

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BRACKENSDALE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Mackworth, Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112736

Headteacher: Mr. D Hall

Reporting inspector: Mr. P. Belfield  
21661

Dates of inspection: 14 – 17 October 2002

Inspection number: 247264

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Walthamstow Drive Mackworth Derby
Postcode:	DE22 4BS
Telephone number:	01332 341171
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Appropriate authority:	Derby City Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. P. Mayall
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21661	Peter Belfield	Registered inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology History Physical Education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? – The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? Educational Inclusion
9619	Robert Miller	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	English Art Design Technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Special educational needs.
32290	Arlene Wood	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Religious Education	How high are standards? – Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
29703	Ray Barton	Team inspector		The Enhanced Resource Provision

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Brackensdale Junior School is situated on the Mackworth Estate, a suburb of the City of Derby. There are 220 pupils on roll comprising of 113 boys and 107 girls. This is smaller than most junior schools. The pupils are taught in eight classes; two classes to each year group. Almost all of the pupils are of white ethnicity and no pupils are learning English as an additional language. Twenty-eight per cent of the pupils have special educational needs which is above average. The school also has enhanced resource provision for pupils who have communication difficulties and there are currently fourteen pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs who are taught in Years 3, 4 and 5 mainly alongside the other pupils. Four other pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Thirty per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above average. The results of the national tests at age 7 shows that the attainment of most of the children on entry to the school is well below average. The school has had significant staff changes during the past two years with six teachers joining the school and five leaving. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been appointed to their posts within this period.

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

This is an improving school. There has been a substantial review of the content, organisation and planning of the curriculum. Standards in English and mathematics have been rising steadily over the past three years and the quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection. The school is led effectively and managed well. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school is well led and managed.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good. Learning support assistants are well deployed and make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The school promotes the pupils' personal, social and moral development very effectively. The pupils have good attitudes to school and they behave well.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science could be higher.
- The teachers could make better use of their ongoing assessment of the pupils' progress to plan future lessons.
- The parents could be more involved in their children's learning.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in January 1998. There is greater emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching and the pupils' learning and this has resulted in raising the pupils' levels of achievement. The assessment procedures have been revised and the pupils' progress is carefully tracked across the school. The teachers now need to make better use of the pupils' assessments to plan work that more closely matches their abilities. There is a deep commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of the curriculum and the special needs provision has been further improved. There has been a revision of curriculum planning and an appropriate amount of time is now devoted to all subjects. This has resulted in an improvement in the standards attained by the pupils in religious education, art, design and technology, history and geography. There is a clear

educational direction for the work of the school and this is shared by all of the staff and governors. The capacity for further improvement is good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	D	E	E
Mathematics	C	D	D	C
Science	C	E	E	E

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

The most recent test results in 2002 show that the pupils' performance in English and science was well below average and in mathematics it was below average when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools the pupils' performance in English and science was well below average and in mathematics it was average. The trend of improvement had been broadly in line with the national trend until 2002 when the standards fell in English and science. This was due largely to the fact that a third of the pupils in the year group had special educational needs. The school set aspirational rather than challenging targets and, hence, these were not achieved. The targets for 2003 are more realistic.

The work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are higher than last year. Although they remain below the national average in all three subjects, the pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. However, standards could be higher if the work was made sufficiently challenging for all pupils. In English, for example, the teaching needs to focus more on how to improve the pupils' writing. Although the school has introduced systems to improve standards of reading, the pupils need more help in developing their fluency and their understanding of what they read. In mathematics the pupils are taught in ability groups. This has raised standards across the school but the pupils' rate of progress could be better if the work was more closely matched to their individual needs, particularly for the more able. The very good provision for those pupils' with special educational needs including those pupils supported through the enhanced resource provision means that they make good progress and achieve well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are eager to come to school, co-operate with their teachers and other adults and concentrate and persevere with activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are familiar with and respond appropriately to the school's behaviour rules.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils help to create an orderly and caring community. The pupils are polite. They have a clear understanding of the impact of

	their actions on others. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality.

The pupils are aware of the needs of the wider community and are involved in a good range of activities which enable them to support people in the locality and charities. The members of the School Council make a significant contribution to the life of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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

The teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and know them well. Strengths in the teaching include planning and the high expectations the teachers have of behaviour and the amount of work the pupils are required to do. Support staff are very well involved in lessons and have a clear understanding of how to help the pupils. The school has satisfactory strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and in the most effective lessons the teachers used great skill and imagination to make the learning exciting and challenging. The pupils with special educational needs are taught well and their individual education plans provide a good steer to their learning.

