

INSPECTION REPORT

THE PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Shirebrook, Mansfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112682

Headteacher: Mr Steven Hewitt-Richards

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland

4483

Dates of inspection: June 16th – 18th 2003

Inspection number: 247258

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Orchard Close Park Road Shirebrook Mansfield
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Fowles
Date of previous inspection:	13 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Music Religious education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32367	Joanna Pike	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
30691	Kathleen Yates	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Educational inclusion	How well are pupils taught?
30144	Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
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?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Park Junior School has 261 pupils on roll and is oversubscribed. It is larger than the average primary school. The school has not identified any pupils for whom English is an additional language. It shares its site with the infant school, from which most of its pupils transfer. The school is located in a former mining area where there are unfavourable socio-economic conditions and significant unemployment. Approximately a third of its pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure significantly higher than the national average. The number of pupils on the school's list of special educational needs is below the national average at 18 per cent. The number of pupils receiving specialist outside help or who are in receipt of statements of special educational need is high, at over double the national average. Many of these pupils have a wide range of difficulties including specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, moderate learning difficulties and autism. Attainment on entry to the school has historically been well below average with very few pupils in the higher-attaining bracket. Last year, however, attainment on entry was slightly improved. There is little movement of pupils transferring in or out other than at the normal points. The school has very recently been awarded the Basic Skills Kite Mark and also has the Healthy School Award. The school is part of the North East Derbyshire Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which has many strong features and is improving rapidly. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are below average, pupils achieve well across the curriculum, which supports their learning very well. Teaching and learning are good. The school is outstandingly well led and effectively managed. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, given their low starting points;
- Good teaching leads to good learning throughout the school;
- There is a very positive atmosphere which promotes a strong sense of community and belonging;
- The very good curriculum supports learning effectively;
- There is outstandingly good leadership with good support from the governing body.

What could be improved

- Standards are below national averages in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design;
- Pupils' reports to parents do not contain enough information on progress;
- Attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, despite a fall in standards in some areas. Much of this has been due to changes in management. The situation is now stable and although standards are rising, they have not yet risen to the national average. In other areas, standards have improved significantly in music, with pupils reaching higher standards than expected by the end of Year 6. In ICT, standards are not yet up to national averages, but plans have been put in place, which the school hopes will address this issue fully. There has been a very good level of improvement in the work done by subject leaders. Planning for teaching and the curriculum is good and has improved well. Links with the infant school have been strengthened and governors are now far more involved in helping the school to improve. The school is in a very strong position to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	D	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	D	C	
science	E	D	E	E	

Standards were well below averages in the Year 2002 national tests in English and science for pupils in Year 6. Standards were below average in mathematics. Over the last three years, there has been little improvement in standards in the national tests, except in mathematics. Inspectors, looking at pupils' work and observing lessons for the current Year 6, judged that standards had improved this year and are below average in all three subjects. In ICT and art and design, standards are also below average. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, their attainment levels are generally well below average. This means that their achievement over time is now good. In music, standards are above average, and pupils achieve very well. In all other subjects, standards are average, which represents good achievement.

Historically, higher-attaining pupils, and especially boys, have not achieved as well as they should. The school has now put a great deal of effort into improving this, and it is meeting with considerable success. These pupils are now doing as well as can be expected. Lower-attaining pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, are making good progress and achieve well overall. The school has reviewed its targets in English and mathematics upwards this year in order to set realistic and high challenges for pupils. Inspectors judged these targets to be fair and accurate and the school is on course to meet them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils love their school, want to learn and are keen to do well. Pupils love the opportunities they are given to take risks when offering solutions to questions when they are not always sure of the answer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There have been three exclusions earlier in the year for extremely unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils take responsibilities on board in a mature way and they get on very well with each other and the adults in the school.
Attendance	Poor – well below the national average. This has an adverse effect on learning for a few pupils who have erratic attendance. There are still too many pupils arriving late in the morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching and learning are good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There are some examples of very good teaching, where teachers prepare detailed and interesting lessons, challenge all the pupils in the class effectively, and make learning fun.

Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are good. The school has paid good attention to the National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy, and standards are beginning to rise as a result. Teachers have a very consistent approach when they plan their lessons and ensure that all pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and why. In all lessons, there are plentiful opportunities for pupils to work in small groups when undertaking discussions or investigations. Pupils find this fun, and it leads to more motivation and better creativity. Pupils with special educational needs learn well and their achievements are good. Many have difficulty with literacy, but very good precise targets help them to progress towards their goals effectively. Teachers now plan effectively to challenge the high-attaining pupils, and more exciting and work requiring deeper thought has now been put in place.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The broad and balanced curriculum has been made exciting for pupils who learn well as a result. The curriculum is enhanced very well by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, residential and other visits and visitors coming in.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are given good support and their individual education plans are very good. As a result, pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school places great emphasis on its motto of 'PRIDE' which focuses pupils' attention forcibly on their achievements and aspirations. Pupils are provided with very good role models through the adults in school and a firm set of principles within the school community. Learning is greatly enhanced as a result.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The child protection procedures are very good and there is good attention paid to health and safety issues. Assessment is good across the school and helps to raise standards effectively.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Good. The school is working hard with its parents, who have a very positive view of the school, and especially of the head teacher. Pupils' annual reports do not currently give sufficient detail on progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher has a very clear vision for the school and is an outstanding role model for staff and pupils. His vision is shared by his deputy, staff and governors, all of whom are working extremely hard to raise standards and improve educational provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are becoming far more involved with the school and are now forging stronger links with the staff. Their knowledge and understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement are very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has a very honest and realistic view of itself. There are very good strategies in place to keep this under review.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are targeted effectively to produce best results. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Learning resources are good and are used well to promote learning. Governors and staff have a very good appreciation of getting the best value for money. The school benefits from good stable staffing.

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 new leadership and management. • Teaching, which is good and challenging. • Behaviour, which is also good. • The values and attitudes promoted by the school which help children to become mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Information on progress. • Higher attainers doing better.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Homework was judged to be satisfactory overall, in terms of both quality and quantity. Inspectors agreed with parents that there is currently insufficient information on progress in the pupils' reports. The higher-attaining pupils are now being catered for far better, and the work they are being given helps to stretch them in a challenging manner.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- **Standards are below average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and ICT. These standards, apart from ICT, have fallen since the previous inspection. Standards in music are above average, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in all other subjects are broadly average, and this is a similar pattern to the previous inspection. Despite this, given the low starting point of pupils on entry, overall achievement in all subjects is at least good.**
1. Strengths include:

Pupils achieve well. Pupils enter the school with standards that have generally been well below average year on year. Only a very small proportion starts Year 3 with above average levels. For many, in the region of two-thirds, standards are well below expected levels. This is especially the case in English. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils have achieved good progress overall. Results in the national tests have shown at least satisfactory progress in recent years. This year, inspectors noted some better achievement, especially in English and science. Standards in mathematics were judged to be very similar to the previous year, but with good achievement over four years. Pupils achieve well because teachers ensure that basic skills are learnt effectively. There is good emphasis on writing, and this is now being extended across the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils improve their mental agility and produce good work in number and calculations. Good emphasis is placed on experiments in science, so that pupils learn basic scientific principles well. In music, pupils achieve very well. They rapidly gain a deeper understanding of technical terms and learn to read music when playing keyboards and the recorder. Their singing by Year 6 is above average. In all other subjects, except ICT, pupils also achieve well. They learn basic facts in history, for instance, and how to read maps in geography. They improve their skills in observational drawing in art and design, and in design and technology they learn the whole design process effectively. Their skills and stamina in physical education develop effectively from Year 3 onwards.
 2. **There has been good improvement this year in the progress made by higher-attaining pupils and by boys.** The results of the national tests in 2002 showed that boys were underachieving, especially in writing. The school had only a very small percentage of its pupils gaining better than expected results in the national tests, a point of concern expressed by parents. Inspectors judged that for the current Year 6, and for other pupils in the school, boys' standards had improved due to the hard work put in by teaching staff and senior management. Central to this improvement was the notion of 'pride', which many boys found hard to accept. By establishing a climate where success was seen as good, the attainment of boys has risen as they are now keen to do well, and are less concerned about peer image. Although there is still some way to go to reach national averages, there is now very little difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Similarly, higher attainers have been given a boost. Teachers have been shown how to challenge their thinking and performance. Staff plan better more challenging work for them right across the curriculum. This has resulted in an improvement in their performance in lessons. It is still early days, however, and the current Year 6 who have benefited from such challenges for a short time are just beginning to improve. Inspectors judged that improvements elsewhere were taking

place rapidly, and they fully support the school in its thinking that greater exposure to better challenges is likely to be more beneficial in the longer term.

