overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Both personal and academic development are very well monitored. The pupils feel secure, valued and happy in school.

- The control and sensing aspects of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology are not being taught at Key Stage 2 as the school does not have the necessary learning resources.
- Pupils are not making sufficient use of information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Lessons are too short in a significant number of lessons, for example in some lessons in geography, science, information and communication technology and physical education. As a result, the breadth and balance of the curriculum is reduced.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- The school makes excellent use of information and communication technology to effectively track and promote pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The use of assessment across the curriculum is good.
- The school has a very strong relationship with parents, who have a high opinion of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Taken together, the leadership and management of the school provided by the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities are good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its duties well. It is well organised, purposeful and plays a significant role in the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has consulted widely on its strengths and weaknesses and this has resulted in significant improvements. The school's monitoring

	programme is making a positive difference to standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of staff, accommodation and learning resources.

- There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers.
- The deputy headteacher is taking on a full teaching role which limits the time available for management.
- The school finds difficulty in recruiting appropriately qualified teachers.
- Learning resources are generally sufficient to teach the planned curriculum.
- Accommodation is satisfactory, but provision for children in the reception classes lacks sufficient classroom space and easy access to a secure outdoor learning area.
- The very new information and communication technology suite is an excellent resource. The subject is in need of additional hardware and software to meet National Curriculum requirements and to support learning across the curriculum.
- The school applies the principles of best value well in comparing its standards with other schools, consulting with the whole-school community on what is good and what needs improving and ensure that funds are secured and are spent to the advantage of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children behave well and respect each other in response to the family atmosphere created in school where the individual is valued. • The good teaching that ensures their children make progress because they are expected to work hard and do their best. • The children like school. They become mature and responsible and gain in confidence. • The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification about the school's provision for homework. • A few parents are concerned about the quality of information they receive and the range of activities provided outside the classroom.

Inspectors' responses:

- Inspectors fully endorse the positive comments made by parents.
- Inspectors agree that the position about homework is unclear and needs clarification.
- The quality of information is judged to be very good. The provision for activities outside the classroom is also found to be very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The most recent baseline assessment for entry into the school was for the pupils currently in Year 1. This assessment covered children's development in their personal and social, communication skills and mathematics. Their attainment was above expectations for children of a similar age. Inspection evidence indicates that by the time children leave the reception classes, most children will exceed the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals for: communication, language and literacy; personal, social and emotional development; mathematics and creative development. They are set to meet the goals for knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. More-able children will exceed the Early Learning Goals. Children's attainment in the nursery is good for: communication, language and literacy; personal, social and emotional development; mathematics and creative development. Their attainment for physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. In all Foundation Stage classes children's achievement is good for: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics and creative development. Their achievement is satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's achievement in the nursery classes is satisfactory for their physical development. The achievement for children in the reception classes is unsatisfactory, as they do not have the opportunity to use an outside play area to develop their large motor-control skills.

2. Since 1998, the average points scores for the school's SAT results for seven-year-olds have fluctuated significantly. In reading and mathematics, they have ranged from well below average to above average. Results in writing have generally been below average. In the 2002 SATs, results for reading were similar to all schools but below schools with a similar free school meals entitlement. Writing was below all and similar schools. Mathematics was in line with all and similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was similar to all schools. The teacher assessments for science in 2002 placed pupils in the bottom five per cent for the country. The school has realised that these assessments for science were unrealistic. There is no data available to gauge the value-added attainment as pupils move from the end of reception to the end of Year 2. The wide catchment area of the school goes some way to explain the variation in the standards attained by different cohorts.

3. Compared with all and similar schools, the school's average points score for the 2002 SAT for eleven-year-olds were average for English and science and above average for mathematics. Over the last two years, there has been a marked improvement in mathematics and science results. In 2000 and 2001, results in English improved, but fell back in 2002. On average, over the last five years, girls have performed better than boys in English, more than the national difference. Since 2000, the average points score for all subjects (English, mathematics and science) has increased faster than the national trend and was slightly above the national average in 2002. Considering the 2002 SAT results with the results pupils obtained when they took the Year 2 SATs, in comparison with other schools having similar prior attainment, progress was below average for English, average for science and above average for mathematics. This analysis broadly ties in with the detailed analysis of individual pupils' results carried out by the school. The school makes excellent use of its assessment data base to set challenging targets for Key Stage 2 SATs which are marginally exceeded.

4. At the end of both key stages, inspection evidence found standards of attainment to be satisfactory in English and science. In mathematics, attainment is satisfactory at the end

of Key Stage 1 and good at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in science at both key stages, and in mathematics and English at Key Stage 1. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is good in English and very good in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. These positive outcomes are the result of a concerted move to raise standards in English and mathematics which have been particularly effective with older pupils. There have been improvements to learning resources and teaching approaches to make learning more attractive to boys. At Key Stage 2, attainment and achievement are unsatisfactory in geography and good in physical education and music. In the remaining subjects, attainment and achievement are satisfactory in both key stages.

5. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The special needs of children in the Foundation Stage are identified early, but the additional support they receive is limited. In Key Stage 1 and 2, the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties are suitably met and they make good progress. This is because teachers try to plan work to match pupils' needs carefully and effective support is provided by learning support assistants. A minority of pupils with specific learning difficulties or with physical problems makes unsatisfactory progress. This is because the school has not been successful in enlisting the help of outside agencies to provide additional support. An example of this is that a school report that identified a pupil as needing help from an outside agency eighteen months ago and none has been provided.

6. Higher-attaining pupils are systematically provided with challenging work in Key Stage 2 resulting in good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated into the life of the school and their progress is similar to that of their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. This is a happy school. The pupils show very positive attitudes and their behaviour is very good. The very good standards of behaviour seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The level of attendance has increased and is now very good, a marked improvement. The school very effectively promotes a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural ethos and this helps to foster the calm, secure and purposeful atmosphere that exists. All these strong features have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning.

8. The pupils enjoy coming to school very much. Even the youngest children in the nursery leave their parents happily, settling quickly into the school routines that are welcoming and friendly. All the pupils want to work hard and to do their best. Parents comment very positively on their children's enjoyment of school, and the expectation that their children will work hard and do their best. Overall, the pupils are very enthusiastic about their lessons and their general involvement in school. In class, they enjoy their tasks and often show very good concentration and perseverance. In nearly all lessons seen, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least good; many were judged to be very good and a few excellent. These very positive attitudes were particularly well illustrated in a Year 5 physical education lesson. All the pupils, including those unable to take part physically, threw themselves into the difficult task set, which was to interpret pictures of body movements by the Austrian artist Hundertwasser. They worked very hard, discussing, practising, evaluating and perfecting what they were doing, showing intense involvement, concentration and a real desire to do better. They thoroughly enjoyed the work, talking about it the following day with a sense of pride. These high levels of enthusiasm start in the nursery and continue throughout the school. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson about making a circuit to light a bulb, pupils were so enthralled with what the teacher was saying that they jumped when she clapped her hands for emphasis. Because of their enjoyment they had listened well, knew

what they had to do and rose to the challenge. The total involvement of the pupils in these two examples also demonstrates well the school's provision for spiritual development. Many pupils take part in the good number of extra-curricular clubs provided by the school, showing further enjoyment and involvement.

9. Parents are rightly pleased with the behaviour of their children. Pupils are polite, well mannered and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. They happily engage adults in conversation, and show genuine interest in that person. Behaviour overall is very good, both in the classroom and around the school. This is because the staff set very high expectations, the pupils know how they should behave and strive to do so. They understand the sanctions if they do not behave; they also understand that some pupils experience difficulties with their behaviour and try hard to be tolerant. The pupils understand that others must be treated with respect. There were no instances of bullying, oppressive behaviour or racial incidents seen during the inspection. One incident of misbehaviour brought to the attention of the headteacher was dealt with swiftly, with the agreed procedures set in motion. The school is orderly and play-times and lunch-times run smoothly. All ages play and work together well. There is a pleasing mix in friendship groups between boys and girls and different ages and ethnic or cultural backgrounds, reflecting the school's good provision for cultural development. Lunch-time supervisors maintain the high expectations of behaviour and reward it by presenting a bear at the end of the week for the best behaved class in each part of the school. There are a few pupils who experience difficulties over their behaviour. Whilst support is given to them, the school is seeking further help from outside to improve provision for these pupils to ensure that they are fully included in the life of the school. There have been no exclusions from the school since it first opened.

10. The pupils' personal development is very good. The strong Christian ethos in the school fully supports this aspect. The headteacher gives a very good lead to the team of adults who provide very good role models; this includes all staff across the whole-school community. Relationships are very good. There is a genuine sense of all staff wanting to do their best for the pupils in their care and they take their responsibilities towards them very seriously. They understand that how the pupils develop as people is very important and thus they work hard to help them. The very good use of praise helps to raise the pupils' self-esteem and confidence, this allows pupils to try things without fear of failure. The pupils have a very good regard for the feelings and beliefs of others and are very supportive of each other. They are encouraged from an early age to appreciate each other's efforts and as they move through the school will spontaneously applaud the success of others. Pupils make thoughtful, sensible and constructive comments about their own and others' work.

11. The pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given, taking on their duties in the classroom and around school seriously. The pupils looking after the office at lunch-time were sensible, polite and helpful when answering the telephone. Older pupils help to look after younger ones, for example during indoor play-times and by introducing them to playground games such as *The Farmer's in his Den*. Older pupils also provide an effective and appreciated peer support system for all pupils. These volunteers have been fully trained and fulfil their duties sensibly. Whilst the school has no formal way of taking pupils' views into account, such as a school council, they are consulted about what they dislike and like about school. Their comments have been acted on with, for example, the improvement in classroom furniture in some parts of the school and the forthcoming refurbishment of some of the toilets. The pupils are very respectful of the school's environment, equipment and resources. One boy was seen at play-time voluntarily picking up litter because he does not like to see the grounds untidy. The pupils use their initiative very well, for example in the current organisation of the *St. Anthony's Brainiest Kid* contest and in organising and manning stalls at fetes and bazaars.

12. Attendance at school has improved in recent years. A lot of work has been put into this and the results are very pleasing. Whilst a number of specific initiatives were used, the headteacher says that making the pupils and parents feel welcome and valued, together with providing interesting lessons and activities, have done most to ensure the pupils want to attend. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching is excellent in three per cent of lessons, very good in 29 per cent, good in 49 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

14. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teaching observed was characterised by high expectations, good use of time and resources and learning objectives shared with the children. Planning ensures all children have equal access to the varied curriculum, and the contributions of the nursery nurse, learning support assistants and helpers who work in the classes are greatly valued. Very careful assessments during lessons take good account of children's progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum is enhanced by the children going to places of interest and listening to visitors who talk about their interests or jobs. The teachers show that they value the children's work through the careful way in which it is displayed, and the classrooms provide a bright cheerful atmosphere.

15. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is most frequently good, with occasional satisfactory and very good teaching. At Key Stage 2, teaching is also good but covers a wider range of quality. At Key Stage 2, there are several examples of both very good and satisfactory teaching with occasional excellent lessons. Overall, the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good although of consistently better quality in Key Stage 2. Expectations for pupils' work in writing at Key Stage 1 are not high enough.

16. Teachers use imaginative settings to make the lesson relevant and capture pupils interest. This was seen in a Key Stage 1 lesson in science when the pupils played 'hide the component' to better know the names of apparatus to make an electrical circuit. In a Key Stage 2 information and communication technology lesson, pupils used the context of planning for a party to develop their understanding of spreadsheets. Teachers generally have good knowledge of the subjects they have to teach.