There are, however, areas for development. The teaching meets the needs of most pupils' well, but the teachers' ongoing assessments of the pupils' work do not always result in an appropriate match of work to the pupils' abilities, particularly for the more able pupils. More effective use could be made of marking and there is a need to accelerate the pace of learning in some lessons. More could be done to encourage the pupils to read more regularly and more widely.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils are well taught, in line with the targets set out in their individual education plans. Special needs assistants are deployed effectively and provide a good blend of support and challenge to the pupils they work with.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development and good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to take on responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's procedures for child protection and welfare are satisfactory and there are effective systems in place to promote the

	pupils' attendance, good behaviour and well-being. The assessment of the pupils is satisfactory, but better use could be made of the information to plan work for the more able pupils.
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The school has satisfactory links with parents although the level of participation by parents in the daily life of the school is limited. The school needs to improve further the links that it has with parents, particularly in developing the parents' involvement in their children's learning.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher manages the school well and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The priority given to monitoring and supporting teaching and learning has had a positive impact on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are fully committed to improving the school and are appropriately involved in shaping its future direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, senior staff and governors evaluate the school's performance effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The time, money, people and specific grants are used effectively and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's evaluation of its performance has resulted in appropriate action being taken to raise standards and to improve the quality of education provided. The co-ordination of subjects by key staff has been effective in identifying priorities for development. The governors are committed and keen for the school to do well, but need to do more in monitoring the outcomes of their spending decisions. The accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value to all areas of expenditure.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• The progress that their children make.</li> <li>• The standards of behaviour.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and to try their best.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• The good teaching.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities provided outside of lessons.</li> <li>• How well parents are informed about the progress their children are making.</li> <li>• The school working more closely with them.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse all of the positive views expressed by the parents. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The parents are provided with a satisfactory level of information about their children's progress but they could be more involved in contributing to their learning.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The trend in the national tests results for Year 6 pupils has been one of steady improvement since the last inspection. They fell in the most recent tests in 2002 due to the high percentage of pupils in the year group who had special educational needs. The inspection findings confirm that the standards in English, mathematics and science in the current Year 6 have improved this year, but they are still below the national average in all three subjects. The pupils enter the school with well below average attainment. Although they make satisfactory progress overall, if there was a greater level of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils, then standards could be higher. The school is tracking the pupils' progress carefully but there is a need to make better and more regular use of assessment information to set more challenging targets for those pupils of average and higher ability.
2. The pupils enter the school with well below average standards in their speaking and listening skills. They make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6, the pupils' listening skills are good. Their speaking skills are below average and the pupils find it very difficult to use Standard English in formal situations. Much is done to improve the pupils' performance and teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop spoken language in, for example, circle time, in literacy lessons and in class assemblies. The pupils' ideas and opinions are listened to and valued by the adults working with them.
3. Reading standards are below average by the end of Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school but they could do better. The school has put in place an action plan to improve both the pupils' fluency and comprehension skills and more opportunities are being provided for group and individual reading sessions. These measures are beginning to have some impact. A home-school reading diary system has been introduced and is working well for some pupils. Overall, however, the checking of the pupils' reading both in school and at home varies from class to class and, at times, it is not done well enough. More could be done to harness the support of parents in reading at home with their children and in providing more information to the pupils about how they can improve their reading.
4. Standards in writing by the end of Year 6 are below the national average. However, the pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils can express themselves in their writing using simple and more complex sentences and can write in a variety of styles. They are confident in their use of adjectives to help them write more interesting sentences and older pupils fully understand the use of adverbs. Average and less able pupils struggle with spelling and grammar, but by the end of Year 6, the more able pupils are becoming more confident writers, using similes and metaphors in their work. Nevertheless, the standards could be higher and the school needs to adopt a more systematic approach to the teaching of spelling so that the pupils learn strategies to improve and self-correct their work. The pupils have been introduced to a new handwriting script but do not use it consistently in all subjects and much of their handwriting is immature.
5. In mathematics the pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. The scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals that a wide range of work is covered in mathematics but too frequently it is not matched to the pupils' ability. To tackle this problem the school is now teaching pupils in ability sets but within these groups, the work planned often does not meet the

needs of all of the pupils, particularly the more able. The majority of pupils know their multiplication tables by the time they leave the school and have a satisfactory understanding of the value of numbers. They are able to plot temperatures and amounts of pocket money on a graph and interpret the information. The pupils can find and justify their answers in most three-digit calculations and they can calculate the mean, mode and median of groups of numbers.