3. **Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.** The school has not yet identified any pupils who are gifted or talented. Those who have been identified with other special educational needs are very well supported and guided. The school has a wide range of pupils with varying special educational needs. These include pupils who find it almost impossible to concentrate for short periods, pupils who are very easily distracted, pupils with specific learning difficulties and those who behave inappropriately. Strategies are fully in place to cater for all these needs. Staff plan well with learning support assistants who play a vital role when taking these pupils out of lessons for short periods of focused learning. The individual education plans are of very good quality and enable pupils to take short secure steps towards their goals. In lessons where the whole class is taught together, teachers plan very effectively to ensure that work is not too easy or too hard. As a result, these pupils are challenged effectively, work more consistently and make good progress towards their targets.
4. **Targets set by the school are honest and realistic.** The school has worked hard to analyse the last set of national test results, and uses this and other information from its assessment of pupils to set realistic targets. The governors' targets in mathematics and English for the current Year 6 have been revised upwards to provide challenge and to be realistic. Inspectors judged that the school is on course to achieve these.
5. Areas for improvement:
Standards are still too low in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art and design. The school has recognised this in its development planning and is already working hard to improve pupils' performances. Strategies have been introduced to identify exactly where the weaknesses are, and staff are now tackling many of these areas. In English, better opportunities are being provided for speaking and listening, since many pupils do not speak clearly enough. By introducing the concept of 'taking a risk', many more pupils are now willing to answer questions in assembly or in the classroom, providing them with better chances to practise speaking. In both mathematics and science, pupils' work in investigation is the weakest. Staff are beginning to focus more on this aspect in their planning. In ICT, the lack of good learning facilities has hampered progress in this area. The school hopes that the introduction of a new computer suite in the autumn will help to rectify this. In art and design, inspectors found that painting and mixing of colours was an area in need of improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- **Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and their enthusiasm makes a significant contribution to the good learning that takes place. Behaviour is very good. Pupils' personal development is very good; they are willing and proud to take responsibility, and enjoy very good relationships with other pupils and with staff. Attendance is poor.**
6. The main strengths are:
Pupils' very positive attitudes to work and their enthusiasm for school help them to achieve well. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work willingly and with enthusiasm, trying hard in lessons to achieve their best. They are interested in their work and settle quickly to activities. This helps them to learn well and make good progress in most lessons. Pupils in all years respond very well to the good teaching they receive. They are interested and involved in their work and take a pride in their

achievements. They concentrate well and work hard. Pupils work very well independently, either on their own or in small groups, so that the teacher is able to provide individual attention to others. In particular, those who have achieved “student status” enjoy the many opportunities this brings to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning, for example by doing extra work at lunchtime or by using the computers. The clubs and activities provided outside lessons are popular and well attended because they provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their skills or learn new ones.

7. **Pupils behave very well, which helps to ensure that they learn well.** Pupils understand the school rules and almost always choose to comply with them. This means that teachers rarely have to use lesson time to deal with unacceptable behaviour, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are able to learn in a purposeful learning environment. When someone’s behaviour is unacceptable this is dealt with firmly but fairly and he or she is helped to understand why the actions were wrong and how they affected others. This means that pupils learn to be responsible for their own behaviour, developing a growing and mature understanding of the effects of their actions on other people. This ensures that bullying incidents are rare. In half of the lessons seen during the inspection behaviour was very good and it was good in most of the others. Around the school and in the playground behaviour is very good. Pupils play very well together and are careful to include others in their games and conversations.
8. **Pupils’ personal development is very good and they form very good relationships with one another and with staff.** Pupils throughout the school enjoy and take pride in the many opportunities they are offered to take responsibility. In particular, the school council is a very democratic body that gives pupils the opportunity to improve the school. Councillors take their responsibilities seriously and are proud of their achievements, such as the range of play equipment for use at lunchtime and the healthy tuck shop. Some Year 6 pupils run the tuck shop, which provides healthy snacks. They have to apply for the job and are interviewed before being appointed. Others are trained to act as mediators, sorting out disputes between pupils very sensibly. In the classroom, pupils join in activities and discussions confidently because their classmates listen respectfully. The ethos of the school supports the concept of ‘taking a risk’ and pupils are willing to try, even when they are unsure about the answer. Pupils’ self-esteem is very well fostered by all staff. This caring attitude helps to ensure that the quality of relationships throughout the school is consistently very good. Pupils like to work with others. They take very good care of equipment and share it sensibly. Their pride in the school is evident through the respect they show for the buildings, equipment and the outside environment. One boy expressed the view that the site needed a strong fence in order to stop vandalism out of school hours.
9. There is one area in need of improvement:
Attendance is well below the national average. Attendance is poor and has fallen since the time of the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. A significant amount of absence is due to illness but many parents choose to take their child out of school for a holiday. The disruption in the learning of these pupils affects the progress they make. Despite the school’s efforts, attendance in the current year is slightly lower than in 2001-2002, although there is now no unauthorised absence. Too many pupils arrive late in the mornings.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. **Overall, teaching and learning are good throughout the school.** Twenty-one per cent of lessons were judged as very good, fifty per cent judged as good, twenty-five per cent judged as satisfactory and four per cent were unsatisfactory. Classes are very well managed and well structured, with many good opportunities for investigative work. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and the support assistants play an important role in helping pupils with learning difficulties to improve their performance, especially in reading, writing, speaking and numeracy. Progress is good towards the carefully and well-written targets on the individual education plans. Teaching is good in ICT. Pupils are learning basic skills in ICT but their progress is hindered by the current lack of an ICT suite. Teachers have high expectations of good self-discipline and most pupils demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for learning. Very good teaching occurs when learning challenges are high and the work is very closely matched to each pupil's needs. In these instances, learning is accelerated and the lessons progress at a more rapid pace. Teaching is good in most other subjects, including science. Satisfactory teaching of geography, with some good features, leads to adequate learning taking place.
11. Strengths in the teaching and learning include:
Planning is now detailed and caters very well for the needs of all pupils. This represents a major improvement since the last inspection. At the start of lessons all pupils are made aware of what they should learn and why; appropriate tasks are set for the varying levels of pupils' ability and an interesting array of resources is usually available to make their learning enjoyable. This occurs in all subjects throughout the school. There are good strategies in place for extending the knowledge and understanding of the higher-attaining pupils as well as providing for those who have learning difficulties.
12. **Classes are very well managed and well structured, with many good opportunities for investigative work.** Teachers plan lessons to include a wide range of learning strategies, to help meet the varying needs appropriately. Good quality questioning at the start of lessons ensures that teachers know that all pupils understand their learning targets. Throughout the school, there is a good balance between investigating, listening, watching and practical activities. In a Year 3 class, the impact of seeing, feeling and weighing pumice helped to consolidate understanding of permeability and texture of rocks. In Year 6, pupils carry out fair tests and answer probing questions and demonstrate their knowledge of filtering to solve problems encountered in industry.
13. **Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good** and support assistants play a vital role in helping pupils with learning difficulties to improve their performance, especially in reading, writing, speaking and numeracy. Progress is good towards the carefully and well-written targets on the individual education plans. Small groups work very successfully with support assistants under the direction of the teacher. Pupils are forced to think and, as a result, have improved chances of remembering next time, given that their retention skills are poor. Good use is made of available space to teach small groups who learn better in a smaller, more productive environment.
14. **Teaching methods are very effective.** All teachers insist on all pupils' full participation in 'active listening' so that the lessons move on at a brisk pace. Activities are well structured with a good balance between teacher direction and pupil participation. Tasks have purpose and sensible time limits are set. Pupils are well used to these routines and the pace of learning is thus enhanced. In the best lessons,