17. Mathematics and extended writing in English have been recently organised for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now taught in three ability sets. Teachers take good account of pupils abilities in these sets and provide an appropriate demand of work within the sets. This has had a positive effect on standards and pupils attitudes to their studies. All the pupils who were asked liked the idea of setting, regardless of which set they were placed in. This was most plainly put by one pupil who claimed she used to hate mathematics, but now she is in the middle set quite enjoys the subject as she better understands the work being covered. Assessment is also used to good effect when teachers discuss with pupils what they understand and what they have to improve upon. A very good example of this was seen where the class teacher had marked the pupils previous test and explained where pupils could improve. The following test re-checked the areas of uncertainty, in different contexts, to see if understanding had been established. Pupils' books are regularly marked, but the comments given do not always help pupils to move forward.

18. Lessons start promptly and the time allotted to lessons is used to the full. Teachers give very clear instructions so that pupils know what they have to do. Teachers set up very good discussion sessions at appropriate times in the lesson. Through the teachers'

perceptive questioning and a supportive listening environment, all pupils contribute and their answers are valued. At times, these sessions are too short to be fully effective because of the short allocation of time allocated by the school timetable. This was observed in Key Stage 2 geography and science lessons. Conversely the time allocated to the activity is, at times, too long and pupils become restless. This was seen in a mental mathematics session. Homework is given regularly in English and mathematics and it helps pupils make progress. The school's homework policy includes a very ambitious timetable, which is not being applied consistently across the school.

19. Teachers generally have very good strategies to manage the behaviour of pupils. The most important of these strategies is the provision of stimulating lesson content. Where behaviour starts to deteriorate, teachers use appropriate behaviour strategies to effectively deal with matters. In a very few instances, the behaviour strategies to control a small number of pupils with particular behaviour difficulties take a significant amount of time. This has a detrimental effect on the pace of the lesson for the whole class.

20. Planning for teaching over termly cycles is generally good. However there are differences in the way these plans are translated into lessons for classes with pupils of the same age. A good feature of teaching is the sharing of the learning objectives of lessons with pupils so they have a goal for their learning. Where learning objectives are clearly written in precise terms, which pupils understand, this is particularly effective in helping them make progress. At times, learning objectives are very wordy or not clearly presented on the class whiteboard and this hinders learning.

21. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together. Learning support assistants are fully briefed by teachers regarding the planned lesson. Through good management and the effectiveness of the learning support assistants all English and mathematics lessons have daily support which helps pupils of all abilities make progress. The learning support assistants make further positive contributions to pupils' learning when they take responsibility for small groups of pupils identified as needing additional help with their English and mathematics. Where learning support assistants are deployed to support pupils with educational needs in lessons, the quality of support is good. Class teachers are diligently involved in writing appropriate individual educational plans for the pupils who need general support in literacy and numeracy. These individual education plans are clearly written and used as working documents to plan work at the right level.

22. Higher-attaining pupils are suitably taught in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 through the setting arrangements. Teaching takes sufficient account of the more-able pupils though feedback from the whole-school tracking of pupils' progress.

23. The teaching of pupils who have a home background of languages other than English is good. The one young child who is at the early stages of learning English is well supported by the teacher and learning support assistant.

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

24. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is satisfactory overall.

25. The school makes good provision for children in the nursery and sound provision in the reception classes. Currently, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals, and the majority are likely to achieve them by the time they enter Year 1 except in their physical development, which is unsatisfactory in reception. Children in the reception classes do not have the experience of using large wheeled toys or

climbing activities due to the lack of a secure fenced outside play area attached to their classrooms. More-able children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in all aspects except their physical development.

26. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. This is also the case at Key Stage 2 with the exception of aspects of information and communication technology where requirements are not fully met. The control and monitoring parts of the information and communication technology curriculum are not taught because of a lack of learning resources. Religious education is not covered by this inspection but by a separate diocesan inspection. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and there is much evidence that they have a good impact on raising standards. The provision for personal and social education is good. There are appropriate arrangements for sex and drug education. All children have good access to the curriculum and the life of the school.

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the nursery are good and sound in the reception classes. All children are provided with a rich range of well planned learning experiences suited to their individual needs. Visitors and visits further enhance the curriculum.

28. The curriculum for pupils in both key stages is satisfactory. The school has detailed schemes of work usually based on commercial or Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes. The schemes ensure that the pupils learn in a structured way and cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, in some of the lessons that are timed for 30 minutes, there is insufficient time for the subject to be taught in appropriate depth. This was seen in lessons in geography, science, physical education and information and communication technology. In these instances, the lessons are rushed and little time is available for the pupils' to consolidate their learning. Conversely, the half hour period is at times too long, for example when pupils do mental mathematics. The school should review these short timed lessons in order to produce the good teaching and learning as observed in other lessons during this inspection. Opportunities to use and apply the key skills of literacy and numeracy across in the curriculum are good. The school now groups pupils in Year 5 and 6 by their prior attainment in English and mathematics. This is a successful initiative, as standards have improved at the end of Key Stage 2.

29. The school is just beginning to give due regard to the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' opinions are sought and parents involved, however, supportive parents are frustrated because the targets set for pupils with specific learning difficulties are not being met. Class teachers are not receiving adequate support to plan work for pupils who have been in need of a statement for at least eighteen months. Pupils' records show that involvement with outside support agencies is inadequate and consequently a significant minority of pupils with severe learning difficulties make unsatisfactory progress. There are no procedures at the infant stage to monitor the progress of pupils identified at the foundation stage with physical difficulties. Teachers produce clear individual education plans for pupils with basic difficulties with their English and mathematics. Teachers and learning support assistants make use of these plans to help pupils make progress. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly, however many individual education plans have not been updated since the previous review because of the illness of the special educational needs co-ordinator. There are no procedures in place to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are provided with suitably challenging work in relevant subjects other than mathematics and English. The school plans to provide a lesson each week for pupils gifted in English for the last half of the year. Last year, gifted pupils in mathematics attained well.

30. Provision for the one child at an early stage of English language acquisition is good because of the many visual and practical activities provided and the good support from a learning support assistant. In all classes, pupils whose home language is other than English are given work that is well matched to their level of ability and have equal access to the whole curriculum.

31. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The training of teachers in respect of these strategies has had a good impact on raising standards of pupils' learning. The school policy on homework is over-demanding and is not applied across the school. The support from most of the parents has helped to improve learning, attitudes and standards.

32. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. It includes lunch-time and after-school clubs such as cross country running, gardening, cooking, soccer 2000, football, hockey, recorders, netball, chess, choir and rugby. In the summer months, there are also clubs for athletics, cricket, rounders and orienteering. In addition to these clubs, the school provides separate residential visits for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils.

33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and personal development is good. It provides a good basis for pupils to learn about healthy eating and lifestyles, bullying pressures, feelings and relationships, medicine and drug abuse and substance use. The teaching about issues concerning family life and sex education is based on the teaching of the Catholic Church. Parents are always informed when their children are to discuss or be shown anything of a specific sexual nature and are invited to view the materials themselves beforehand. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils in every aspect of its activities. This commitment is underpinned by the very good moral and social teaching that informs the attitudes and behaviour of both staff and pupils.

34. Relations with the community, including the church, local businesses and students from college, are good. Links are maintained with receiving secondary schools to ensure a smooth transition of pupils from one stage of their education to the next. There is a very active parent-teacher association that works hard to raise money for the school.

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

35. Overall, the school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. The high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have largely been maintained.

36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. In both class and school assemblies, pupils are given ample opportunities to ponder life's mysteries, or to reflect on and pray silently for world events. Sometimes, teachers take time to use these moments of stillness imaginatively and to great effect. This results in pupils being moved by the language of a story they hear or they are invited to reflect on the consequences of actions. There is scope to use this approach with even greater consistency. Teachers occasionally use writing lessons well to evoke a particular mood to fire pupils' imaginations. For example, in one very good lesson, the teacher read a mystery story with great effect, changing the inflection of his voice to match its mood. His approach roused the imagination of his pupils and led them to produce writing of a high quality. Displays are often used well to encourage pupils to wonder on the life and sacrifice of Jesus or of latter-day saints such as St. Maximilian Kolbe. Such good provision ensures that pupils develop a receptiveness towards spiritual experiences by the time they leave the school.

37. The school makes very good provision for the moral education of its pupils. This is led by its strong Christian teaching and by its mission statement that puts moral and spiritual teaching at the heart of its work with pupils. As a result, pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and consistently behave very well, both in the classroom and when moving unsupervised about the school. Minor misdemeanours are dealt with calmly and promptly by teachers. On the rare occasions when they occur, pupils are reminded quietly of their responsibilities towards themselves and others. The headteacher and staff provide excellent models for their pupils, greeting them courteously and cheerfully when they arrive in the morning. Because they know their pupils well, staff display a keen sense of respect and understanding for their feelings. Throughout the school, there is a high expectation that staff and pupils will treat each other considerately and fairly.

38. Equally, the school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. From the time they enter school, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and are made aware of the impact these have on others. They are taught to share materials and equipment selflessly and to wait their turn when others are speaking. As a result, for example, pupils in Year 1 discuss their work quietly and sensibly in pairs or small groups, listening to the contribution of others and speaking sensibly in turn. Pupils in Year 3 listen carefully to the rhythms others have composed in music, and their demeanour creates a calm atmosphere in which very good learning takes place. Pupils are progressively given greater responsibilities as they move through the school. For example, older pupils play or read with the younger ones at lunch-time, or help them to change their books after school. The school promotes well the social awareness of its pupils. This is done through its family-life programme, pupils' involvement in the support of charities and the welcome they give to senior citizens when they visit the school. All of these measures ensure that pupils develop a keen sense of their social responsibilities by the age of eleven.

39. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are introduced to a good range of experiences that enable them to learn of their cultural heritage. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 become familiar with their local community in their geographical studies, or study of the local environment in Years 3 and 4. Visits are sometimes made to enhance the understanding of history. For example, to Bantock House in Wolverhampton or further afield to Boscobel House. Younger pupils make an overnight visit to the Kingswood activity centre while older ones take part in longer residential visits. By inviting visitors from other religious groups to explain their practices and beliefs, the school makes equally good provision for its study of different cultures. This work is enriched through visits to a range of places of worship and through pupils' attendance at multi-cultural or multi-faith events. There is scope to extend pupils' appreciation of the richness of the music and art of other cultures, but pupils in general develop a broad sense of the wealth of their own cultural traditions, and those of others, by the time they leave the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. This is a school in which the individual is valued. The headteacher and his staff work very hard to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for both the pupils and their parents. The very good relationships mean that the pupils feel safe and know that they will be listened to and supported and so they are free to concentrate on their learning. Parents are very happy with the family atmosphere that is promoted.

41. The school has very good procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils at all times. Appropriate risk assessment is in place in the planning of lessons as well as for trips and outings. Accidents are well handled and parents are informed of any happening to their children. Fire appliances and alarms, electrical and curriculum equipment

are all tested at the appropriate time and fire drills held at least termly. Child protection procedures are now very good, an improvement on the last inspection. The headteacher and his deputy are attending a course very soon to update and refresh their knowledge. The school is fully aware of its responsibilities in this area and staff are reminded regularly of the need for vigilance and the procedures to follow if they have concerns. The school makes appropriate arrangements for use of the internet.

42. The pupils behave very well because of the school's ethos that encourages good behaviour and discourages any form of bullying or harassment. The behaviour policy is very clearly based along Christian lines. The pupils are reminded of the school rules as needed; they are involved at the start of the year in devising the rules for their own class and this discussion helps them to see the reasons behind rules. The clear guidelines on handling any inappropriate behaviour are very well and quickly used. Monitoring by the headteacher is very effective and usually has very positive results. Behaviour at lunch-time is very well promoted by the lunch-time supervisors who acknowledge this good behaviour by awarding behaviour bears each week. The school has provision for recording any racial incidents; none have been recorded. The school takes bullying very seriously. However, because of the very good relationships that exist across the whole school, any problems are generally resolved very quickly; this is further helped by the peer support system at lunch-times. Both the pupils and parents agreed that there appears to be very little bullying, and that if the school were made aware of it, it would take action.