6. The pupils cover a wide range of work in science and the teachers ensure that all of the elements of the science curriculum are covered. The pupils are taught how to plan experiments systematically from the time they start in the school but they do not have sufficient opportunities to investigate for themselves. Although they make satisfactory gains in their knowledge, their understanding is not developed as well as it could be. By the end of Year 6, most have a basic knowledge of physical and natural science. They research the life processes of people and plants and have a satisfactory understanding of environmental issues. The scrutiny of the pupils' past work indicates that too little account is taken of the aptitude of the more able pupils to further develop their skills and understanding. This results in underachievement by these pupils.
7. The school has made improvements in the provision for religious education, art, design and technology and history and geography. All of these subjects were found to be weak at the last inspection but the improved provision and better teaching has resulted in the pupils making good progress and attaining standards that are average. In religious education the pupils reach the appropriate levels for their age. They gain a sound knowledge of the major faiths that has led to a deeper understanding of religious issues. No music lessons were seen during the week of the inspection and it is not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching, the pupils' response in lessons or standards of attainment. The resources for information and communication technology have been extensively developed since the last inspection. The pupils have been following a comprehensive programme of work over the past two years and now have access to a very well equipped computer suite. Standards are rising rapidly. In Years 3, 4 and 5 the standards are in line with what is expected for the pupils' age. Due to the gaps in the knowledge and skills of the pupils in the current Year 6 the standards attained by these pupils are below average.
8. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in literacy and numeracy. The pupils supported through the enhanced resource provision make good progress in achieving both their academic and social targets. Those pupils who have additional targets with regard to behaviour management set in the individual education plans also make good progress in achieving them. Each pupil has an individual education plan, which has appropriate targets for improvement, and these are reviewed regularly. Good day-to-day records are kept by learning support assistants, and these show the progress of the pupils against their personal targets.

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

9. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most pupils arrive at school in good time and teachers greet them on the playground at the start of the day. The pupils settle quickly into their classrooms and begin their early morning tasks quietly and sensibly during registration. Those pupils with special educational needs are keen to begin their first tasks with their adult helpers and no time is lost. All of the pupils start the day in a purposeful way. The pupils listen to their teachers well. They are able to concentrate and persevere with activities. Most pupils are keen to answer questions and make an active contribution to lessons. They work sensibly in pairs, in groups or independently and all pupils try hard to meet their teacher's expectations. They respond well to humour and praise and are pleased when they earn star points for their efforts. The pupils acknowledge and support their peers who have special educational needs. Those

pupils who work outside the main lesson are always welcomed back into the classroom, by both teachers and pupils, with a minimum of fuss. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to each other are evident throughout the school and have a positive impact on learning.

10. The pupils' behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions. They take care when moving around the building and they behave very well in the playground, in the dining room and in the hall. Any unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly in a calm and quiet way. The pupils take care of equipment well, they take turns when playing games, and share resources sensibly in lessons. They can wait patiently and they talk quietly to friends when queuing for lunch in the dining room.
11. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. The pupils treat each other with tolerance and respect, modelling themselves on the very good example set by the adults in school. They are friendly, polite, courteous and considerate. This was demonstrated when pupils listened carefully and sensitively to each other in circle time and in a religious education lesson. They appreciate and celebrate each other's successes both in lessons and out of school.
12. Provision for the pupils' personal development is very good. Those pupils who have tasks in the classroom or around the school take their responsibilities seriously. In Year 5, the pupils readily join in a "buddy" reading scheme with Year 2 pupils from the infant school. Members of the School Council make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They have helped, for example, with plans for the future development of the Year 5/6 playground and in developing the school's mission statement into a poem which pupils could remember easily; "Together we learn, together we care, together we succeed, together we share." The pupils are aware of the needs of the wider community and are involved in a good range of activities which enable them to make a worthwhile contribution to society. They visit residents at the local old-people's home, collect paper for a recycling scheme, and raise a significant amount of money for a range of local, national and international charities.
13. The staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included in and are encouraged to take part in all activities. They have very good relationships with the adults who support them when they are working individually, in small groups and in whole class situations. The pupils are helpful, kind and supportive to their peers with special educational needs and include them in their activities.
14. The pupils' attendance is satisfactory. At around 94 per cent it is broadly in line with the national average for similar schools. The school has worked hard to reduce the amount of unauthorised absence. There continues to be a number of families who take holidays in term time and their absences have a detrimental effect on their children's learning. There are a small number of pupils who are persistently late but, overall, punctuality is good. Lessons start and finish on time.

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

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In all of the lessons the teaching was satisfactory or better. The improvement in the quality of teaching has been the key to the improvement in standards since the last inspection. The school has just come through a difficult period with fifty per cent of the teaching staff leaving during the past two years. The scrutiny of the pupils' workbooks from last year indicates that the quality of pupils' learning slipped somewhat during this period and that, combined with the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, this resulted in a significant fall in standards in the 2002 national tests. The staffing



situation is now stable again. The staff are enthusiastic and keen to improve the quality of their teaching and the capacity for improvement is good.

16. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and the pupils respond well and work hard. The teachers plan effectively in year groups and all teachers follow carefully the whole school curriculum plan. Since the last inspection the support for teachers has improved. There is frequent monitoring of lessons by senior staff and local authority advisers leading to opportunities for teachers to receive training to further develop their teaching skills. There is a whole school approach that ensures that teachers identify the learning objectives in their lesson plans. These are displayed for the pupils to refer to throughout the lesson. In most classes this is working well, although there are occasions when teachers do not make sufficient use of the pupils' assessments to build successfully on previous work and this affects particularly the progress made by average and more able pupils.
17. The teachers have a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching in English is satisfactory overall and teachers are well prepared and organised. The basic skills of literacy are taught well in all of the classes and great thought and care is given to providing resources and activities that build the pupils' confidence and engages them in the learning. The teachers are competent in teaching phonics and the word level work is taught systematically in all classes. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants and other adults to support groups and individual pupils. All of the adults provide a good balance of support for the pupils. This was evident in a very good Year 5 lesson when the teacher prepared writing frames that enabled the teaching assistants to help the pupils to devise a playscript and record it in dialogue form emphasising adverbs. In the best lessons the teachers motivate the pupils by choosing materials that interest them. In Year 6 the teacher's enthusiastic approach prepared pupils very well for a forthcoming meeting with an author by teaching them very effectively the difference between open and closed questions. The outcome of this was that the pupils were able to gather sufficient information to write a biography. Across the school the teachers provide very good opportunities for the pupils to improve their spoken language in *circle times* and during class discussions.
18. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. In all year groups the pupils are taught in ability groups. All of the teachers ensure that the pupils know what they are to learn and they have high expectations of the pupils' ability to concentrate and explain their answers. The teachers make effective use of the three-part lesson structure recommended in the Numeracy Framework. The teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it and they use appropriate vocabulary and open-ended questions to extend the pupils' understanding of the mathematical topics. In some classes, however, the work is not as demanding as it could be for the more able pupils and in these classes they make slower progress than they should. The most successful teaching makes good use of the pupils' assessments and is characterised by careful planning that identifies what different groups of pupils are to learn, very good relationships and effective management of the pupils. This was evident in an excellent lesson in Year 6. The teacher clarified some of the pupils' misunderstandings about graphs from the previous lesson and then ensured that the pupils were all challenged as they learnt the difference between mode, median and mean in graphs illustrating pupils' shoe sizes. The pupils' behaviour was very good in these lessons; they learned at a brisk pace and they were proud of their achievements.
19. The teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics has a number of strengths. The work in history and geography, for example, is making good use of fieldwork and visits. Almost all of the teachers have completed their ICT training and they are confident and competent

users of computers. They make good use of the computer suite and the pupils are taught new skills systematically. Greater use could be made of the computers to consolidate learning in reading, spelling and number work. Each subject has a scheme of work that is used to guide the teachers' planning. A review of each subject by the co-ordinator is resulting in the National Curriculum orders being interpreted more imaginatively although more effective links could be made between English, mathematics and science.

20. The teaching of those pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Class teachers, special needs teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to meet the pupils' individual needs. Individual education plans are securely in place and have appropriate targets for improvement. It is clear who will carry them out and how this is to be done. The pupils are taught in a variety of situations, being both supported within the classes but on appropriate occasions withdrawn to work in a group or individually. These strategies work well to support all the pupils with educational problems and have a positive impact on the good progress they make.
21. There are some areas for development in the teaching. Most pupils learn effectively, invest much effort in their work and the teachers work particularly hard. Examples of this were seen in all subjects and in all age groups. Pupils concentrate very well and show strong interest in what they are taught. However, the monitoring of what the pupils' read is inconsistent across the school and there needs to be better monitoring by the teachers of what the pupils are required to read at home. The school has rightly recognised that more attention needs to be given to the pupils' understanding of what they read. The work provided in some English and mathematics lessons and in science, particularly for the more able pupils, is not always sufficiently challenging. Some teachers do not make sufficient use of on-going day-to-day assessments of the pupils in order to plan further work for them at an appropriate level. The scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals an inconsistency in the marking as some teachers do not provide the pupils with a clear view of how to improve. It is also a relative weakness, therefore, that the teachers could do more to encourage greater independence in the learning. They could, for example, encourage the pupils to work independently and to research topics for themselves. In science this would require them to provide more opportunities for the pupils to design and carry out investigations for themselves. In history and religious education the pupils could use the skills they have learnt in the Literacy Hour to pose and answer their own questions using books, artefacts and the computer.