teachers prepare very well for pupils' learning and are rewarded by the eagerness with which pupils engage in learning. Teachers and assistants ask questions which probe pupils' level of understanding well and thereby identify areas for further development. Pupils enjoy the challenge of 'taking a risk' when responding to questions and this raises their self-esteem and helps teachers to extend their knowledge.

15. **Teachers have high expectations of good self-discipline.** Generally pupils listen well and follow instructions effectively. They share equipment fairly in mathematics, music and science lessons; they are eager to talk to visitors about their learning and do so in a controlled and polite manner. The good behaviour in lessons and sense of good discipline that pupils carry with them are instrumental in raising the rates of learning.
16. **Teachers have good subject knowledge.** Teachers work hard to share their knowledge with pupils. In a Year 5 science lesson language levels were raised as pupils learnt new technical terms such as 'stamen, stigma, carpel and style', essential to understanding the functions of reproduction in flowers. In religious education, staff cover six major world religions with confidence, focusing very well on subject specific technical language, with pupils learning a wider vocabulary as a result.
17. An area for improvement is:
Sometimes, there is insufficient detail and preparation in planning for lessons. On the rare occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, resources are inadequately prepared and activities lack sufficient challenge, leading to pupils making unsatisfactory progress in their learning.

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

- **Overall the curricular provision for pupils is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in terms of planning. Pupils are offered a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.**
18. **Pupils are offered a wide and stimulating range of learning opportunities.** The school has put in place an appropriate curriculum which is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements. It has been carefully created to match the needs of its pupils, whose views have influenced its development. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' basic skills. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been very well implemented, and successful teaching approaches from these have been incorporated across the school. The school has also made very good use of local and national projects to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, such as the 'Push on Writing Project' and 'Booster' groups. These are having a positive impact on standards across the school. However, computer skills are not well developed because the school has limited resources. Additionally, the provision of art and design is unsatisfactory, with pupils having insufficient opportunities to develop and explore techniques and ideas, particularly in painting. Sex education and drugs education are fully incorporated into the broad curriculum. All activities and areas of the curriculum are readily accessible to all pupils. The planning of the curriculum is now of a very good standard. Detailed planning is in place for all subjects and ensures that learning is built up sequentially. This is an improvement since the last inspection when planning was weak. Very good attention is also paid to developing positive values and attitudes across the curriculum. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs, especially for pupils with special educational needs, and provision for gifted and talented pupils is now being developed.

19. **The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, and other enrichment opportunities.** Pupils can take part in many different activities at lunchtime and after school. These include: football, rugby, cross-country, French, guitar, choir, and 'maths monsters'. Pupils also run several activities. These include: dance, karaoke and the student club. Many pupils participate and they greatly appreciate the opportunities on offer. Additionally, pupils in Years 4 and 6 have taken part in residential trips. The school makes good use of trips and visits including visiting theatre companies and theatre visits. Pupils greatly enjoy the school discos. There are now close links with the Infant School, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school is hoping that the planned joint computer suite will further strengthen these. There are also good links with the secondary school. Year 6 pupils visited the high school for science activities. There are many good links with the local community including a local church, which Year 3 pupils visit. The reader from the church attends assemblies several times a year. The University Project is linking the school with Derby University and Year 6 will have a graduation ceremony with their parents this term.
20. **The school places a high priority on developing pupils' personal skills.** The provision for spiritual, moral, and cultural development is very good, with provision for social development being outstanding. Pupils are encouraged through the school's motto of PRIDE to develop effective personal skills. There are posters throughout the school promoting positive qualities. These include: promoting active listening, how to cope with feelings of anger or hurt, and developing confidence. The student project encourages pupils to develop good study skills, including being independent learners. Pupils eagerly work hard to gain 'student status' which allows them special privileges, such as being able to work in the 'student area' of the classroom. At break times pupils run a snack shop, further strengthening their responsibility and independence. Pupils have to apply for this responsibility. Money raised from the snack shop has been used to pay for pantomime trips for pupils and parents. Pupils' moral development is very effectively promoted by the school. All the staff who work in the school are very good role models. Adults treat pupils fairly and courteously. In lessons teachers make very good use of opportunities to show pupils how to treat others appropriately. They are quick to use praise and reward pupils.
21. **Pupils' achievements, both academic and personal, are celebrated in many ways and this helps pupils to develop very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning.** Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They receive clear guidance from the 'stop and stay cool steps' posters around the school. These provide a range of simple strategies they can use. Pupils are also empowered to take a responsible role in the school in many ways, such as the school council, and by running the snack shop and clubs. They can also call a 'circle time' to discuss particular issues. Pupils know that their views are listened to and show a good sense of responsibility. They treat the school buildings and environment with care. Pupils' spiritual development is well supported by a range of activities across the school. These include assemblies and lessons where pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on others' and their own feelings and beliefs. In a religious education lesson pupils were involved in imagining a 'safe place'. They were asked to visualise what they saw. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about other cultures in history, geography, art and design, music, and in personal and social education. There are displays around the school about other world religions, and these include attractive banners of the major world religions made by the parents of the school. Assemblies often start with pupils and staff saying good morning in different languages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- **The school is successful in providing a safe, secure and caring environment for learning. The procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid are clear and are known to all staff. The school promotes the importance of regular attendance well and monitors absence carefully. Behaviour is very well managed and the procedures to eliminate bullying and other forms of harassment are very effective. Pupils' personal development is very well supported.**
22. The main strengths are:
Pupils are able to learn well because the school provides a secure, caring environment. Pupils are confident that all staff are concerned for their welfare and that any concerns they have will be listened to and dealt with efficiently. Because of this, they are able to concentrate on their work. The purposeful, happy atmosphere contributes to their good learning and to their very good personal development. Pupils know that any unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, is not tolerated and that it is dealt with both promptly and firmly when it does occur. Pupils appreciate the help and support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants.
23. **The school has good, clearly stated procedures in place to ensure that pupils' health, safety and welfare needs are met.** Regular health and safety inspections are carried out and teachers pay very good attention to safety in lessons. Risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly. Child protection procedures comply fully with requirements and all staff are clear about their responsibilities. Arrangements for first aid are good and clear records are kept of all incidents and the action taken. The school has achieved two elements of the Healthy Schools Award and is working towards the final one. A particular feature of the school is that pupils are confident that the head teacher takes an informed personal interest in every one of them, so they are keen to approach him with any concerns they may have. As very good attention is paid to the welfare of all pupils, they feel safe in school and are able to concentrate on their work.
24. **The school promotes the importance of regular attendance well and monitors all absence closely.** Registers are well kept and office staff monitor attendance well so that there has been no unauthorised absence this year. Telephone calls are made on the first day of absence if the parents have not informed the school of the reason why their child is away. The prospectus makes the school's expectations very clear and newsletters are used to remind parents of their responsibilities. Pupils are now very keen to come to school because 'learning is fun' but many parents continue to take their children out of school for a holiday.
25. **The school has very good systems for managing pupils' behaviour so that pupils are able to focus on their work.** The school rules are clear and well understood by pupils, who know what is expected of them. They appreciate the system of certificates and praise they receive. Teachers and other staff are very skilled in managing pupils' behaviour so that those who find it difficult to sustain good behaviour are well supported. This means that inappropriate behaviour rarely disrupts others. Pupils say that teachers use the reward system fairly, so that they are encouraged to try their best. They particularly like being encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and take pride in achieving a high standard. The school aims and values, built around the word 'PRIDE', standing for perseverance,