43. Staff know the pupils very well and have a genuine desire to support and guide them. As a result, personal development, whilst only monitored formally in the Foundation Stage, is tracked very well. Teachers have very good relationships with parents and are readily available at the end of the day so that any concerns can be discussed at an early stage. The outcome is that parents are particularly pleased about the way their children are maturing. The school recognises and rewards personal development through awards made half-termly, weekly and, in at least one class, daily. In this class of older pupils, they make suggestions for 'pupil of the day'. This is usually for a personal achievement and shows very good respect, recognition and celebration of other's success. Effective support from outside agencies is sought if this might help individual pupils to cope in specific situations, such as bereavement.

44. Attendance is very well promoted and monitored. Registers are marked correctly and any emerging problems are tackled quickly and efficiently. The levels of attendance have risen in recent years because of the very thorough procedures put in place by the school, some with support from outside agencies. The use of a 'first day' call system raised with parents the need to inform the school of any absence, not least on safety grounds. The school constantly reminds parents of the need for their children to attend, giving dates that must be avoided if it is really necessary to take pupils away on holiday during term time. However, the headteacher feels that the biggest reason for the improvement in attendance is that the school is much better now at providing an interesting and varied range of lessons and activities, so that pupils are eager to attend.

45. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic attainment and progress are very good. The assessment co-ordinator has set up an extensive data base which includes all pupils in the school. This data base is regularly maintained and used to track and predict individual pupil's performance in reading, writing and mathematics from Year 2 onwards. It is also used to track the progress of identified groups in the school, such as those pupils supported by specific funding or intervention strategies. The system relates to National Curriculum levels only and hence is not used to track the progress of special educational needs pupils against their individual education plans. As pupils move from one school year to the next, a notional two-thirds of a National Curriculum Level is added to their previously attained level. All

teachers have password-protected access to the data base. Through formal negotiation with the assessment co-ordinator, class teachers comment on the realism of the notional improvement for each pupil over the current year. Assessments are recorded at the end of a year and a colour coding system identifies where targets have not been met or have been exceeded. Discussions with the class teacher result in improvements to teaching where needed. Pupils are placed in more appropriate ability groupings so they make better progress. The system is also used to set precise targets for Key Stage 2 SATs. This is aided by reference to national data, provided by a charitable organisation, which gives the probabilities of pupils obtaining particular levels based on their Key Stage 1 SAT results.

46. Arrangements for monitoring progress in science and the foundation subjects are effective. The learning outcomes of a taught unit of work are assessed against one of three broad outcomes for each pupil in a class. English and mathematics are assessed on a similar unit base using National Curriculum level descriptions. Outcomes are kept by each class teacher in well maintained files. This provides information for annual reports to parents on their children's attainment and also to modify the curriculum where needed. These good assessment procedures to guide curricular planning also ensure that pupils have full access to the curriculum provided by the school. In the shorter term, that is whilst a unit of work is being taught, the school is promoting more effective marking of pupils' work. There are examples of teachers adding comments to pupils' work based on the learning objectives for individual lessons. The use of this helpful marking is inconsistent.

47. Inspection evidence supports the school's identified need to make more effective use of assessment data for pupils with special educational needs. Additionally the assessment of pupils' motor abilities by class teachers is insufficient to allow the early identification of pupils with particular learning difficulties. A recent school audit has recorded pupils with learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy, but there are no procedures to track the progress of pupils with speech or physical disabilities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school has a very strong relationship with parents. A good proportion replied to the questionnaire and the views expressed generally show very high levels of support for the school. There is particular confidence in the key areas of leadership and management, teaching, and personal development. Nearly all parents feel that the behaviour is very good and the school helps their children to mature and become responsible. They feel that the teaching is very good and so their children make good progress. Nearly all parents feel that the school is approachable and see this is as particularly important in ensuring good communication and relations. Some concerns were expressed about the activities for pupils in addition to lessons. Inspection findings, however, are that provision is very good. Nearly a quarter of parents are concerned about homework and here inspection findings are that the policy is not followed consistently across the school, but that if it were implemented, it would be burdensome.

49. At the last inspection, concerns were expressed about the quality of reports and information for parents and remain for a small number of parents. Inspection findings are that the quality of all the information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are both informative and helpful, giving a good flavour of the school. The school publishes the dates of class assemblies early so parents can arrange to attend, and whilst they are there they are able to see the work of the school first hand. Parents are provided with information about what their children will be learning each term. It is very clearly set out and gives sufficient detail for parents to support their children if they so wish. The annual report that parents receive on their children's progress, criticised in the last report, is of very good quality. In all subjects, but in greater depth in English, mathematics and

science, comments concentrate on the important areas of what the pupils have genuinely mastered rather than on what has covered by in class. The targets set in English, and mathematics and the more general one are often too open. There are a range of meetings at which targets and progress are discussed with class teachers. Teachers are readily available to talk to parents about any concerns. The school helps to promote parents' involvement and interest in the work of the school by organising meetings about, for example numeracy and literacy. Attendance at these meetings is good.

50. Parents make a very good contribution to the work of the school. Most parents willingly help their children with homework, particularly in the early stages of learning to read. A small number of parents are currently able to come in to school to help in the classrooms. The number is smaller than normal because of administrative problems outside the school's control. The support that these parents provide is greatly valued and appreciated by the school. The school is active in promoting parents' involvement in the education of their children and the work of the school. Recent successes, to be repeated in the near future, are family learning projects in which parents are encouraged to find ways in which they can support their children's learning at home. Currently a course, run in school by a local college, focused on helping in the classroom. These initiatives serve not only to support parents in helping their children, but also gives them a valuable opportunity to understand the workings of a school and to, perhaps, offer their services. The school uses the expertise of parents where it can. It is very fortunate in having amongst its parent governors, one who works with and understands computers. His help has been invaluable in the setting up and running of the new computer suite.

51. A measure of the improving involvement of parents is the growing number of parents willing to sit on the Parent Teacher Association committee. This is very active in arranging both social and fund raising events; the money raised is well used by the school, for example, to help with the purchase of a new reading scheme that is more pertinent to the needs of the pupils. Parents are consulted in a number of ways, formally and informally. Recently a survey of parents showed a similarly high level of support as the one undertaken before this inspection. The school works hard to develop and maintain its partnership with its parents and as a result, it enjoys the confidence of all sectors of the community from which the pupils are drawn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. Taken together, the leadership and management of the school provided by the headteacher, governing body and staff with management responsibilities are good.

53. The present headteacher has been in post for two years and previously was deputy headteacher in the school. He provides excellent leadership. He has introduced changes, which have not always been popular, but in the longer term have become accepted and have improved provision at the school. At all times during the day, particularly at break-times and the start and end of school, he is busy around the school in contact with pupils and adults. His commitment to the school and the local community is complete. The deputy headteacher is very hard working and effective in the significant management roles he has. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together, collectively and separately providing very good management. The deputy headteacher currently has a temporary full-time teaching commitment. The school has advertised widely for a teacher to release the deputy headteacher for part of the week but has not been successful in finding a suitable candidate. This is reducing the management potential as the deputy headteacher's original role was to teach for half the week, the remainder given to management duties.

54. Through excellent use of information and communication technology, the headteacher and deputy headteacher involve all curriculum co-ordinators in planning for development and tracking progress against previous objectives. This is carried out through termly meetings with all co-ordinators using the school improvement plan maintained on the school's information and communication technology network. The school improvement plan is a useful and well used electronic-document. Whilst there is a very narrowly-based senior management team of headteacher and deputy headteacher, many of the teaching staff are involved in decision making by this regular consultation. The governors, teaching staff, learning support assistants, support staff, parents and pupils are consulted to find their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, effective action has been taken leading to improved efficiency and a better working environment. These consultations and outcomes are good examples of the school applying best value principles.

55. Monitoring in the school is making a positive difference to standards. There has been systematic, direct observation of teaching and learning in several subjects including English and mathematics. The monitoring reports for physical education are particularly well structured. Pupils exercise books in English, mathematics and science have been analysed against shared, relevant criteria. The governor for literacy has looked at standards and provision and reported back to the curriculum committee of the governing body. These activities have resulted in good practice being recognised and areas for improvement identified. In particular, extended writing has been targeted for improvement. A common strategy was agreed by the whole staff. The implementation of this strategy was monitored and amendments made where the strategy was not being interpreted correctly. This has resulted in improved standards in extended writing, particularly by the oldest pupils in the school. The database for pupils' progress in English and mathematics is used creatively. For example, where pupils' standards are not as predicted, additional learning support assistants' time or support for the class teacher is given. Also, the effectiveness of additional learning initiatives is being evaluated as the progress of the pupils involved is monitored.

56. Staff responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and aspects have recently been re-organised. The majority of co-ordinators are clear about what they have to do and carry out their duties to good effect. Co-ordinators for a minority of subjects have received insufficient training for their role. The management of assessment, the Foundation Stage, English, information and communication technology and physical education are good or better. There is a very positive effect on standards in these areas. In the term previous to the inspection, the school appointed a special educational needs co-ordinator. Unfortunately the person appointed became ill before a sufficient influence was made on systems to support special educational needs. Learning support assistants are effective in their work. The good relationships between them and teaching staff benefits their work with pupils. One learning support assistant has successfully obtained significant funding for the school through her professional studies.

57. The governing body is well organised with a clear sense of purpose and a good balance of experience and new blood. There is a very useful depth of expertise within the governing body to guide and influence the development of the school. Meetings of the full body and the separate committees are purposeful and clearly minuted. Under the experienced guidance of the chair of governors, the governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. The chair of the governing body and the literacy governor are frequent visitors to the school. Governors are kept well informed of developments in the school by the headteachers' termly reports and presentations by co-ordinators. The governing body is involved in development planning and makes use of the school improvement plan to monitor progress against agreed targets. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but do not have a programme for monitoring standards or other

aspects of provision. Because of the hiatus in the appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator, the work of the special educational needs governor is limited.

58. The educational priorities of the school are well supported through the school's financial planning, and the senior management team and governors anticipate wisely the fluctuations in budget caused by in the changes in the school roll. The governors' finance committee have a good understanding of the financial activities of the school, closely monitoring its budget, and ensuring that money is spent in accordance with the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Those subjects not specified in the plan receive a maintenance allocation negotiated between the subject's co-ordinator and the headteacher. This allocation is in turn based on the priorities identified by the co-ordinator in discussion with other members of staff. The senior management team monitors expenditure in the course of their formal termly meetings with the co-ordinator. Day-to-day procedures for financial management and control are good, and the school secretary knows where to seek outside support or information should this be required. Specific grants are used judiciously for the purposes for which they were intended. The most recent audit report judged financial arrangements to be sound, and the headteacher is properly implementing the small number of improvements it recommended. The governing body adequately monitors the impact of its spending decisions on the quality of education the school offers. It is fully aware of how these decisions are directly linked to the current improvements in standards. The school makes excellent use of information and communication technology to maintain its financial and assessment systems, employing these imaginatively, for example, to project pupils' likely levels of attainment. The school makes appropriate acknowledgement to copyright protection. The use of information and communication technology to support subjects is under-developed, but the very new provision and the expertise of staff gives great potential for significant improvement.

59. Overall, the school applies the principle of best value very well to its financial transactions. Taking into account its context and pupils' attainment on entry, its expenditure, overall effectiveness and the quality of education it offers, the school provides good value for money.