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

22. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum has a number of strengths but there are also some weaknesses, which have an impact on areas of progress made by the pupils. Overall, however, the school provides a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities and activities; these are very well enhanced by a very good variety of extra-curricular activities, educational visits out of school and visitors to the school. All of the pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and there is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has constructive relationships with its partner institutions and they, together with the wider community, make positive and supportive contributions to the pupils' learning.
23. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection, which identified serious weaknesses in a number of areas of the curriculum. A whole school curriculum plan, which clearly states what each year group will learn in each subject, has been put in place and this has helped to improve standards in English, science, design and technology,

history, geography, art and religious education. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been consistently implemented and there have been steady improvements in the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science. There are some missed opportunities in using literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum such as history, geography and religious education. The school recognises that standards in reading are not high enough. Although a classroom now houses the library, the book provision is inadequate and storage is limited and this makes it difficult for the pupils to develop independent research skills. The curriculum has placed an increased emphasis on the development of numeracy and this has led to standards rising in mathematics, although on occasions the numeracy lessons are too long resulting in the pupils losing concentration. There are too few occasions planned for the pupils in both mathematics and science lessons to develop independence in their learning. They need more opportunities to make choices, to investigate and to make decisions for themselves.

24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. The individual education plans are clear, relevant and well matched to the pupils' needs. They are reviewed on a termly basis, and new targets are set. The plans are carried out with close liaison between the class teachers, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the teaching assistants. Advice and input from a range of support agencies is well used. The teaching assistants have very clear knowledge of their role in supporting the pupils with special educational needs. They are well informed about the pupils' needs and are clear about how these will be addressed. There is very good management of the pupils by the teachers and the learning support assistants who are well deployed. All these features contribute to the consistently good progress made by the pupils with special educational needs.
25. The curriculum opportunities for all the pupils are enriched and enhanced by the very good provision for extra-curricular activities. These include a wide range of sports, music, drama and French clubs organised by the teachers and volunteers and these supplement the quality of the curriculum offered to the pupils. There are regular educational visits out of school planned, for example to the Black Country Museum and Elvaston Hall to support work being done on life in Victorian times, and when the Year 5 pupils visit Drum Hill they take part in an interesting range of activities including shelter building. Good use is made of the local environment to support work in geography and history and there are visits to the Derby Faith Walk and the Gudwara. Visitors to the school include local clergy, friends and governors of the school, artists and the 'animal man'. During the inspection one of the Year 6 classes was visited by a local author; the pupils had previously worked out the questions they would like to ask about her life and work and the resulting dialogue gave them a very good insight into her work. Together with the very good use of the talents of teachers and other adults who work in the school, these visitors provide learning experiences that have a positive impact on the overall social and educational development of pupils.
26. The school is giving a good emphasis to pupils' personal, social, citizenship and health education. This area of the curriculum is actively promoted as part of a structured programme, and is a very important feature of the life of the school. The teachers give praise and encouragement in lessons and this helps the pupils to try hard, it enhances their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to succeed with tasks. The pupils are given increasing opportunities to become independent and responsible by, for example, taking part in the School Council. In all the classes pupils are encouraged to help and support one another and to do jobs to help in the smooth running of the school. The older pupils have 'buddy' reading partners with younger pupils; this helps them settle happily into the school and fosters the growing maturity of the older pupils. In lessons, circle time and assemblies good opportunities are provided to consider issues such as choosing between right and wrong in different situations, qualities of friendship, and how to

establish your own place in life. Personal safety is given good attention and the pupils are taught about the importance of maintaining a healthy life style through exercise, healthy diet and the benefits of medical drugs and dangers of some other drugs. The school nurse supports the school in teaching the older pupils about sex education and related issues of growing up. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning through the school's links with many organisations, institutions and individuals. For example, the pupils visit the adjacent home for the elderly to talk to people both as caring individuals and to learn about their community through 'living history' memories. The school's work in recycling and considering wider environmental issues contributes to the pupils as developing and thoughtful members of the community.