responsibility, individuality, discovery and excellence, contribute very well to raising pupils' self-esteem and their desire to behave well. Bullying is not tolerated and some Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are trained to act as mediators should it occur. All pupils are actively encouraged to treat others with respect.

26. **The school makes good use of the information it gathers whilst carrying out its programme of regular assessments and the tracking of progress.** Through careful analysis individual needs are identified, programmes of effective support provided where necessary, and achievable targets are set for all pupils. Regular assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum is carried out and used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Statutory assessments for pupils with special educational needs are very good. A thorough tracking of progress with very good record keeping enables staff and outside agencies to make very good decisions based on a thorough knowledge of the pupils concerned. Parents are fully involved and take a strong interest in their children's progress.
27. **Pupils' personal development is very well fostered, especially through the "student project" and the very good programme of personal, health and social education.** The "student project" is set up to encourage pupils to aspire to high academic standards and independence in their learning. Students have a range of privileges such as working outside the classroom, in the library, at a computer or in the study areas, to extend their learning. They can also choose to do additional study, play challenging games or have fun at lunchtime; these activities are solely for students and are highly valued. The school has a very strong programme of personal, health and social education that prepares pupils very well for the choices they face in life. To complement this, a very wide range of opportunities is provided for pupils to take responsibility and to be active citizens in the school community. For example, they staff the office at lunchtime, run the tuck shop and some of the extra-curricular sports activities and, through the school council, are involved in decisions affecting the whole school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- **The school works hard to involve all parents in its life and work and has recently developed a strong partnership. Parents are very supportive of the school. The quality of information provided for parents is very good, with the exception of annual reports, which are not sufficiently focused on the progress the pupil has made in each subject.**
28. The main strengths are:
The school works hard to involve all parents as active partners by consulting with them over proposed changes and inviting them in to school regularly. Parents are very well informed about the school's expectations in all areas of its work. The school has successfully involved parents in consultation about changes, such as those recently made to the homework policy. Parents especially appreciate the head teacher's weekly surgery and his willingness to listen to their views. Parents are welcome in school and have contributed considerable expertise in improving the quality of the environment by painting the hall, producing splendid displays, such as the banners celebrating different religions, and planting the garden. Many parents make use of the informal opportunities they have at the start and end of the day to discuss any concerns with their child's teacher or with the head teacher. Parents have an outline of the curriculum so that they are aware of what their child is learning about. They enjoy attending the assemblies where children's work is celebrated and appreciate the open days where they can see their child's work. Meetings about

literacy and numeracy have been held and were valued by those who attended. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and involved at all stages. The school is currently working with the infant school to set up a joint parent-teacher association.

29. **Parents speak highly of the school.** Those parents who made their views known to the inspection team praised many aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate the changes made by the current head teacher, as they now feel very welcome in school and part of its life. They state that their children are very highly motivated by the rewards and praise they receive and enjoy coming. They are confident that the teaching is good and helps their children to make good progress. Parents are almost unanimous in their view that the school sets very high expectations so that children achieve their best and behave well. A number of parents told inspectors that they now took a pride in being associated with the school.
30. **The information provided by the school is of very high quality.** The prospectus, governors' annual report, newsletters and other information sent out by the school are very well presented. All the written information is free from jargon. The prospectus provides a very clear picture of the school, its aims, values and expectations. Parents have information about the curriculum and are sent a copy of the homework timetable for their child's class. Parents are fully involved with the reviews that their children with special educational needs attend.
31. There is one area in need of improvement.
Pupils' annual reports do not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils make in each subject, nor are targets set consistently to ensure that pupils improve their standards of work. Reports follow a clear format and give information about every subject. However, the current format is restricted in space so that no subject has a long comment. Teachers' comments are clear about pupils' attainment and their attitude to their work but rarely focus on the progress that has been made within each subject. In English, mathematics and science, teachers usually indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils' work but this is not a feature of other subject reports. The weaker areas are not consistently developed into clear targets for future improvement. Where targets are given, they are variable in quality. For example, an able pupil is exhorted to 'keep up the good work!' while in mathematics a pupil has the specific target of learning the two times table.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- **The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The recently appointed head teacher is an inspiration to his colleagues and pupils. His commitment, energy, vision and drive are responsible for the rapid improvements taking place within the school, building on the firm foundations left by his predecessor.**
32. Strengths include:
The head teacher and deputy are leading by example. There is a strong commitment to raising standards. The head, sharing his vision with the deputy and other senior staff, has devised a programme of improvements, which are already bearing fruit. Inspectors noted great improvements in the way that subject leaders tackled their own areas of responsibility. The senior team have trained and encouraged them to take more responsibility, to monitor their colleagues regularly and offer improvement advice, and to check on planning and pupils' work. The school motto of 'PRIDE' is reinforced by all staff regularly so that pupils, too, feel proud of their school

and take care in helping to improve. Governors have now become far more involved in linking in to staff development subject by subject, as well as investigating for themselves what the real strengths and areas for improvement are. As a result, there has been very substantial improvement in the quality of both leadership and management since the previous inspection.

33. **The work of the school is guided by very good development and improvement plans.** The school development plan is an all-embracing document with clear priorities based on raising standards and improving educational provision. Through the plan and linking strongly to it are a series of subject improvement plans. These are based on secure evidence gathered from analysing results of tests, assessing pupils realistically throughout their lessons, reviewing their own teaching and learning and other means such as auditing resources. As a result, the school is now tackling with vigour issues such as boys' underachievement and helping higher-attaining pupils to make better progress. Central to this process is the raising of self-esteem – of staff, governors and pupils. The school lives its motto – all are taking great pride in establishing and sustaining what is rapidly becoming a centre of excellence. From the start of the day, when pupils echo their motto by singing 'What have you done today to make yourself feel proud?' in assemblies, to the final sessions in the afternoon, staff and pupils work harmoniously together in a very positive and productive atmosphere. Improvements are now showing on all fronts. Standards in English and science are rising and some improvements are taking place in mathematics. Pupils achieve above average standards in music. Behaviour has improved substantially. Staff and learning support assistants have improved their practice so that much better learning is taking place in classroom and in small groups in corridors and side rooms. The school also shouts its motto and purpose, with pupils' achievements celebrated in very good quality displays throughout the building.
34. **Governors are beginning to take a more active role in supporting the school.** This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Governors have a very good overview of the school, and its strengths and areas for development. Many have discovered this first-hand, with stronger links now being maintained between subject leaders and individual governors. The work of the school, and in particular the learning by pupils, is being enhanced as a result. Governors ensure that policies are being put into practice and, in good consultation with the head teacher, they help to support new developments for the benefit of learning. All governors have clear roles, which they know and understand. All staff and governors support the central principle of raising the attainment of pupils who are provided with a fully inclusive curriculum. The management and support for pupils with special educational needs is very good, fully meeting statutory requirements and with a good link to governors. They are becoming more frequent visitors to the school. Financial responsibilities are clearly understood. The above average carry forward in the budget is clearly debated and recorded in governing body minutes. This reserve is set aside as numbers on roll have been falling, causing there to be some discussion about class sizes and resourcing levels. Other monies are spent after considering the best value for money so that pupils benefit from these decisions. Overall, the school provides good value for money. The school is well resourced generally, although the delay in acquiring a new computer suite has resulted in less than average standards being achieved by pupils in ICT. The school hopes that its forthcoming autumn venture with the infant school in sharing a new suite will rectify this problem quickly.