60. The staff are a committed and hard working team. There has been a significant turnover of staff in the past two years and staff new to the school or new to posts of responsibility are fully involved in school development. The teachers are appropriately qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum and some have particular expertise in mathematics and physical education. There is no expertise available in the school to assist pupils with special educational needs, but the school is making provision for the professional development of a teacher and a learning support assistant. The school makes effective use of a music specialist to complement the teaching of music. Arrangements for the professional development of staff have improved since the previous inspection. Good provision is made for the professional development of teaching and learning support assistants and for the induction of newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school. They pursue an appropriate range of training to enhance their skills and knowledge and because of very good relationships all feel valued and well supported. The school has plans to train co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects. They currently monitor standards mainly by analysing the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' written work.

61. Teachers and learning support assistants share a common purpose and are dedicated to promoting pupils' learning. Effective use is made of learning support assistants who provide valuable support in all classes. They have a clear knowledge of daily routines and they efficiently join classes to support pupils when they are working in groups. Although learning support assistants record their observations on pupils' progress, there is no common system for this.

62. Special educational needs provision is under the supervision of a teacher new to the post who has begun to gather together information on pupils identified as having special educational needs. The illnesses of the previous and current support teacher have affected the school's arrangements to support pupils with special educational needs. There has been insufficient liaison between the staff of the school and various support agencies including the speech and language, the physiotherapy and the psychology services. Because of this, insufficient advice and resources are available in the school to support class teachers. The governor with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs is frequently in school and aware of the need to improve provision for them.

63. Overall, the accommodation is good. Classrooms, other than the one classroom separate from the main school building, are of a suitable size. Cramped conditions in the detached classroom limits opportunities for the reception pupils to use large toys or construction kits in order to develop their physical skills. In most areas of the school, the environment is enhanced by displays of pupils' work and the entrance to the school is welcoming to parents and visitors. The library is a separate room of adequate size. The newly-opened computer suite is spacious and well furnished, creating a very positive atmosphere for learning. The school is clean and well maintained. Outside the school, there are sufficient hard-surfaced and grassed play areas. The school has plans to mark the hard surface area with games. There is no suitable outside play area for pupils in the reception classes and the small outside area for the nursery limits opportunity for pupils to develop their spatial awareness and physical skills. A school prayer garden and environmental area enhance pupils' spiritual development and their learning in science and art.

64. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in mathematics, physical education and for the Foundation Stage. The computer suite has first class facilities, enabling access to computers for a whole class. This is helping to improve standards in information and communication technology. However, there is insufficient hardware and software to teach the statutory parts of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology covering control and sensing physical data. The use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum is similarly restricted, particularly for requirements in science and design and technology. Insufficient atlases and globes in geography have a negative effect upon the pupils' ability to read maps to develop their geographical enquiry skills. In history, good use is made of visits and visitors and materials are borrowed to support learning, but the school has insufficient objects from times past for display and investigation. In art, poor quality tools results in over-dependence upon teachers for cutting and insufficient techniques for creating sculpture. The library requires some improvement in the quantity and quality of information books for pupils to undertake independent study. The school grounds are used well as a resource for pupils to appreciate the natural environment and work in science and art. Effective use is made of the adjacent playing field for sporting activities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should:

- (1) raise standards in writing in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that the teaching and learning strategies which are successfully used in Key Stage 2 are consistently applied in Key Stage 1 for all pupils;
(See paragraphs : 2, 15, 17, 36, 55, 75-77, 81-84)
- (2) establish effective systems to support pupils with specific special educational needs and to involve the relevant support agencies as necessary;
(See paragraphs : 5, 29, 47, 56, 60, 62, 77, 79 81, 89)
- (3) provide the learning resources and, where needed, the staff training to teach the control and sensing elements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology at Key Stage 2;
(See paragraphs : 26, 28, 101, 109, 115, 120, 125)
- (4) provide adequate classroom space and easily-accessible, appropriate and secure outdoor learning facilities for all the Foundation Stage classes so that children's physical development is enhanced.
(See paragraphs : 1, 25, 63, 67, 73)

Minor Issues

In addition to the above key issues, the school should note other weaknesses stated in the report and act upon them, in particular:

- make more use of information and communication technology to promote learning in subjects across the curriculum, providing learning resources and staff training where needed;
(See paragraphs : 101, 102, 109, 115, 120, 125)
- raise standards in geography at Key Stage 2.
(See paragraphs : 111-115)

The school has plans in hand to progress many of the above areas for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
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	2	18	31	11	0	0	0
Percentage	3	29	50	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	283
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	19

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	2.5
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.3
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	21	22	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	20
	Girls	19	19	21
	Total	36	38	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (75)	88 (84)	95 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	14
	Girls	17	17	13
	Total	33	35	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (82)	81 (86)	63 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to validated 2001 data. The 2002 figures have not been validated.

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	23	22	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	23
	Girls	17	19	21
	Total	34	38	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (78)	84 (66)	98 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	17
	Girls	17	20	20
	Total	34	39	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (68)	87 (71)	82 (78)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to validated 2001 data. The 2002 figures have not been validated.

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	205	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	26	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	26.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	654166
Total expenditure	646498
Expenditure per pupil	1977
Balance brought forward from previous year	11749
Balance carried forward to next year	7668

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	327
Number of questionnaires returned	172

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	30	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	42	18	5	4
The teaching is good.	61	34	1	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	43	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	21	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	22	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	37	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	64	31	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	32	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	28	11	1	4

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

65. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good and show an improvement from the last inspection. At the time of the inspection, there were 46 children attending either in the morning or afternoon session in the nursery and 37 children in the reception classes. Baseline assessment has not been completed for the children in the present reception classes. This is because new profiles are being introduced nationally this year, and will cover all areas of learning. However, in the previous year (the current Year 1 pupils), the local authority's baseline assessment of attainment on entry was above expectations for children of a similar age. This assessment only covered three aspects of children's attainment, namely their personal and social development, communication skills and mathematics.

66. The induction of children is well thought out and includes pre-school visits, part-time attendance, working to full attendance in either a morning or afternoon session. The parents are very appreciative of these arrangements. By the time they leave the reception classes, most children will exceed the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals for: communication, language and literacy; personal, social and emotional development; mathematics and creative development. They are set to meet the goals for knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. More-able children will exceed the Early Learning Goals. Children's attainment in the nursery is good for: communication, language and literacy; personal, social and emotional development; mathematics and creative development. Their attainment for physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

67. The Early Years co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and leads the team by example. The teachers, the nursery nurse and learning support assistants are committed to further improvement and work together very effectively as a team. Homework is regular and children take home their book bags every day. Parents are made to feel very welcome in all classes at appropriate times. The quality of the provision for accommodation and learning resources in the nursery class is good and sound in the reception classes. The provision in the reception classes does not offer children the opportunity to experience playing with large, wheeled toys and climbing activities in a secure outside play area on a daily basis. In all classes, good use is made of daily assessment information to plan what the children will do next, which is closely matched to their individual needs. This means children do not waste time being taught what they already know. The leadership and management by the early years co-ordinator is very good. She inspires and motivates the team and all staff are very conscientious and hard working. The children are eager and happy to come to school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

68. In both the nursery and reception classes, children make significant gains in their personal, social and emotional skills. As a result, they develop the right attitudes to learning from the start because the teachers, the nursery nurse and learning support assistants make learning an exciting experience and children come to school joyfully. Children reinforce and extend their independence skills by selecting their own activities in free-choice sessions and, because the purpose of tasks is carefully explained, they play there productively; for example in the role-play areas in all classrooms. They can choose when they would like a drink and which fruit they would like. Children change for their physical education lessons in the hall and need very little help to do so. Most can take their coats off and put them on again at home

time. When they come into school they know where to put their coats and lunch boxes. They use their name labels to register their attendance. The teachers oversee this activity and fill in the appropriate formal register. Most children are confident and enjoy coming to school. Less-confident children are given much encouragement and praise to improve their self-esteem. Most children are polite and show respect for one another. They appreciate the difference between right and wrong and have a sense of fair play. A few children have a short concentration span and often find it difficult to share equipment.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

69. Children in both nursery and reception classes make good progress in this area of learning. Many children are confident to offer oral contributions during whole-class sessions, for example during prayers a boy moved a book and explained why; 'I moved the book because the candles are burning'. In another session, children were telling the class what they did in school; 'We play together' and 'We do jigsaws'. They were asked how they helped at home. One child said 'I help Mummy to wash up' and another said 'I can walk with my Daddy'. When less-confident children want to speak in front of the class, the rest of the class is patient and gives encouragement to them. The children enjoy speaking about their reading books and what is happening in the pictures. They enjoy books and handle them with care. They like to listen to their teachers reading or telling a story. All children are secure in knowing that words and pictures convey meaning in stories. There is very effective teaching of phonics and most children know the letters and sounds of the alphabet. Most children hold a pencil correctly and write recognisable letters, especially in the reception classes. Many write their names on their work and settle to independent activities quickly and diligently.

70. More-able children, especially in the reception classes, are self-reliant and able to judge for themselves how well they are doing. They respond to questions and communicate their ideas well and their speech is usually clear and easily understood. The teachers and nursery nurse plan the work carefully and match it to the children's needs very closely. This means that the children extend their understanding, skill and knowledge lesson by lesson. Again good teaching methods and appropriate challenges mean the children sustain concentration throughout the lesson and do not waste time. Most children's responses to learning are very good. They want to learn and succeed. The teachers and all support staff have good questioning skills, which they use effectively to promote children's thinking and provoke responses.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

71. In all Foundation Stage classes, achievement in mathematics is above expectations for children of a similar age. Nursery children count reliably to ten and the more-able children much further. In the reception classes, children count to 20 and the more-able children much further. Children develop their mathematical skills in a variety of ways. For example, they are given responsibility for counting how many children have had their snack. During registration teachers asks how many children are in the class and, if two are away, how many are here today. All children know several number rhymes and enjoy playing number games involving counting on and counting back. Most children have a sound knowledge of shapes and can name squares, triangles and rectangles. Older children use language such as 'more' or 'fewer' to compare two numbers. They relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to 'taking away'. Sharing equipment and taking turns in many mathematical activities reinforces social development. Most children have a good sense of time and know when it is play-time and home-time. More-able children know the correct sequence of the days of the week. While doing the weatherboard in the mornings, the teachers ask such questions as, 'If today is Wednesday, what day was yesterday?'