27. There are good links in place to ensure that when the pupils transfer from the neighbouring infant school they get to know their new school before they move. Most of the Year 6 pupils move to the local secondary school and there are good arrangements for all of the pupils to transfer smoothly to their new schools. There is good liaison between local schools on several levels, with teachers visiting each other's schools, and joining together for activities such as sports and science projects. The school also has good relationships with a variety of further education establishments and provides placements for students on a range of courses connected with teacher training and special educational needs provision.
28. The provision made for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and it is a strength of the school. The provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory; this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Spiritual development is securely promoted throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and other activities when the school makes good use of the teachings of Christianity, and other world faiths to support its provision. The school works hard to develop and extend the pupils' self-esteem and promote good relationships; with the outcome that all the pupils enjoy their learning and feel part of a living community. Some opportunities for the pupils to reflect on spiritual dimensions of life are provided and are enhanced by using dramatic and artistic ways of exploring and considering feelings and emotions. These activities mean the pupils are given opportunities to value and understand their own individuality. They show good respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs and the relationships between everyone at the school are very good.
29. The school promotes and fosters values such as honesty and fairness and teaches pupils the difference between right and wrong. All of the adults in the school provide very good role models for the pupils and make the pupils aware of the benefits of positive behaviour and attitudes. The pupils have opportunities in lessons and at other times to work together co-operatively and collaboratively. They compete fairly, and they consistently treat one another and adults with courtesy and respect. The school has developed a good range of opportunities for the pupils to experience social activities including educational visits where the pupils learn to rely on each other and work co-operatively as a team. A very good number of charities are supported, such as the Mencap 'spellathon' and the collection of tins of food for Harvest Festival. These activities promote the pupils' personal development, enabling them to learn, think about and support the needs of people in different situations.
30. The school works well to promote the pupils' knowledge of their own culture and there are some opportunities for the pupils to learn about living in a multicultural society and to consider aspects of cultures not represented in the school. As part of religious education the pupils learn about a range of world faiths including Islam and Sikhism. In literature sessions the pupils hear and read excerpts of poetry and prose from varied traditions, and they begin to appreciate the rhythm of language and ways it is used by a variety of authors including Shakespeare. Opportunities for the pupils to experience, enjoy and participate in events from their own and

other cultures are provided. For example they discover the art of Picasso, encounter features of the Chinese New Year, cook and eat pancakes for Shrove Tuesday, and celebrate with enthusiasm the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

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

31. The pupils continue to be provided with a caring and supportive environment, as reported at the last inspection. The staff know the pupils well and the child protection procedures are sound. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall. The parents are pleased with the care the school offers to their children and say that their children like school. The hazard of vehicular access to the school coinciding with the arrivals of pedestrians, identified in the last report, has been addressed successfully.
32. There are satisfactory systems in place for safeguarding children's health and safety. There are regular safety inspections and potential hazards are dealt with effectively. Suitable first aid arrangements are in place for dealing with accidents and illness and there is adequate adult supervision at lunchtimes.
33. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Registration and follow-up procedures are now well established and registers meet statutory requirements. There is very effective liaison with the Educational Welfare Service.
34. Very good arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour, including measures to prevent bullying have been developed, after consultation with staff, parents and pupils. There are simple rules for pupils displayed prominently throughout the school. There are rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for dealing with misbehaviour. These rules are consistently applied by all staff across the school and have a very good impact on behaviour at the school.
35. There are good procedures in place for the initial identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and for the assessment of their progress. The school uses a range of methods including the use of detailed information from the infant school when the pupils come into the Juniors. The special educational needs staff continue to check on the pupils' progress as they move through the school and make sure that the work they are given carefully matches their needs. The pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from the teachers and teaching assistants within the school. All the adults know the pupils well and work hard to help the pupils achieve their personal targets. Statutory requirements with regard to special educational needs are carried out; the register is up to date and identifies the pupils that need extra help. There are very effective arrangements in place to make use of support from a wide range of external agencies. There are good procedures in place for monitoring the pupils' academic progress and personal development.
36. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and personal development are satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science they are satisfactory. Assessments are undertaken at the end of units of work and teachers keep records of pupils' current attainment. Samples of pupils' work are also retained, providing further evidence of their attainment. However, the information is not used consistently to provide work that is well suited to the pupils' individual needs and, consequently, the pupils have insufficient knowledge of their own learning. In particular, the work planned for the more able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging in English, mathematics and science and this results in underachievement by these pupils. Records are

kept and targets for improvement are set but these are not always comprehensive enough to be of assistance to the pupil or parent. Comprehensive procedures are in place for monitoring the pupils' progress in other subjects. This is a new initiative and it is not yet clear how teachers will use them to plan the next stage of the pupils' learning.