35. **The school has worked very closely with the Education Action Zone and has benefited from financial and other assistance.** Teachers have learnt much from seeing and sharing good practice with funding from the EAZ. The very good curriculum now includes a wide range of other activities such as clubs, visits out and visitors in, some of which have been sponsored by the EAZ. A full review is kept of progress and value for money, so that pupils' learning and wider experiences may be enhanced. Staffing levels are now stable and good. Pupils benefit from continuity with their teachers and good relationships are a hallmark of the school. Learning support assistants play a vital role in the teaching and undertake their various duties very professionally. They plan with the staff and enable pupils with all kinds of difficulties to make good progress, be it behaviour, literacy or numeracy. They support staff in the classrooms very well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to make improvements, the school should now:

- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - Raising the standard of speaking in literacy lessons and across the curriculum by providing more explicit teaching in speaking skills such as storytelling and making presentations. (paragraphs 5 and 41)
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills through problem solving and activities involving investigation. (paragraphs 5 and 45)
 - In science, developing a specific recording system to identify pupils' levels of achievement so that planning might build effectively on this. (paragraphs 5 and 51)
- (2) Raise standards in ICT by:
 - Increasing resources so that pupils can use computers more regularly. (paragraphs 5, 10, 59, 67, 71, 76 and 84)
- (3) Raise standards in art and design by;
 - Providing further opportunities for pupils to express their own techniques and ideas, especially in painting. (paragraphs 5 and 55)
- (4) Continue to work on improving the rate of attendance and punctuality in the good way already started using rewards for pupils and letters to parents. (paragraph 9)

The school has already identified points 1, 2 and 4 in its current development planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	28	14	2	0	0
Percentage	0	21	50	25	4	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 approximately two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	261
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	46

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	25	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	26
	Girls	19	17	20
	Total	39	37	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (61)	64 (48)	79 (72)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	17
	Girls	14	16	15
	Total	29	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (54)	50 (52)	55 (55)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	106	6	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	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	155	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.2
Average class size	32.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	246

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	619,434
Total expenditure	555,271
Expenditure per pupil	2,373
Balance brought forward from previous year	51,057

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	261
Number of questionnaires returned	145

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	40	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	46	1	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	42	12	7	1
The teaching is good.	57	39	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	41	17	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	50	34	12	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	64	30	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	37	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	39	11	4	8

Other issues raised by parents

- great improvements taking place since appointment of new head teacher;
- parents feel they can approach the school and are made to feel very welcome;
- things get sorted out now;
- higher attainers could do with more of a 'push'.

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

ENGLISH

- Throughout the school, standards in English seen during the inspection are below average. However, pupils achieve well, given their low starting points when they enter the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
36. Strengths include:
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.** Thorough monitoring and analysis of the subject have resulted in a detailed Literacy Action Plan to raise standards. The school has made very good use of many local and national initiatives to improve pupils' literacy. The initial focus has been on raising the achievement of boys and high-attaining pupils. The careful monitoring of these projects allows the school to make appropriate changes when necessary. The impact from these initiatives is having a positive effect. Standards seen during the inspection found no significant difference between boys and girls. The number of pupils reaching higher levels in writing is increasing, and the school's target for 2004 is likely to be met. The school has been working towards the Basic Skills Kitemark, and recently gained this earlier than expected.
37. **Assessment procedures are very good, allowing pupils' progress to be very closely tracked.** This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work, and use tests, when appropriate, to identify where pupils need to improve. This information helps teachers to target learning very effectively. Teachers' plans for lessons are good; they ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs. They structure activities very carefully to address weaknesses that they have identified through their thorough assessment. This helps all pupils, even those with special educational needs, to make good progress. Pupils' work is regularly marked. Teachers write helpful comments, so pupils can understand what they can do and where they can improve.
38. **Teaching and learning are good.** This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers know their subject well and make good use of approaches from the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons always start with teachers ensuring that pupils know what they will learn. These aims are clearly displayed for pupils to refer to during the lesson. At the end of lessons, teachers encourage pupils to share what they have learnt, and this results in pupils making good gains in their learning. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were learning about some of the elements of poetry. At the end of the lesson each group reported back to the class on what they had done. The high-attaining pupils were able to explain how different poems had different ways of using rhyme. This allowed all pupils to share and learn from each other. Effective use is made of small whiteboards on which pupils write. In a Year 5 lesson where the teacher wanted pupils to learn about using apostrophes, pupils were able to show the teacher their answers very quickly and receive immediate feedback. This led to rapid learning. As a result of teachers providing time for pupils to write longer pieces of work, pupils have good understanding of how to write a story. Their plots are well sequenced and have appropriate endings. For example, in her story about a fantastic adventure, a low-achieving Year 6 girl ended her story with, 'I knew I wasn't day dreaming by the scratch on my head'. Handwriting standards are now average across the school; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Handwriting skills are regularly taught, and pupils do other English work in their book to practise their skills. Pupils' listening skills

are good, but their speaking skills are below average. Pupils are given many opportunities to talk about their ideas or make presentations. Many pupils are reluctant and teachers successfully make use of good strategies to encourage pupils to have a go. However, pupils do not always speak clearly, and their use of vocabulary is limited. Pupils listen well; by Year 6 they are able to respond appropriately to others' ideas and views. On entry, pupils' reading is well below average. By Year 6 their reading skills are below average, showing good achievement. The school provides good support for all pupils in furthering their skills. Low-attaining pupils are given intensive support, which helps them to make good progress. High-attaining pupils in Year 6 can read a variety of texts with expression and accuracy. They can interpret deeper levels of meaning from what they read.

39. **Teachers provide a positive learning environment for pupils, which leads to pupils having very positive attitudes and behaving very well.** Classrooms have attractive and informative displays, which support pupils' literacy. These include key words and grammatical terms. There are posters encouraging pupils to listen well and to contribute orally. This results in pupils being confident to ask questions when they don't understand or where they want to find something out. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent by giving them opportunities to choose how they will tackle a piece of work. All classrooms have a comfortable and attractive 'student area' where pupils who have done well can go and work. Teachers make learning fun, and pupils are eager to contribute in lessons. Teachers are quick to give praise, and use positive ways to support pupils' behaviour. Pupils work well together, sharing their ideas. They concentrate for long periods of time.
40. An area for improvement is:
To raise the standard of speaking by providing more explicit teaching in speaking skills such as storytelling and making presentations. Although teachers currently provide opportunities for pupils to make presentations and contribute orally, they do not teach skills in speaking in a specifically structured way.