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

72. In all nursery and reception classes, children make satisfactory progress. They learn to take care of the world around them by taking turns as monitors to tidy up the classrooms. The children use their developing oral skills to talk about their work. More-able children talk about where they live and their families. The children begin to be aware of the changing seasons. Children in the reception classes are learning about cold and hot countries and are able to show on the map of the world where they are likely to be. They are looking at the North Pole and in both classes their role play area is a cold shelter. They know that when it is very cold you need to put on more clothes to keep warm. They know and understand such words as 'snow storm', 'iceberg', 'igloo' and that polar bears have very thick fur to keep them warm. In one of the reception classes, the teacher had brought in some ice cubes and asked the children what they thought might happen if they were left on a dish in the classroom. One child said 'They would get smaller', the teacher allowed them to touch the ice cubes and asked what did they feel like. Many children said they felt cold or wet while others suggested they were 'little icebergs'. Through the use of computers, they begin to be aware of the use of technology. Many can use the mouse to access programs. They enjoy painting pictures on the computer. Children begin to gain understanding of forces by experimenting with sand. However, while the children in the nursery gain experience of force as they push the pedals of their large, wheeled toys, the reception children do not have this opportunity.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

73. Children's achievement in the nursery classes is satisfactory for their physical development. The achievement for children in the reception classes is unsatisfactory, as they do not have the opportunity to use an outside play area to develop their large motor-control. However, most children's fine motor control is sound. They show good control of their pencils when writing their letters and numbers. For less-able children and a minority of older children this is barely satisfactory. The children develop control in drawing, painting, modelling with play dough, cutting, by using the mouse and small construction apparatus. Children use scissors, glue, paint and pencils with increasing skill. There is a small outside play area for the nursery children, which is fenced, and the children have the opportunity to play with large wheeled toys and these activities extend their physical development. The children were observed during outside activities and they showed good balance when riding the large wheeled toys. The school hall has equipment for indoor physical activities. In one of the lessons observed, the children were moving like a snowflake. The teacher demonstrated what it would be like to walk in deep snow and the children made a good attempt to do the same. In the other lesson, children were asked how they thought they could move as an icicle melting. In both lessons the teachers chose children to demonstrate good practice. Also in both lessons, the teachers emphasised the need for warm up and cool down exercises and why it was so important to do so. There was also emphasis on the need for safety and children were reminded when travelling around the hall to be aware of other children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

74. In all Foundation Stage classes, children's achievement in creative development is good. Effective teaching ensures that children soon learn to control mark-making tools, such as brushes and pencils. Children's attainment exceeds that expected for this age. There are good opportunities provided to promote the children's development in this area of learning. The children enjoy exploring with water, paint and sand. They show increasing dexterity when they model dough by rolling, pulling and squeezing. The children enjoy role-play and use the time well in specific role-play areas in the classrooms, for example, in the nursery, the children enjoy being 'Percy', in the Park Keeper's Hut. In the reception classes, the children

take great delight in going on an expedition to the North Pole. They enjoy singing and sing in tune together. They understand that different instruments make different sounds. They develop good work routines, for example, they put aprons on without being reminded before they paint or play with the water. The children imaginatively explore colour, sound and texture. The majority of children know the names of the primary colours.

ENGLISH

75. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils attain average standards in English. For pupils across the school, standards in reading are similar to those seen nationally. In writing, those for pupils of seven are below those expected, but they are average for eleven-year-olds. The difference in standards of written work between pupils of seven and eleven is mainly due to the differences in teachers' expectations. The oldest pupils in the school are well-motivated and expected to produce work of a high standard, and they respond well to the challenges they are set. Standards in speaking and listening are good in both key stages. Overall, pupils' achievement is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1.

76. Standards in reading and writing appear to have declined since the last inspection, when those for seven-year-olds were in line with the national average, and those for eleven-year-olds above the national expectations. Trends in standards are not easy to interpret because of the considerable variations in the overall ability of pupils from year to year. The school's denominational foundation means that pupils are drawn from a wide and changing area, which goes some way to explain this variation. The evidence of this inspection indicates that standards in reading across the school are largely similar to those suggested by last year's SAT results. Standards in writing are beginning to improve significantly, especially among pupils in Year 5 and 6. This is because the school has acted on the need to raise writing standards. It has gathered more detailed information about the learning needs of its pupils and adjusted teaching to meet them. This has had the greatest impact in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are carefully grouped according to their needs. In particular, teachers have raised their expectations for their pupils' achievements. This is particularly noticeable in most of the Year 3 and 4 classes and among pupils in Years 5 and 6, but is less marked in Year 2. Standards in writing across the school are still rising, and the full impact of these improvements on pupils' learning has not yet been realised. Over the last three years, the performance of boys in Key Stage 2 SATs has been significantly less than girls. Through suitable choice of context for reading and lessons, there is no discernable difference between the performance of boys and girls across the school.

77. Pupils between the ages of five and seven are systematically taught the reading and writing skills they need. They make better progress in reading than writing because the skills of reading are thoroughly practised at home and at school. Also, teachers have a clear understanding of what their pupils may attain by the age of seven. Many pupils attain the expected standards in writing, but those of greater aptitude and ability do not make the progress expected. They are not challenged sufficiently to produce work of consistently high quality, and attainment varies from one piece of work to the next. Between seven and eleven, pupils make sound progress in their reading, but achieve increasingly good progress in their acquisition of writing skills where the school has concentrated its priorities on raising standards. The most rapid progress is evident among ten-year-olds and eleven-year-olds, where expectations are at their highest, and where teaching is constantly focused on raising the standard of pupils' work. Across the school, those with special educational needs make good progress when they are well supported by learning support assistants. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make progress similar to that of others in their class.

78. Pupils in every class make good progress in speaking, so that standards are above those expected nationally by the time they leave the school. The good practices of

encouraging pupils to speak confidently that are established at the Foundation Stage are continued as pupils move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 2 explain their opinions when required to do so, while those in Year 6 begin to clarify and enlarge on ideas that they put forward. Pupils are given sufficient time to speak at length when they need to do so, and are given good opportunities for speaking to a wider audience in assemblies or through drama. However, there is scope to extend opportunities for older pupils to justify or defend an argument through debate. In most lessons, teachers create an unhurried atmosphere in which the contributions of all are respected, often employing open-ended questioning that does not anticipate the length and nature of pupils' responses.

79. Standards in listening across the school are good at both key stages. Teachers expect pupils to listen carefully when they are speaking, establishing a calm working atmosphere in which concentration and attentiveness are fostered. Because the contribution of each pupil is valued, they listen in turn carefully to each other when working in pairs or groups. Pupils respect the opinion of each other and modify their own views or work in the light of what others say. In many lessons, pupils exchange views on an idea put forward by the teacher. This makes a positive impact on pupils' understanding and the quality of their learning. Teachers often develop pupils' listening skills well by varying the inflection of their voice to evoke an atmosphere of mystery or excitement. For example, in one very good lesson the teacher read a short story in a voice matching the suspense of the plot. This prompted the pupils to capture the mood he had created in their subsequent writing. Pupils also listen very well in school assemblies, and their response contributes significantly to the atmosphere being created.

80. Across the school, standards in reading are average. Pupils in Year 1 build satisfactorily on the skills they have acquired in the Foundation Stage. They understand that letters represent particular spoken sounds when they are either written alone or in combination. They begin to build up an appropriate sight vocabulary of common words that do not conform to regular spelling patterns. By Year 2, a number of pupils are beginning to gain pleasure from books. They are no longer focusing on individual words, but are moving their eye along the page, deriving meaning from whole sentences. Younger pupils are well supported in their efforts in learning to read, both at school and at home, with the result that they are well motivated to make progress. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils continue to make sound progress in their acquisition of reading skills. By the time they leave the school, many read fluently from a range of texts, make predictions on the development of a plot, or offer reasoned comment on its characters. The support that pupils receive diminishes as they move through the school, so that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are rarely heard to read from a library book they have chosen for themselves. As a result, teachers' understanding of the progress in reading these older pupils are making is not as well-informed as it might be. Furthermore, these pupils are not sufficiently guided in their choice of fiction, so their experience of a wide range of authors may be limited. Those with special educational needs are generally well supported and monitored as they make progress in their reading.

81. Standards in writing are below average for pupils aged seven, but are at least average among eleven-year-olds. While very few examples of above-average writing was noted in Year 2, a much higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 were attaining standards above those expected, and most made good progress. Pupils in Year 1 write captions to explain what is happening in a picture; many are beginning to sequence ideas and develop a growing awareness of audience. For example, they understand that a story or narration needs to have a beginning, middle and end. In Year 2, many pupils recount simple stories or describe imagined or real events. A number demarcate sentences correctly, but very few do this with consistent accuracy. Progress in writing for these pupils is unsatisfactory, overall, because not enough is expected of them, especially of those with greater ability. Too often, pupils do not apply consistently their knowledge of capital letters and full stops in their work. This is

because marking is not rigorous enough and pupils are not given sufficient guidance to improve. Between Year 3 and Year 6, pupils of different ability make increasingly good progress in their writing. A small number of nine-year-olds are already achieving writing standards close to those expected at the age of eleven. The most rapid progress is achieved in Years 5 and 6. This is because, after careful assessment, pupils are carefully grouped according to their learning needs. As a result, teachers match closely the tasks they set to the particular requirements of their pupils. The high expectations they have for them are frequently realised. Across the school, those with special educational needs make good progress in their writing when they are supported by learning support assistants.

82. Pupils in both key stages make sound progress in learning to spell. As they learn to read, good principles for remembering the patterns of sounds in words are established in Years 1 and 2. These pupils become progressively more familiar with many of the common rules of spelling, and of notable exceptions. Progress in handwriting and presentation across the school is less consistent. For example, by Year 6, many pupils write in a neat, cursive script while others continue to print, a few holding a pen or pencil in an inappropriate grip. The principles that pupils learn for uniform, legible handwriting are not sufficiently practised or applied across the school. The English co-ordinator is aware that improvements are necessary in this aspect of the curriculum.

83. The teaching of English in Years 1 and 2 over time is sound. The teaching of basic skills in speaking, listening and reading is thorough and often good, but expectations for pupils' achievements in writing are not always high enough. The teaching observed in lessons during the inspection was consistently good. Lessons were well planned and structured, so that teachers had sufficient time at the end of lessons to remind pupils of what they had learned. Work is often well matched to pupils' learning needs, although work is occasionally based on grammatical exercises that have limited relevance for improving the fluency and accuracy of their writing. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is uniformly good. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils' achievements, especially in Years 5 and 6, and work is closely matched to pupils' different learning needs. Teachers use questioning well, frequently offering pupils opportunities to discuss their work in pairs, and drawing appropriate conclusions from their responses. For example, in one very good lesson, the teacher grouped pupils in a variety of ways for the different literacy activities she had planned. The explanations given were very clear and the work prepared for the respective groups closely matched the relevant learning objectives. Across the school, teachers generally monitor well their pupils' progress in the course of the lesson. On a small minority of occasions they become too involved in the work of one or two groups, and are unaware until later of the difficulties pupils encounter. At the end of each lesson, teachers draw pupils together, effectively summarising their learning and sometimes building anticipation for future work. In many lessons, teachers make good use of this opportunity by encouraging pupils to share their work. Pupils of lower ability, or those who are reluctant speakers, are targeted as the first to contribute. In all lessons, teachers use such strategies well to ensure that all pupils are included in the lesson. Learning support assistants are effective in their work, especially when pupils are working independently. Their skilful use of questioning makes a very positive impact on the learning of the pupils for whom they are responsible.

84. With the exception of handwriting, all aspects of the English curriculum are taught in sufficient detail. The national guidance for teaching literacy is generally applied well across the school. Writing is sometimes used effectively to support learning in other subjects, such as science, but it is underused in geography, where average-attaining and higher-attaining pupils have insufficient opportunities to record what they know and understand. Pupils sometimes use the computer skilfully to present their work. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to develop their research skills, for example by using the library for independent enquiry. The school employs rigorous systems for measuring the attainment

and progress of individual pupils, and teachers use well the information they collect to plan future learning. However, the school could do more to monitor the reading habits and progress of its older pupils. The English co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths in the subject and of the direction of future developments, and is conscientious in monitoring the curriculum and pupils' work, offering advice to colleagues where appropriate. Resources for the subject are generally good. There is a wide range of books in each classroom and pupils regularly choose books from the library. However, there are insufficient stocks of non-fiction books in some subjects, and as a whole for younger pupils. Drama is often used to enhance the curriculum, and visiting troupes sometimes share their expertise with pupils.

MATHEMATICS

85. In the last inspection, standards in mathematics were judged to be above the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now at the national average at the end of Year 2 and above by the end of Year 6.