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

37. The parents consider Brackensdale to be a good school. They are generally satisfied with the school and what it offers their children. They are particularly pleased with the behaviour of the pupils, the way the school is led and managed, and the approachability of the staff. They feel that their children are happy to be at the school. These positive views are well founded.
38. The school has satisfactory links with parents although the level of participation by parents in the daily life of the school is limited. An area for improvement identified by both the parents and the school is making the links between home and school more effective. Some of these are in place and working well and have improved since the last inspection. A number of parents are dissatisfied with the provision for homework and the information provided in relation to their children's progress, but their concerns although understandable, are largely unwarranted. Consultation meetings with class teachers about the pupils' progress take place termly and the majority of parents attend. Parents are given suggestions about how they can help their children at home. The pupils' annual reports are better and now contain more detailed information about how the pupils can improve. The parents are kept well informed about the school's events and curriculum matters through newsletters. The prospectus has been revised and updated and now meets statutory requirements. A good number of parents attend school assemblies and other social events organised by school and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). However, more parents could be more involved in their children's learning, particularly in supporting their learning at home by ensuring that homework is completed. The school has tried to effect this but has not been as successful as it would have wished and there is a need to consider alternative ways of improving this aspects of the schools work. A number of parents help with the PTA and raise much appreciated funds for school equipment and learning resources.
39. The school works well in partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and the parents know who are their main points of contact in the school. The parents are invited to attend the annual reviews. Most attend and contribute their views in relation to the progress that their children are making. The parents are informed of the targets set for their children in their individual education plans at parent meetings. Suggestions are given to parents by the school staff about support that can be given at home to extend the work being done in school and this makes a good contribution to the progress of the pupils.

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

40. The headteacher has been in post for only a year and is already providing good quality leadership. He works closely with the governing body, a committed staff and is ably supported by the newly appointed deputy. The school has made satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection in 1998 and has worked hard to address the key issues raised in the last report. In the short time since his appointment, the headteacher has established a clear direction for the school's work with a focus on raising standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Detailed audits of the school's performance have been undertaken and have informed the plans for improvement. The headteacher has identified the school's weaknesses and is tackling them effectively. With the help of the LEA he is regularly monitoring teaching and learning and this has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. There has been a thorough review of the content, planning and organisation of the curriculum and standards in English and mathematics are beginning to rise. However, they are not as high as they could be

and are still below average. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' work has been reviewed and revised and the tracking of the pupils' progress, although at an early stage of development, is now in place. The teachers need to make better use of the pupils' assessments to ensure that the work planned matches the different abilities of the pupils. Subject leaders are now much more involved in the development of the curriculum areas. The deputy headteacher, a leading teacher in mathematics, has taken on the overall responsibility for teaching and learning and provides good advice and guidance for teachers.

41. These improvements, combined with the headteacher's clear vision of what he wants for all of the pupils at the school, both academically and socially, places the school in a favourable position for sustaining these improvements. There is a very positive ethos and a supportive learning environment in which the pupils relate well to each other and to adults. The school is moving steadily towards achieving its newly agreed aims.
42. The governing body is very supportive and committed to improving the school. They are informed by the headteacher of the school's results in the national tests and the overall performance of the school. An example of this was their determination to improve the information and communication technology (ICT) facilities by providing a high quality computer suite. An aspect of their work that they need to improve is in evaluating the impact of their spending decisions.
43. The special educational needs co-ordinator is well informed about the special educational needs provision in the school. She has a clear view about how the support for pupils can be further improved, for example through in-service training and fostering the partnerships with parents. Special educational needs provision is well-organised, all statutory requirements for special educational provision are in place and up to date. The governing body is very supportive of the work done with the pupils with special educational needs and is well informed about how it is carried out by the school.
44. The school's financial planning is good and the governors monitor the budget very carefully. All of the recommendations in the last audit report have been implemented. Educational targets are appropriately linked to the budget but more needs to be done in monitoring the effectiveness of expenditure on standards. The school makes a thorough analysis of the contracts and service level agreements and decisions are made to best value principles. The school has been very successful in obtaining additional funds by bidding for a range of grants. These are used very effectively in providing additional staff and resources in, for example, the provision of additional computers. Funds allocated for the provision and support of the pupils with special educational needs, including the enhanced resource monies, are used very effectively and the pupils benefit from the provision. The significant underspend carried forward in 2002 were funds that had been appropriately set aside to pay for additional classroom support assistants and building conversion work. The school's systems for day-to-day financial controls are good and very effective use is made of new technology in managing the school's financial systems. The headteacher has established good procedures and routines.
45. The school has undergone a period of turbulence in staffing and recruitment difficulties led to the appointment of temporary staff. The quality of the pupils' learning dipped during this period and standards fell. The school has overcome this problem and the level of staffing is now good. The new staff are well supported with good induction procedures and the standards of teaching and learning have improved. All teachers are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Well-trained and dedicated support staff are well deployed throughout the school and have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. They make a

particularly good contribution to the achievement, progress and self-esteem of the pupils with special educational needs. There is a shared commitment to, and capacity for, school improvement. Performance management contributes significantly to this through the appraisal process. Clear objectives for teachers include pupil progress targets which focus specifically on key areas of school development, for example, improving attainment in writing. All teachers attend courses, designed to match their own needs and the needs of the school. They have appropriate professional development targets that are agreed with the headteacher.