MATHEMATICS

- **Although standards are not yet at the level expected by Year 6, and are currently below the national average, the school has made significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The analysis of pupils' work shows increased progress, and assessment information gathered during the inspection indicates that the school is well on course to meet its upwardly revised target. This indicates that pupils are achieving well when compared with their starting point on entry to the school.**
41. Strengths include:
Good quality teaching and learning are at the heart of the increasing progress pupils are making. All teachers confidently use the National Numeracy Strategy, and do so with imagination to make activities both challenging and interesting for pupils. In a lesson in Year 6, this element of challenge so inspired pupils that some of them continued working through their lunch break and at home in the evening, so keen were they to complete the task. Lessons are planned very well and ensure that there is appropriate provision for the needs of pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by teaching assistants. Pupils are very well managed and enjoy good relationships with each other and the teaching staff. There is good pace to lessons, and teachers use questions effectively to assess learning. They encourage pupils to 'take a risk' in answering, and this is an effective strategy in encouraging all pupils to participate in the oral part of lessons.

42. **Good learning takes place because of the good quality of the teaching.** Pupils are well motivated, and acquire mathematical skills well because they work very hard and find the work interesting because it is matched to their level of ability. They behave well and display good levels of concentration to tasks. They develop independent and collaborative skills due the positive way they are promoted. They have frequent opportunities to engage in discussion with their partners and neighbours during oral parts of lessons.
43. **Very good leadership and management by the subject leader are having a significant impact upon the improvements in teaching and learning in mathematics.** Staff development through training in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved the quality of teaching, and through monitoring activities and the development plan many improvements have been introduced that are helping to raise standards. Good procedures for assessment and the tracking of progress have ensured that the school is able to allocate support for pupils where it is most needed, and to set achievable targets for all pupils.
44. The area for development is:
There are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills through problem solving and activities involving investigation. This is the main reason why standards are below average.

SCIENCE

- **Standards seen on inspection at the end of Year 6 are below the national average. Since the previous report the quality of teaching and learning in science has improved and all pupils now achieve well.**
45. The strengths of the subject are:
Achievement is good. Although the number of pupils in the school who reach the higher levels in national tests is lower than expected, pupils achieve well in relation to their low starting points.
46. **Planning is now detailed and caters well for the needs of all pupils.** This represents a major improvement since the last inspection. At the start of lessons all pupils are made aware of what they should learn and why; apparatus is readily to hand and pupils' enthusiasm is immediately fired. In a very good lesson in a Year 3 class, pupils begin by handling pumice, and then they feel the shape, discuss the size, texture and use of the stone: this helps them to maintain concentration and ensures a good level of involvement in lessons. Planning identifies at least three different levels of task and ensures that all pupils are well provided for. Good links are made to mathematics as pupils weigh rocks and measure amounts of water when they design and conduct a fair test to compare the permeability of rocks.
47. **Teachers are committed to promoting pupils' independent learning and investigative skills.** All teachers work hard to ensure that pupils develop good enquiry skills in science. Opportunities for independent learning are well planned for. In a Year 6 lesson, where the teaching is very good, pupils demonstrate their knowledge of filtering to solve problems encountered in industry very skilfully. In response to a letter from a research department, which asks for their help in locating the best place to build a fish farm, pupils engage industriously in a survey of different rock types: chalk, clay,

flint, limestone and millstone grit. They devise a fair test and find that chalk is a really good filter. Pupils incorporate improving writing skills into their project as they write to the research department informing them of the suitability of different rock types for providing the clearest water needed to build a fish farm. This learning links in very well with previous lessons on the water cycle and the making of a desalination plant. Less able pupils are well supported in their learning by a teaching assistant who questions them well, and pupils are able to report the systematic steps in their experiment, and confidently discuss the accuracy of the test. A visit to the nearby works to see how materials are filtered further enhances pupils' learning. All pupils are made aware of potential health hazards in that they gain an understanding that clear water is not always clean water. They know how to make the water clean enough for 'industrial use' but that this is not safe enough to drink.

48. **Teaching methods are good and often very effective.** Activities are well structured with a good balance between teacher direction and pupil participation. Tasks have purpose and sensible time limits are set. Pupils are well used to these routines and the pace of learning is thus enhanced. In the best lessons, teachers have prepared very well for pupils' learning and are rewarded by the eagerness with which pupils engage in learning.
49. **The subject leader monitors standards and teaching of science well.** This is a major improvement since the last inspection and is driving the school forward in its attempt to raise the profile of science. The subject leader has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and shares his expertise well with other staff. He observes their lessons and helps them to improve their practice to provide the best learning opportunities for pupils.
50. The area for improvement is:
There is no specific recording system to identify pupils' levels of achievement. Standards are not yet as high as they should be, and are below the national average. Although inspectors found that standards in science have risen since the national tests in 2002, they are still below average. One of the main reasons for this is that currently the assessment of pupils' work lacks a consistently structured approach. The school is beginning to trial new methods but has not yet finalised a system which all staff can use.

ART AND DESIGN

- **Standards in art are below the national average, though standards in observational drawing are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in their drawing skills. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.**
51. Strengths include:
Pupils reach standards of drawing which are in line with the national average. Pupils are given many opportunities for observational drawing, including making good use of the local community and school environment. This is an improvement since the last inspection when little use was made of the local environment. Pupils observe closely and accurately. They make good use of shape and space in their work. Although work in Year 6 sketchbooks is limited, it does show that pupils are beginning to make effective use of line and tone to represent form in their sketches from around the school. Where sketchbooks are particularly well used, such as in Year 3, pupils achieve well. At the start of the year a low-attaining pupil's work on portraits was simplistic, but recent work of figures shows effective and accurate observation. Standards in Year 6 are below average. This is a decline since the previous inspection.

Pupils in Year 6 do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills. For example, a display of pupils' work of figures copied from pictures by Vermeer and Bruegel, showed accurate observation, but poorly developed skills with colour.

52. **Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with some examples of good practice.** Teachers plan lessons very carefully, to provide pupils with structured activities which build up their skills gradually. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils were asked to make several short sketches of plants and flowers. The teacher very skilfully directed pupils to make a skeleton sketch first before adding detail. Because pupils were given the time and opportunity to practise this over four sketches, they reached average standards. High-attaining pupils reached above average standards. Pupils varied their use of line and tone to capture the form and shape of the plants. The resulting drawings were delicate and pleasing. Teachers make good use of approaches from the National Literacy Strategy. At the start of lessons pupils are made aware of what they will learn. Time is provided at the end of lessons for pupils to evaluate each other's work. This is effective in helping pupils to identify what has worked well and what has not been so successful. They are also encouraged to make connections to the work of other artists. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were developing their own landscape in the style of Lowry. During the discussion at the end, pupils were able to identify features in their own work which were in the style of Lowry, such as use of perspective, line and tone. However, pupils made only satisfactory progress because there was insufficient time for them to develop their skills.
53. **Teachers create a positive learning environment where pupils are encouraged to work hard.** Displays around the school and in classrooms are lively and informative. They show pupils that art is valued. Pupils have actively contributed to making the school attractive. They have made decorative designs on many of the windows. Hand-printed lengths of material are used to enhance many areas. Pupils are proud of their involvement in making large displays often linked to work in history, such as the Year 6 castle display. In lessons teachers use praise and humour, which pupils respond to positively. Their behaviour is always good and they persevere, even when they experience problems. Teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to develop good social skills. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were building group sculptures. The teacher had given each pupil a specific role in the group: manager, listener and recorder. This was extended further by ensuring that each pupil was given a part of the sculpture to complete. Consequently, pupils worked well together, solving some difficult problems.
54. An area for improvement is:
To raise standards by providing more opportunities for pupils to explore techniques and ideas, particularly in painting skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. This is a similar finding to the previous report. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress. Teaching and learning are good; this is an improvement on the last inspection**
55. The strengths of the subject are:
Planning for lessons is clear. Pupils know exactly what they are supposed to learn and teachers set time limits, which ensure a brisk pace for the various stages of lessons. Pupils in Year 3 gain confidence by experimenting with a plastic model prior to choosing a suitable model to make plaques and pots from clay. In their making, they explore shape and form as they manipulate materials, tools and techniques to develop

and extend their ideas for a 3-D form. They eagerly discuss the methods and approaches used in their own and others' work.