86. The 2002 SATs for seven-year-olds and for eleven-year-olds show a similar performance to inspection evidence. For seven-year-olds the 2002 SAT results were in line with all and similar schools nationally. The performance of boys and girls was similar. The results for eleven-year-olds were the school's best results for the past five years. The school's attainment, both at the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5, was above all and similar schools nationally. The target set with the local education authority was slightly exceeded. Girls performed better than boys, which goes against the national trend. Assessment records indicate that this difference in performance is narrowing as the rate of boys' progress improves. Overall, pupils make good progress and towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make very good progress. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and good when they are given individual support either by the teacher or learning support assistant.

87. The recent improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 has been gained through a concentrated endeavour by all staff. In particular, the school has effectively implemented the National Numeracy Strategy together with a commercial mathematics scheme. A rigorous analysis of test results has been conducted to identify pupils' strengths and areas of weakness. The school has effectively used pupils' attainment to form ability groups in Years 5 and 6. A series of support programmes has been taught to enable pupils to reach the appropriate expected level and extension programmes are used to challenge more-able pupils. The senior management team have established a programme of lesson observations and sampling pupils' work. This has resulted in a more consistently good quality of provision.

88. By the age of seven, most pupils can read, write and orders numbers to 100 and a few more-able pupils much further. In three-digit numbers, they know the value of each digit. They are confident in counting forward and backward in ones and tens. They present numbers in figures and words and know and understand the terms of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Most see the links between addition and subtraction and between multiplication and division. They know that halving is the opposite of doubling. They correctly add single digits to double digits numbers and make given amounts of money up to a pound. Most pupils know their multiplication tables of two, five and ten. They understand odd and even numbers and explain why a number is either odd or even, explaining that even numbers always end in two, four, six, eight or zero. They are developing a good understanding of fractions, for example colouring a half and a quarter of a shape. Pupils name and give descriptions of a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, such as hexagon, square, octagon, triangle, cubes and cuboids. They measure items around them to the nearest centimetre. Their response to mental calculations is improving as a result of mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of the lessons.

89. By the age of 11, pupils extend their knowledge of number, measurement and shape and begin to develop good data handling skills. Many pupils use a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately. They have a sound understanding of the relationships between the operations. Lower-attaining pupils use smaller numbers. Higher-attaining pupils have good mental arithmetic skills and use a variety of methods to solve problems. They explain clearly and correctly their preferred method. Most pupils understand number sequences including square and triangular numbers. They work accurately with factors, prime numbers and positive and negative numbers. They understand the equivalence of fractions and add, subtract, multiply and divide decimals to two decimal places accurately. Many pupils read and accurately plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. They classify a variety of quadrilaterals and can calculate the perimeter and area. They collect and represent data in different ways and use this information to solve problems.

90. Teachers' planning takes account of the different abilities within the class, and for the most part pupils are sufficiently challenged. In Years 5 and 6, the grouping of pupils by ability rather than age is having a beneficial effect on standards through accurately matching suitable work to their ability. When pupils with special educational needs are supported in class, by learning support assistants or helpers, they make good progress. At times, this is not the case and they tend to struggle with completing the task and their progress slows. Appropriate emphasis is placed on number work and this is having a good effect on standards. Other aspects of mathematics are taught and pupils use their knowledge of number to help solve their investigations. The good contribution made by the learning support assistants is greatly valued by the teachers. There was little evidence that computers are used extensively to support mathematics, for example in producing pie charts and graphs.

91. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Particular strengths in teaching are the thorough planning with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teaching is clear and well structured so that all pupils understand. There is a brisk pace to the introduction and this is continued throughout the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to try and find different ways of calculating. All pupils are included, challenged and involved in the activities. Good attention is given to the use of correct mathematical vocabulary. Teachers provide good opportunities for speaking and listening. Learning support assistants are effective in promoting pupils' progress and deployed well. The relationships between pupils and staff are very good and lead to a very purposeful working atmosphere.

92. Where some or all of these positive aspects are present, pupils enjoy their work, try hard, and make good progress. Even within otherwise satisfactory lessons, there are some elements that need improvement. They include, ensuring that pupils' prior attainment is used appropriately to determine the level of tasks set. Also to make sure that all groups are kept on task and not left to cope on their own for too long without the help of the teacher or learning support assistant. The school's homework policy is not being fully implemented.

93. Pupils are frequently encouraged to work in pairs or groups. This is proving very beneficial in developing their understanding of mathematical concepts. In addition, it makes a good contribution to their social development. Pupils help one another and share equipment. They are often required to work on their own while the teacher concentrates on a particular group. This too is beneficial and this contributes to their personal development. Pupils are aware of the patterns and symbols in mathematics and contributes to their spiritual awareness.

94. Numeracy is used well in other subjects. For example, a variety of measurements are made in science, involving time, distance and weight, during experiments. Pupils use measurements when making articles in design and technology. In history, pupils use four-digit numbers when looking at time-lines.

95. Leadership and management in the subject are sound. The co-ordinator has been in post for one year. The policy for mathematics was written in September last year. It is based on the National Numeracy Strategy, but includes information from the commercial scheme the school uses. This ensures complete coverage of the National Curriculum for mathematics. The co-ordinator has attended training sessions to support her role and is currently attending a management course being run by the local education authority. Assessment procedures are good and are used to positive effect to set targets and plan future work. The school uses statutory and non-statutory test materials on a regular basis, the results being used to track pupils' progress from year to year. Each year the subject is allocated a capitation allowance which is spent in line with the identified items in the school improvement plan. Links with parents have improved since the last inspection. The school held two numeracy workshops for parents last year, which were supported by the Education Action Zone consultant together with the co-ordinator and other members of staff. Annual reports to parents are good and include comments on how their children are progressing and identifies targets for future learning. Resources were satisfactory at the last inspection, they are now good.

SCIENCE

96. In comparison with all and similar schools, the school's 2002 SAT average points score for eleven-year-olds was broadly in line with the national average. There has been a steady improvement in these results since 1999, when results were well below average. The proportion of eleven-year-olds attaining the expected Level 4 was well above average but there was a lack of performance at the higher Level 5. Teachers' assessment of seven-year-olds in 2002, judged standards to be in the lowest five per cent of schools across the county. The school has realised that this is an unrealistic outcome and seriously under-evaluated pupils' performance. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the time pupils are seven and eleven, they attain standards which are similar to the national average and their achievement is satisfactory. Attainment and progress for pupils who use English as an additional language is similar to other pupils of the same age. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

97. Pupils in the Year 1 class have a very good understanding of the concept of an electrical circuit. This high standard is achieved through the excellent use of analogy and imagination by the teacher. Pupils consider an electrical circuit as a mouse [electricity] wanting to go round a one-way pathway. Cheese is the light bulb. A cat waits by any possible break in the pathway / circuit and the mouse can only move forwards. Inspiring ideas! Pupils in all Year 1 and 2 classes set up simple, safe electrical circuits. Their understanding of the concept of an electrical circuit is satisfactory in classes with older pupils. When pupils get a bulb to light for the first time, the room goes particularly quiet and pupils experience a sense of wonder. In all Key Stage 1 classes, pupils know the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise. They use a given table to record the number of times they can carry out different activities, such as clapping or hopping, in a set time. They know the benefits and dangers of medicines and electricity. Their understanding of the wide range of plants and animals is enhanced by visits to historic parkland and a residential centre. Whilst pupils carry out experimental work purposefully, they are not sufficiently involved in investigative work. For example, in their study of forces and movement they do not make use of questions, carry out experimental work to gather data and then study the data to find answers to their questions. There is a need to improve the quality of presentation of pupils' recorded work.

98. In Year 3 and 4, pupils extend their studies about keeping themselves healthy. They make good use of appropriate, simple categories of different foods and relate this to their activity and growth. Their use of more demanding concepts, such as proteins and

carbohydrates, is confused. They study the human skeleton in detail and write accurately about what they know. This richness of this writing varies significantly from class to class. The function and development of human teeth are known but the dentition of different animals is not compared. Pupils make good comparisons of different skeletons, such as those of humans, fish and dogs. To give greater background to their studies, pupils use reference books to copy out facts about relevant topics, such as vertebrates. In addition, they discuss questions relating to bone length, consider what makes a fair test which they carefully carry out. In comparing the forearm length of pupils in the class they measure carefully. They appreciate that the measurements cannot be precise and round their measurements to the nearest centimetre. In this practical activity, pupils with identified special educational needs in mathematics cope very well. More-able pupils accurately record their results in tables they draw themselves and less-able pupils appropriately complete given tables. Pupils have a good understanding of the scale need for their bar charts. This is because the teacher makes good use of the overhead projector to show graphs of different scales. Pupils transfer the data from their tables to bar charts with great care. Time is wasted as the more-able pupils do not use squared paper. Colouring-in the charts with thick crayon leads to lack of precision in the completed graph.

99. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 extend the theme of healthy living. More-able pupils make correct use of more demanding technical terms, such as fibre and vitamin, to describe a balanced diet. The effect of exercise on the muscles of the body is suitably known by pupils' comment such as, 'muscles get tired'. The fact that the heart functions as a muscle and its role in blood circulation in the human body are well established. Graphs of heartbeat and exercise over different times are accurately interpreted. The benefits and disadvantages of drugs are studied. The dangers of smoking are covered through a survey of adults which brings very powerful responses. Technical terms, such as evaporation and condensation, are correctly applied to the water cycle. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding of forces by using force-meters and considering balanced forces. The effect of forces due to gravity and air resistance is investigated by timing the fall of differently weighted paper spinners. Whilst pupils are developing satisfactory investigative skills they are not being systematically developed. Their strategies do not always lead from an investigable question through the necessary processes to reach a conclusion which is valid against the results they obtain. The time spent on their investigative work can be very limited.

100. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. There are examples of very good teaching in both key stages. Teachers make very good and occasionally excellent use of literacy to explain concepts and tease out appropriate words for pupils. The correct use of terminology is encouraged. For example, a pupil described gravity as something which 'pulls us to the centre of the Earth'. Whilst welcoming the pupils' response, the teacher made the statement more precise by stating 'gravity pulls us towards the centre of the Earth'. Pupils work is regularly marked but does not always point the way for pupils to improve. There are better examples on constructive marking at the end of Key Stage 2. All teachers use learning objectives for a lesson and share these with pupils, so they know where their learning should take them. The quality of these objectives ranges from the very precise and easy to understand to over-long and involved objectives. The presentation of these objectives also varies from putting them on a rather cluttered white board in a pale ink, to boldly written on a cleaned white board. The teaching of investigative skills is in need of rationalisation. The time given and the approach to a whole investigation needs to be sufficient for pupils to raise an investigable question, identify and handle variables to make a fair test and then record, present and interpret their work. Additionally, the use of squared or grid paper should be more fully considered when pupils construct graphs. There are instances where pupils' time is spent drawing outline grids rather than making use of printed ones. For example, pupils had a working grasp of decimals, stating '4.8 is 0.2 less than 5', but the dimensions of squares on the given grid paper were not suited to apply this knowledge. Pupils always try their best,

behave well and enjoy their work, particularly when teaching is good or better. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. Teaching time is used efficiently and learning support assistants give good support.

101. The curriculum for the subject is appropriate and suitably reviewed. Assessment procedures to gauge pupils attainment at the end of a topic make appropriate use of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. This information is used well to modify future curriculum planning in the light of whole-class outcomes. It also provides a useful data bank for writing end-of-year progress reports on individual pupils. The use of assessment to influence what is taught during a topic is not consistently developed. The school is aware of the positive role of marking pupils' work against the relevant learning objectives and the use of plenary sessions to steer the best curriculum path during, and not just at the end, of a topic of work. The science co-ordinators provide purposeful leadership. They know what is needed to improve provision and are making a positive difference. Resources are sufficient to teach the planned curriculum and are well organised. The use of information and communication technology is under-developed, particularly in the production of graphs and sensing physical data.

ART AND DESIGN

102. Pupils' standards by the age of seven and eleven are average for their age. Standards at the last inspection for both of these years were described as above average. Since then pupils' ability to use the visual elements of colour line and tone in the styles of the work of major artists has not been maintained. They have difficulty in talking about the differences and similarities in the work of artists in different times and cultures. Their work in three dimensions and use of a sufficiently wide range of media, including the use of information and communication technology is under-developed. The use of sketchbooks has improved since the last inspection. Current strengths throughout the school are pupils' ability to explore and develop ideas for designs and drawing techniques. Generally, pupils of different abilities make satisfactory progress.

103. By the age of seven pupils draw detailed portraits. They select appropriate shades of pastels and pencils to draw from photographs of landscapes. They confidently explain how they could improve their line-work. Pupils use sketches of natural objects made from first-hand observations in the school grounds to create attractive pictures and collage. They describe what they enjoy about the quality of a leaf collage and how it makes them feel. They skilfully colour wash to change the tone of a blue sky and represent winter trees with torn black paper. When working with fabric they extend their vocabulary in naming and writing adjectives to describe the texture of the fabrics. Pupils are reliant on the class teacher to cut fabrics into their chosen shapes or simplify their designs since the pupils' scissors are blunt. They have a satisfactory understanding of the purposes of craftwork from discussing the school millennium banner. They are beginning to relate natural patterns to those used by William Morris. There is a very little evidence of a similar quality of work in one class because of staff changes.

104. By the age of eleven, pupils make good progress in drawing techniques and make better use of sketchbooks than at the previous inspection. They explore different ways of representing shadow, light and movement in their drawing. Their drawings in pastel, pencil and charcoal pay good attention to shape and use light and shadow well to give a three dimensional effect. They appropriately use grouped objects and photographs to produce their work. They succeed in representing *People in Action* by smudging to create the effect of movement. Pupils' knowledge of how other artists such as Lowry and Matisse represent moving people is gained from lessons in dance. In Year 3 and Year 4, pupils use a good

range of techniques to produce displays of colourful prints using overprinting to produce repeated patterns.

105. The quality of observed teaching was good overall. Teaching focuses very effectively on the core skills of designing and drawing so pupils learning is good in these aspects of art. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and offer clear explanations so that pupils settle to work with enthusiasm. High quality teaching assessed pupils' progress during the lesson to provide very effective support for individual pupils. Questioning helped pupils to clarify their ideas. Sufficient time was allocated for pupils to evaluate their work with a partner. Because of the very good relationships and the fact that pupils know that their ideas are valued, pupils reflect upon their work and are confident in expressing their views and ideas. Opportunities for pupils to learn colour mixing to express emotions and mood through a sufficient breadth of experience are missed. At times, the pace of the lesson was slow and pupils' interest waned. There was a negative effect on learning when a pupil, with special educational needs, found difficulty in concentrating and distracted the rest of the class. Generally in lessons pupils persevere with their work and support each other well in paired and group work.

106. The curriculum has recently been revised. There are aspects where there is an over emphasis on designing for a purpose which limits opportunities for pupils to use art as a way of expressing their emotions. The subject fails to include enough focus on cultures other than western European and different time periods. Assessment procedures are good and used to inform teaching. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory but co-ordinators are not involved enough in monitoring pupils' standards. Parents are very supportive in lending books to supplement the school's reference books about other artists. The school is under-resourced for fabrics so that teachers bring their own. Information and communication technology software is not sufficiently included to bring pupils in line with current national expectations in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Design and technology is taught in blocked periods of time during each term at both key stages and was not taught during the inspection. Inspection evidence was drawn from the scrutiny of the limited amount of pupils' recorded work, discussions with teachers and with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, displays around the school, teaching plans and photographic evidence. Attainment and achievement are satisfactory in both key stages. At the last inspection, progress was judged to be good and standards were above expectations.

108. Year 2 pupils have a good recall of the work they did in Year 1. They recognise the design and make components of the subject: 'We have to design and then we do the technology'. Pupils define designing as 'drawing and thinking' and technology is 'the making bit'. They remember making toys using split pins so that a teddy bear or fish could be made to move and also wheeled vehicles when 'some of them moved when we pushed them'. They have sampled the texture and taste of different fruits and considered how to make them into a fruit salad. During the term previous to the inspection, pupils visited a playground and made observations to give ideas for their own playground project. Through this visit they gained a good understanding of the properties and uses of different materials. For example, they state that glass is not a suitable material for a playhouse because it might break and produce sharp, dangerous pieces. They consider cardboard as an alternative but, with prompting, decide it will not be much use if it rains. Plastic is decided upon as the best material because it can be soft and will not go soggy in the rain. Strong structures have been considered, such as triangle and 'X' shapes. There is very limited evidence of completed models.

109. Year 3 and 4 have listed the resources needed to make a 'monster' with parts made to move by the use of balloons and syringes. They have written step-by-step instructions on how to make the model and the descriptions for the finish and final appearance are considered well. They have evaluated their model, although the term 'evaluate' is not used, with comments mainly relating to the finish of the model rather than its functional parts. Year 6 pupils recall making different types of bread. They know the basic rules of health and safety, technical terms, such as kneading, and the general function of yeast. They use the word 'cam' in the context of moving toys they have made after looking at 'old-fashioned' toys. They have visited a fairground to study the different rides, but not used information and communication technology or simple electrical circuits to make their own working models. During the term previous to the inspection, Years 5 and 6 pupils made musical instruments. A good range of finished products shows a great deal of thought has gone into the design and making of these instruments. One class has produced a very good 'personal diary' of how they made their instrument. This diary serves as instructions for another person to follow.

110. Pupils of all ages respond enthusiastically when talking about their work. They use a variety of methods for recording their work. This recorded work is not stored systematically so it is difficult for pupils, teachers and others to easily see evidence of progression. Different formats of prompt sheets are used for pupils to record their work. None of these formats gives pupils full access to the processes of the subject. Space for pupils to describe at appropriate length is restricted at times. Assessment procedures follow Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. Teachers use the assessment information to improve the curriculum and produce useful reports for parents on their children's progress. The curriculum is based on Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance and the Design and Technology Advisor's group, the subject co-ordinators selecting appropriate sections for study. Resources for the subject are sufficient to teach the planned curriculum. The system for the purchase of consumables and local bargains for the subject are not clearly established. The use of information and communication technology is not sufficiently used in designing and making. Monitoring of pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of teaching is only carried out on an informal basis.

GEOGRAPHY

111. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one geography lesson, but an analysis of work, discussions with pupils and an examination of planning indicate that pupils attain standards firmly at the expected level by the age of seven. However, standards at the age of eleven are below those expected nationally, and pupils therefore make unsatisfactory progress overall as they move through Key Stage 2. The reason for this is that the work offered to older pupils is too superficial and does not always challenge them sufficiently. In particular, higher-attaining pupils are not given adequate opportunities to record their knowledge in enough detail, nor to employ enquiry skills to explore geographical features for themselves. Standards in the subject are not as high as they were at the last inspection.

112. By the age of seven, pupils have made sound progress. They develop an increasing awareness of the features of their own environment and begin to understand how they may differ from those of other children's environment. For example, they know that villages, towns and cities differ in size, and compare features of the life of a child on a Scottish island with their own. Pupils of greater aptitude and ability not only describe these differences, but offer simple explanations for them. For example, they understand that amenities in remote places are likely to be fewer, and transport more difficult. Pupils know the purpose of a map, and draw plans indicating features of the school's locality. Pupils express a limited understanding of relative distance, knowing, for example, that Birmingham is nearer to their homes than London, and that France is nearer than Australia.

113. Between the ages of seven and nine, pupils continue to make sound progress. They examine in sufficient detail some of the environmental issues associated with litter and consider the social and moral implications of abandoning rubbish. They write imaginary persuasive letters of information and complaint to those in authority, and consider aspects of recycling. Most of this work is at least of satisfactory standard, and some is of good quality where pupils have been encouraged to explore issues for themselves. Between the ages of nine and eleven, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Much of the work is of a superficial nature. For example, pupils draw a diagram of the water cycle or plot areas of high and low rainfall on maps of the world, but most of this work is without explanation and some is unfinished. Pupils of higher and average attainment in particular are not offered sufficient opportunities to demonstrate what they know and understand. They have insufficient opportunity to practise the geographical skills they need, such as using maps of varying scales or employing sources of secondary information such as books and photographs. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils, and do well when they are supported by learning support assistants.

114. As only one lesson was observed, no overall judgement may be made on the quality of teaching and learning, but it is possible to draw some conclusions from the evidence gathered. Teachers of pupils between five and seven display sufficient knowledge of the subject, allowing enough time for pupils to ask questions to clarify their learning, and to record what they know and understand. Basic skills are generally taught thoroughly, so that pupils build up a good understanding of the similarities and differences between different locations and learn the value of maps in representing geographical information. Teachers of pupils between seven and eleven display equally sound knowledge of their subject, but sometimes fail to exploit fully the good opportunities for learning that they create. For example, they do not allow pupils sufficient time to explore a theme at the depth at which they are capable. They do not expect pupils to use their developing writing skills to record their findings or to pursue their own lines of enquiry. Sometimes, teachers give too little time to the subject because they are working under the constraints of tight time-tabling. In the lesson seen, for example, the teacher had created very good opportunities for learning by planning and resourcing a potentially very good lesson, but had to hurry the explanations she offered because of the lack of time. Pupils interviewed displayed an interest and enthusiasm for the subject, those in Year 2 especially demonstrating a good understanding of what they had been learning.

115. The geography curriculum is sufficiently broad, but the depth of learning shown by older pupils is not sufficient. The two-year rolling programme of study allows for geography to be omitted from the curriculum for a term at a time, and this means that skills such as map-reading or collecting evidence and drawing conclusions are not taught with sufficient frequency. The two co-ordinators work well together, but do not have their roles separately defined. Recently appointed, they are gaining in knowledge and experience, but have not monitored the quality of teaching or learning. However, samples of work have been collected from most classes, and resources have been purchased to support teachers in planning their work. Assessment procedures are realistic; these permit teachers to identify those pupils doing well and those needing further support. Resources for the subject are just sufficient. However, there are not enough atlases for use at Key Stage 1 and too few opportunities for pupils to acquire information using information and communication technology. Residential visits, for pupils at both key stages, are used effectively to support the curriculum.

HISTORY

116. Standards for pupils at the age of seven and eleven are average for their age. Standards at the last inspection for both of these years were described as above average.

Pupils' achievement across the school is satisfactory. During the inspection, no lessons were taught in Key Stage 2 because of timetable arrangements. In Key Stage 2, standards were judged from inspecting pupils' written work, from discussion with pupils, by looking at teachers' planning and the school's assessments of pupils learning. Pupils are not taught history on a frequent basis, which limits the historical enquiry skills of pupils, particularly in Year 6. It becomes difficult for them to compare and make links between past societies and the wider world because of the time gaps in their studies.

117. By the age of seven, pupils develop a sense of the passing of time by comparing their own toys with toys of earlier generations. They also order their family into respective generations. During lessons about the Fire of London, teachers arouse pupils' interest with 'eye witness' accounts such as that written in Samuel Pepys' diary and paintings by contemporary artists. Several pupils discuss the event at home with their parents and grandparents and enthusiastically offer ideas in class discussions. Higher-attaining pupils clearly describe in detail how the fire started and how it was stopped. Teachers appropriately vary activities to maintain the attention of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils correctly recognise that the fire spread quickly because dwellings at that time were timber and close together and understand how frightened the people must have been.