56. **Teachers promote independent learning, speaking and listening skills at every opportunity.** In a Year 6 lesson the teacher engages the pupils well in discussion as to the construction of packaging for the biscuits they have made. They confidently identify aspects of hygiene, protection and advertising as key factors to consider. One group suggests that a distinctive shape such as that of the 'Toblerone' chocolate would make their product more saleable. Pupils work very well in pairs and give due consideration to the opinion of others as they evaluate their product, and then improve their designs. Those who are less able design and make cuboids with a loose lid while the more adventurous produce more complex, conical and triangular shapes with lids that fit. Challenges set are demanding, which results in pupils being very well motivated by the task and producing work of a high standard. Pupils are duly praised for their efforts and their self-esteem is raised.
57. **Leadership and management of the subject are good.** The subject is now being carefully monitored and this is helping to raise the profile of design and technology in the school.
58. The area for improvement is:
Currently, pupils do not have sufficient access to computers. In a subject that lends itself to enhancement by new technology, very little evidence of its use was seen. The school is hoping to address this issue shortly with the inauguration of a new computer suite.

GEOGRAPHY

- **The satisfactory standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained, and by Year 6 pupils make sound progress and attain standards that are in line with the national average. There has been good improvement in the development of the subject recently, but this has not yet had time to raise standards.**
59. Strengths include:
The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. The sound subject knowledge teachers have enables them to provide a range of interesting activities to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to a satisfactory level. Teachers prepare and use resources effectively in lessons and these contribute well to pupils' learning. Good management strategies ensure that pupils remain focused and are involved in learning. The quality of relationships is very good.
60. **Pupils learn at a steady rate and show an interest in lessons.** Their social development is enhanced when they work co-operatively in pairs and small groups, sharing and discussing their tasks, preparing their presentations or working together on a computer. This is well illustrated when Year 6 pupils work together to assemble information of the effect of coastal erosion, including cracks, caves and stacks, based on their study of Flamborough Head. Pupils work enthusiastically using a good range of resources including photographs, information packs, maps, reference books and information sheets downloaded from the Internet. Pupils in Year 3 also work co-operatively and locate Shirebrook and Ashbourne on the map. They report back confidently their findings about maps and places of interest around Ashbourne.
61. **The subject leader has ensured that the geography curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities to develop learning.** The curriculum is planned to enable

pupils to have a balanced diet of local, regional and national themes, as well as the study of world environments and some physical geography. Lessons are planned to enable pupils to use skills learned in other lessons including English, mathematics and ICT. Visits support learning well. Pupils go to contrasting localities like Ashbourne, Carsington Water and Bolsover, as well as field study visits to the coast. The curriculum is well managed, and planning is monitored and reviewed in the light of evaluations. Resources are adequate but the use of ICT is currently underdeveloped. Pupils of all abilities are catered for and included in the geography curriculum.

62. Area for development:

Although the school has made considerable improvement over recent months, pupils' enquiry skills are not yet fully developed. Geographical enquiry is in place in some year groups but it is not yet fully embedded in regular practice. ICT does support this aspect to some extent but, with the small number of computers currently in classrooms, opportunities are somewhat limited.

HISTORY

- **There has been good improvement in history, much of it very recent, but it has not yet had time to reflect in higher standards. However, pupils make steady progress by Year 6 and attain at an average level.**

63. Strengths include:

Pupils make steady progress in their development of knowledge and understanding of history by Year 6. They develop a sense of time, and make comparisons of the similarities and differences between times past and present. Also, they understand the effect that being poor had upon families during the time of Queen Victoria, and how social reformers like Lord Shaftesbury improved social conditions for them. Their understanding of how inventions like electricity, railways, motor cars and medicines have improved our lives is clearly reflected in their work. Literacy skills are used well and reflect pupils' interest as they write at length on these aspects to communicate their findings.

64. **Teachers have high expectations of pupils and manage them well.** Teaching and learning are good. This results in good working relationships and ensures that pupils are well motivated, show interest and work hard in lessons. This is well illustrated in one lesson in Year 6 when pupils are given roles and responsibilities to work in mixed ability groups to collect together information on the history of Bolsover Castle. Their tasks include finding further information, designing a web page, and word-processing text. Pupils work keenly and willingly and support each other well, and are motivated by being given trust and responsibility to work unaided. This impacts positively and pupils make good progress in the lesson as a result. Elsewhere, teaching and learning are satisfactory.

65. **The subject leader's role has been developed well during the current year and this has enabled her to promote history more positively.** She has a clear vision for the future through the provision of professional development, support for her colleagues to deliver the curriculum, and to raise standards. Currently her monitoring role is identifying areas for development, and the provision of suitable resources to support pupils' learning. She has ensured that the curriculum now offers a broad range of areas of study within which to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. There is a strong emphasis on the study of local history, and good opportunities are provided for pupils to visit local places of interest including Ashbourne and Bolsover. Their own heritage is well provided for through a study of the local industry of coal mining, with

real mining artefacts to support their learning well. There is an adequate supply of good quality resources and teachers are using the Internet more to supplement these.

66. The area for development is:
Pupils are beginning to carry out aspects of historical enquiry to support their learning of history, but this work needs extending. There is insufficient focus on developing the techniques of research and enquiry from a variety of sources, including ICT, and this has hindered the raising of pupils' standards in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- **Throughout the school standards in information and communication technology are below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress, considering their low level of skills on entry. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.**
67. Strengths include:
Teachers have good knowledge of information and communication technology. Since the last inspection teachers have gained confidence in using computers. This enables them to make best use of the school's limited number of computers and to plan effective lessons, where all pupils are developing their skills. Opportunities are made in many lessons for pupils to use computers for their work. This occurs, for example, in English where they use computers for writing poems, stories and letters. Teachers know their pupils well and activities are carefully structured to match pupils' needs. Pupils' skills are built sequentially. In art and design, Year 3 pupils use a graphics program to make a simple pattern and draw portraits. In Year 6, pupils use this program to make complex repeating patterns. Across the school computers are used for a range of purposes. The requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT are now being met.
68. **Teaching and learning are good.** Teachers make good use of approaches from the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils are told what they will learn at the start of lessons, and these aims are often displayed so that pupils can refer to them during the lesson. At the end of lessons, time is used to share what has been learnt and to check pupils' understanding. Also pupils are made aware of their next lesson, helping them to understand what will follow. Teachers give clear instructions, so that pupils know what they must do, and no time is lost between different activities. Effective demonstrations are given using the interactive whiteboard. A variety of good teaching strategies are used to provide pupils with active and enjoyable learning. In a Year 4 lesson when pupils were writing a sequence of instructions to control the movement of a floor turtle, the teacher used a large floor map for pupils to demonstrate their moves. This helped her to identify pupils' misconceptions. Learning is linked to other subjects, such as Year 6's recent history study of Bolsover Castle. Pupils were asked to design a web-site for the castle. They had to use the information they had found out about the castle, and ideas they had gained from researching current web-sites to design their own. Most pupils had to plan using paper, not computers. Lack of sufficient computers limited pupils' progress. In a subsequent lesson extra computers were loaned to the school, allowing each group to have one. This led to pupils making good progress and reaching national standards. They confidently used a range of information sources for their sites, and saved their work at the end of the lesson. By Year 6, pupils know how to use computers for a range of tasks. For example, pupils know the main features of word processing and graphics programs. Middle and high- attaining pupils can write instructions to control a set of traffic lights, realising the importance of precision. However, pupils' knowledge of spreadsheets and databases is limited.

69. **Leadership and management are good.** The co-ordinator has reviewed current provision and written a very detailed action plan. The plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement and the action to be taken. This is helping the school to raise standards in information and communication technology. The school recognises that pupils lack in-depth knowledge of using computers because they do not have enough hands-on experience. Assessment procedures have recently been introduced, and this is helping teachers to track pupils' progress. Staff have received sufficient training with more planned. The co-ordinator makes time for staff to improve or develop new skills through a weekly 'drop-in' workshop session. She has very good skills in using computers and supports teachers when difficulties arise. The school also has support from a technician employed through the EAZ project.
70. An area for improvement:
To raise standards by increasing resources so that pupils can use computers more regularly. Currently, there are insufficient resources and opportunities for all pupils to gain maximum benefit from the new technology. In a number of subject areas, ICT is rarely used as a means of raising standards. The planned development of a computer suite is well in hand, and the school is planning to enhance learning across the whole curriculum as well as focusing more on learning basic skills.

MUSIC

- **Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection as it was a key issue then. Pupils achieve very well, given their starting points.**
71. Strengths include:
Teaching and learning are good and this leads to very good pupil achievement over time. Teachers are very clear with pupils in lessons about what they will learn. This sets a clear goal and agenda for learning. Staff ensure that work is matched effectively to pupils' needs, so that lower-attainers and those with special educational needs are well supported, while the higher-attaining pupils are effectively challenged. In Year 5, when composing sounds to accompany a journey into space, pupils were given ample opportunities to explore their own creativity. They collaborated very well and produced interesting and varied sounds group by group, learning effectively to use a wide range of sounds produced from the body, such as clapping, the voice or striking the hand against the table. Pupils in Year 3 have become very proficient at reading music, making good clear sounds with their recorders and are now learning to play simple musical phrases on the keyboard. This represents very good achievement since they entered the school.
72. **Teachers use resources very effectively, and match work very well to pupils' needs.** There are plenty of opportunities provided for pupils to experiment with sounds using a good range of untuned percussion instruments. Pupils enjoy these activities and treat the instruments carefully. In a Year 6 lesson on 'moods in music', pupils organised themselves very effectively within groups, and using simple scoring, produced a series of sounds to represent different moods, having first listened to Tchaikowsky's 1812 Overture. The good use of resources led to good levels of creativity and pupils learnt how to vary the sound or rhythm to create a different mood. Teachers also plan lessons so that all groups of pupils are given differing tasks. In this way, they are all suitably challenged. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 were asked to compose a phrase using a wide range of notes. This was kept simpler for lower-attaining pupils. The result was good learning by both groups, and a grasping of the important principle of a musical phrase.

73. **Standards are above average.** The good and sometimes very good teaching and learning has led to a raising of standards over time. Raising standards was a key issue at the previous inspection and this has been accomplished fully. Pupils in all years have a firm grasp of musical language, which they use accurately when answering questions. They learn to sing in rounds, using native North American songs in the process. They are competent singers in assemblies, comfortable with more traditional melodies or complex popular songs. Pupils are inventive when given opportunities to compose and they perform their compositions with confidence and pride.
74. **The subject is very well led and managed.** The subject leader has identified all the weaknesses from the previous report and tackled them with gusto. She has ensured that less confident staff are supported in their teaching. She has encouraged performance by pupils in the school setting in assemblies and in classrooms, as well as in the community. Visiting musicians have enhanced provision by giving pupils a deeper insight into singing well and playing brass instruments, for example.
75. The area for improvement:
There is currently little use made of ICT in helping pupils to learn more effectively. Although some electronic keyboards are being used effectively, there is little use of the computer as an aid to learning in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- **Standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. This is a similar finding to the previous report. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress.**
76. The strengths of the subject are:
Teaching methods are good and effective. Teachers plan lessons well, and use initial warm-up sessions effectively. They demonstrate techniques clearly in order to improve the quality of pupils' performance, and they use individual pupils well to demonstrate good practice. This ensures that pupils are beginning to learn and to develop the correct skills. For example, in a Year 3 class where many pupils display relatively poor co-ordination of throwing and catching, the less able begin to refine their moves by using the expertise of more able pupils. Teachers use praise and encouragement well, and this persuades pupils to attempt challenging tasks.
77. **Pupils have good attitudes to learning.** They are keen to participate and respectfully wait their turn. For example, in another Year 3 lesson, pupils are beginning to develop precision, speed and stamina as they work well together in small teams. They know that each individual contribution is central to the success of the team. Pupils' skills benefit from a very good variety of extra-curricular sessions and regular competitions with local schools in cross-country, cricket, football, rugby and athletics. Most pupils swim to a reasonable standard and are confident in the water. Nearly all pupils reach the required 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 visit Walesby Adventure Centre and enthusiastically participate in climbing and orienteering pursuits.
78. **The leadership and management of the subject are good.** The co-ordinator has a good grasp of how to raise standards in the subject, and the scheme of work provides a good basis for teachers' planning. Overall, the subject has good resources; apparatus and equipment are carefully used, sensibly stored and well maintained. Although the hall is somewhat small for the large numbers in classes, the extensive playing field is used at every possible opportunity.
79. The area for improvement is:

To improve the amount of indoor space available for use when weather dictates that physical education has to take place inside. Poor weather means some lessons have to be brought indoors during the summer months. Current planning is not sufficiently clear as to how to make best and most efficient use of the space available. This restricts learning when there is inclement weather.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- **Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6 where standards are average. This shows good achievement over time. Standards have been sustained since the previous inspection.**
80. Strengths:
- There is good learning taking place due to good, well-prepared lessons.** Teaching is good. Staff plan well, and deliver lessons that are relevant and stimulating. In Year 5, for example, pupils had opportunities to design Mehendi patterns as well as look at a range of artefacts of the Hindu religion. They also had the opportunity to undertake some deeper spiritual reflection through guided fantasy work, enabling them to gain deeper experiences as they imagined a journey into a place of safety and security. Pupils' work shows imaginative writing, with letters to God asking why there is so much suffering in the world. Others write about the nativity, or relate what happens during religious festivals taken from a wide range of faiths. Teachers manage their pupils very well, and ensure they have first-hand experiences whenever possible. There are visits to the local church, for instance, as well as visitors coming in to assemblies to talk about different aspects of their faith.
81. **Achievement is good over time.** Many pupils do not have a faith of their own and few regularly attend a religious service. The school ensures that pupils gain an insight into what being a member of a faith group entails. The wide-ranging syllabus helps pupils gain an insight into the faiths and customs of Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism as well as Christianity. This is good preparation for life in a multicultural society. By Year 6, pupils have developed an understanding of major festivals and customs; they know why different religions practise in different ways, and they understand some of the traditions associated with major celebrations such as marriage and Communion. Pupils respond very well in lessons, enjoy the subject and put a great deal of effort into their learning. This is helping them to gain a deeper insight into spirituality and develop a stronger moral code.
82. **There is good subject leadership.** This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The subject leader has developed a very good syllabus from the recommendations of the LEA and the locally agreed syllabus. There is a good range of teaching and learning strategies in place which are monitored regularly and improved upon. A recent audit has resulted in better resourcing for the subject, and a regular review is held of what works well and what might need amending. As a result, standards meet national expectations.
83. The area for development:
- The subject does not use ICT effectively as an aid to learning.** There are few opportunities currently planned for pupils to access web-sites and there is very little evidence in books of the use of ICT in any form. The school is aware of this and is hoping that the proposed ICT suite will present more opportunities to develop this area.