118. By the age of eleven most pupils have a good understanding about the different social conditions in which people lived during the reign of Queen Victoria. They discuss reforms made at that time which affect the lives of children today. All pupils follow the same lines of enquiry and this limits the attainment of higher-attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils write about the Victorians in more detail and use a broad vocabulary. Pupils of all abilities gather information from a variety of sources, including information and communication technology, which they structure well. Pupils correctly explain the first-hand and secondary evidence available that they and others have used to answer questions about the past.

119. Because, overall, the quality of teaching in lessons observed in Key Stage 1 was good, pupils' learning was good. Pupils with special educational needs found difficulty in concentrating on a detailed picture. In one class, the special educational needs pupils were involved in role play, which improved their interest and understanding. Pupils are helped by illustrations to sequence their own written accounts of events. In one class, teaching extended pupils' learning by providing the opportunity for pupils to visually express the event in an art lesson. In an otherwise satisfactory lesson, the quality of the teacher's questioning did not encourage pupils to answer in sentences and one word answers were accepted too readily. Several pupils in this class have special educational needs in speech and language. No history lessons were taught in Key Stage 2. Written work from the previous term shows that the unit of work has been covered. Pupils have had opportunities to discuss and appropriately write in their own words. However in teachers' marking of pupils' work, insufficient use is made of comments to extend pupils' ideas and lead them into further independent research.

120. In common with other foundation subjects, there is a team of two co-ordinators for the subject. The co-ordinators have successfully invited in visitors to the school to enrich pupils' learning, for example about Tudor times. The co-ordinators plan to improve the range of visits to museums, books and artefacts available in the school and the use of information and communication technology for research. Resources for history are similar to the previous inspection, which noted a limited range of artefacts and CD-ROMs. The lack of artefacts limits the quality of learning, especially for those with special educational needs, to observe and investigate artefacts for themselves. Whilst use is made of information and communication technology, it has not sufficiently impacted on pupils' ability to find, compare and present relevant evidence. Information books about the units selected for history in the

library are insufficient for pupils to develop their skills in locating, questioning and selecting information as part of their independent research.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. The standards of work among pupils of both seven and eleven are average when compared with those expected nationally. Pupils make sound progress in the subject overall, and the rate of progress is even as they move through the school. At the age of eleven, pupils attain good standards in the use of spreadsheets and word-processing skills, but currently have little practice in exploring control technology or in sensing physical data. No meaningful comparison may be made between standards seen in this inspection and those obtaining at the last, because new facilities for teaching the subject have only very recently been opened, and the school is in the process of installing new applications compatible with them.

122. By the age of seven, pupils use arrow keys to move the position of the cursor in a word-processing application. When given the choice, about three-quarters of pupils prefer this method of changing its position to using the mouse, although they are aware of both options. Pupils know how to change the appearance of text by using different styles and size of font. They accurately use the return and shift keys to create verse from a sequence of running text. They understand the principle of organising and finding stored files, and save their work either to a new or to an existing folder. They print their work without prompting, and know how to close an application. Many are beginning to understand a variety of applications of information and communication technology, for example using their word-processing skills to create name tags. Pupils also create simple bar-graphs and pie-charts on which they represent information they have collected.

123. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils further develop and practise appropriate skills. By the age of nine, for example, pupils begin to understand the principles of devising and refining sequences of instructions that enable them to find information in a data-base. A few pupils write simple programs that satisfy criteria that they themselves devise. By eleven, pupils become proficient in manipulating the mouse to access and modify information or displays using tool buttons or dragging techniques. For example, they modify column widths on a spreadsheet and change cell size to accommodate the information they wish to include. Almost all successfully use a spreadsheet application to calculate costs and totals for simulated practical activities devised by the teacher. Pupils with special education needs are generally well supported and make progress similar to that of others in each class.

124. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and four-fifths of the lessons seen were judged to be good or better. Teachers across the school have good subject knowledge. Teachers have worked hard to familiarise themselves with the new computer suite that opened a few weeks prior to the inspection. Pupils also have adjusted well to this new learning environment. Several teachers are making good use of the new interactive whiteboard in the suite. This is used to effectively clarify explanations and to demonstrate techniques. This saves much laborious repetition of instructions and ensures that learning proceeds at a good pace. Teachers manage lessons well, monitoring pupils' progress in the tasks they have set and ensuring that those in difficulty do not have to wait too long for assistance. Nevertheless, the timetabled thirty-minute lessons do not always give pupils sufficient time to complete their work, and some very good learning opportunities are therefore missed. Pupils respond well to their teachers, listening carefully to instructions, discussing their work sensibly in pairs or threes, and sharing equipment without fuss. In most lessons, teachers summarise pupils' learning well in whole-class discussion, sometimes encouraging pupils to show or explain the outcomes of their work. This good practice is again often curtailed because of lack of time. Teachers organise learning well, pupils know in advance where they are to sit and with whom they are to work. This ensures that time is well

used because pupils move smoothly from one activity to the next with the minimum of interruption.

125. The curriculum is changing and developing in response to the new facilities at the school's disposal. Currently, it is too narrow because many of the applications the school previously employed have not yet been adapted to the newly-installed systems. At Key Stage 2, the school does not meet statutory requirements in teaching control technology or in offering pupils experience of sensing systems. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who both currently co-ordinate the subject, are well aware of these shortcomings. They provide very good leadership. They provide staff with good training and support to ensuring that they are well versed in managing the new facilities. Assessment procedures are sound, providing teachers with a satisfactory understanding of the broad levels of achievement of their pupils. The time allocated for each lesson in the computer suite is inadequate and the school should take steps to extend the thirty-minute sessions it currently allows. Through its word-processing applications, information and communication technology is used soundly to support pupils' work in English. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is under-developed. Resources overall are good. The very new facilities are excellent, but their use is limited by the range of software yet available.

MUSIC

126. Pupils' standards by the age of seven are average and by the age of eleven they are above average, particularly in singing and appraising performance. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop a richness in their voices and sing clearly and expressively in response to the mood of the music. Their standards are average in composing. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were based mainly upon singing and in this aspect standards have been maintained. Musical performances make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development. In Year 2, pupils recognise that sounds can be represented by symbols and respond well with appropriate percussion instruments to pitch or to maintain a pulse. By Year 4, pupils begin to combine the playing of percussion instruments as an 'ostinato' overlaid with groups playing different melodic rhythms. Pupils listen well and carefully evaluate the combinations of melodic phrases and changes in volume. Pupils gain an increasing musical vocabulary and use this when describing their work. Pupils at the end of Year 6 plan their own notation to blend with a song, for example shaking a tambourine to complement the word 'bells' in a song.

127. Teaching and learning in music lessons is good for seven-year-olds and very good for eleven-year-olds. Small groups of pupils are taught by a specialist teacher in extra-curricular violin and recorder lessons. In an excellent lesson, pupils' voices benefited from instrumental music learned by a group in extra-curricular time. Percussion groups took cues from the expression in pupils' voices. Pupils in all classes pay full attention and collaborate well in groups. They respond very well to teachers' expectations and make decisions about how they will present their compositions or combine different instruments. Teachers' questioning effectively extends and helps pupils clarify their ideas and observations when appraising music. Teachers make constructive comments and give praise for points of development which enable pupils to improve their performance. Teachers in the school have very good expertise in the teaching of singing and in ensuring that pupils learn about relationships between sounds and how music is used for different intentions. More use could be made of the expertise of the visiting specialist to introduce classes of pupils to notation. Teaching makes good use of recorded music of different genres to motivate pupils and increase enjoyment. Music from other cultures is used to illustrate the celebration of religious festivals of main world faiths as well as their own.

128. The two co-ordinators of the subject are recently appointed and keen to develop expertise in the subject. The school implements the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority curriculum guidance successfully and carefully assesses pupils' achievements at the end of taught units. Pupils have very good opportunities for extra-curricular lessons for violin, flute, recorder and choir. They make a significant contribution to church celebrations, assemblies and plays and productions in school. The school combines with the secondary school for a carol service and with orchestras from other schools. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and their cultural development in their love of music. The co-ordinators are correct in identifying the need for a wider range of resources. The school has few instruments from other times and cultures. Planning for pupils to use keyboards and information and communication technology are areas for further development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. In the previous report attainment was judged to be at national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in this inspection are judged to be at national expectations for pupils aged seven and above for pupils aged 11. Standards have been maintained at Key Stage 1 and improved at Key Stage 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. During the inspection, lessons were observed in dance. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers' planning for the subject ensures that there is good attention to all aspects of the curriculum throughout the year. By the age of 11, all pupils meet the national expectations of being able to swim 25 metres unaided.

130. Pupils aged seven work enthusiastically and move with increasing control, for example through actions involving running, jumping, landing and balancing. In response to good teaching, they plan and perform movements safely. They practise and improve their individual and group performance, repeating previously performed series of movements with increasing imagination and control. Teachers give good coaching points to help pupils improve. This results in pupils appraising their own and others' dance sequences and making necessary improvements. Thus they know the importance of planning and evaluating their group movements. At times, groups have difficulty in organising themselves and planning their group sequences. This results in too much discussion and not enough planning. A few pupils need to develop a greater awareness of the space around them.

131. By the time they are 11, pupils build on their previous work well and show a good awareness of effective use of space. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This means pupils achieve well in dance because they are taught skills and techniques systematically. This was well illustrated in a Year 5 and 6 class, when pupils were spinning and rotating in high and low movements. The teacher had inspired the pupils by discussing and exploring the elements of movement in the paintings by Lowry. In an excellent lesson, groups of Year 5 pupils were presented with different prints of the work of Hundertwasser. The teacher asked the pupils to look at the shapes, levels and pathways that are suggested within the pictures. The groups discussed, organised and negotiated how they were to interpret the elements of movement from the pictures to their dance sequences. The teacher asked very pertinent questions to push their ideas to the limits, always seeking improvement. In both lessons, the teachers' own demonstrations motivated pupils to copy and helped produce dance sequences of very good quality.

132. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. In the three Year 5 and 6 classes teaching is very good and at times excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned, with teachers leading pupils in a sustained and rigorous warm-up. Expectations are high especially in Key Stage 2, with the result that pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. Teachers explain tasks clearly and constantly support and encourage pupils, particularly in

improving individual skills and techniques. Teachers use questions, such as 'How can you improve?' and 'What can you do to make it better?' to develop pupils' skills. In all lessons observed, teachers observed safety rules and insisted that no jewellery was worn and long hair was tied back. They explained very clearly the need for warm-up and cool-down exercises. Pupils really enjoy their lessons. No time is wasted through repeated instructions and lessons flow at a brisk pace. This holds pupils' interest and ensures activity is rigorous. Pupils are suitably breathless at times.

133. The subject is led very effectively by the two co-ordinators. The schemes of work have been suitably developed in order to ensure progression in pupils' learning. The school uses a commercial scheme for Key Stages 1 and 2 in gymnastics and games and for dance at Key Stage 1. The scheme from a nearby local education authority is used at Key Stage 2. Assessment procedures are good and uses the school's 'All/Some/Few' sheets to record pupils' achievements. Annual reports to parents provides achievements throughout the year and how well their children are progressing. Time allocation to the subject is appropriate. However, lessons that are only timetabled for half-an-hour do not give sufficient time for physical exercises. For example, the pupils get changed as quickly as they possibly can, they then have to move from their classrooms to the hall and take their footwear off before they can begin their lessons and repeat this at the end. This leaves at the very most only twenty minutes for pupils' physical exercises including warm-up and cool down sessions. This lack of time impedes pupils' progress. The pupils are fortunate in having the opportunity to attend many lunch-time and after-school activities such as soccer coaching, football for boys and girls, hockey, cross-country running, cricket, mini-tennis, netball and rugby. About half the Key Stage 1 pupils also go on an overnight visit to a residential centre and Key Stage 2 pupils stay at an outdoor pursuit centre. Resources are good.