46. The accommodation is good, clean and well maintained. The new computer suite is a very good resource, enhancing the teaching of ICT. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The size of the library, although an improvement since the last inspection, has insufficient book stocks and lacks an index to assist pupils to carry out research and independent learning. Resources throughout the school are satisfactory overall and used well. They are good in ICT, science, design and technology and physical education. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Learning resources are unsatisfactory in history, where there is a lack of artefacts, books and photographs.

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

47. Continue the drive to raise standards in English and literacy by:
- ensuring that there is better monitoring by the teachers of what the pupils are required to read at home;
  - ensuring that more attention is given to the pupils' understanding of what they read;
  - make better use of the library and of computers to develop the pupils independent learning skills;
  - ensuring that the schemes of history, geography and religious education are clear about how the work in these subjects will contribute to the pupils' learning of the key skills in literacy;
  - ensuring that marking is used consistently to identify the next step for pupils' learning;
  - monitoring the marking across the school to ensure consistency.
- (2) Continue the drive to raise standards in mathematics and science by:
- ensuring that lesson planning takes better account of the pupils' varying abilities, particularly in offering greater challenge to the more able pupils;
  - providing more opportunities for practical and investigative work.
- (3) Make better use of the assessments of the pupils' work to:
- devise individual targets for learning in English, mathematics and science;
  - ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged.
- (4) Involve the parents more in their children's learning by:
- ensuring that the homework policy is consistently applied;
  - reviewing the home-school reading arrangements so that all pupils benefit from taking books home;
  - regularly informing parents of the targets that have been set for their children in English and mathematics.



## **ENHANCED RESOURCE PROVISION**

48. The Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP), which was started in September 2000, can provide support for up to thirty-two junior age pupils from across the local authority. The pupils, who are accepted into the school for this support, have varying degrees of difficulty with their communication skills. The Enhanced Resource Provision has a full time 'manager', who is supported by the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), and six Learning Support Assistants. Both the ERP Manager and the SENCO are experienced special educational needs teachers. The aim of the Enhanced Resource Provision is the inclusion of pupils into mainstream classes, where they can play as full a part as possible in the normal life of the school.
49. The pupils, who benefit from the Enhanced Resource Provision, can take part in all activities, both curricular and extra curricular. For some pupils this means that extra time is spent carefully preparing them for activities, such as outside visits that would often cause them anxiety.
50. The Enhanced Resource Provision is still developing, but it is already successfully improving the pupils' social interaction and communication skills, and is developing their inclusion into mainstream classes and the life of the school very well. This success is the result of the commitment and good support given by the school and its staff. The provision is well managed and the staff of the school benefit from the regular training and expertise provided by the ERP Managers.
51. The class teachers and learning support assistants know the difficulties experienced by the pupils who are supported by the Enhanced Resource Provision. They plan work that is usually well matched to the abilities of the pupils. The teachers use appropriate visual signals and picture cues to emphasise expected working and behaviour routines. They use effective strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour and are aware of individual differences when applying them. The use of structures and routines has been developed well and can be seen in the responses of the pupils at times when they exhibit inappropriate behaviour. The pupils know what will happen next and what they have to do, and at times they themselves are now aware of the need to take more 'time out' before re-entering their work group. The teachers and learning support staff work well together to include the pupils in all aspects of their lessons. The class teachers are beginning to apply the strategies used within the ERP when working with other pupils, and this is having a positive effect on their teaching. Learning support assistants know their pupils well and give them good support both academically and socially.
52. Each pupil has an individual education plan, which has appropriate targets for improvement, and these are reviewed regularly. Good day-to-day records are kept by learning support assistants, and these show the progress of the pupils against their personal targets. The pupils make good

progress in achieving both their academic and social targets. Sometimes these records are also used by the teachers to record useful information. Assessment records are continuing to develop, so that soon more information will be available concerning the pupils' personal and social development as well as their academic progress. These will also enable the teachers to use pupils' individual strengths and learning styles when planning their work.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
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
4	17	27	52			

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 2 percentage points..*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	220
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	67

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	62

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.7

*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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	35	24	59

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	23	26
	Girls	13	14	17
	Total	30	37	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (75)	63 (72)	73 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	25	21
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	30	39	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (71)	66 (77)	59 (87)
	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	201	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	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	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

### *Financial information*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	27.5

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	361

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	597,271
Total expenditure	583,873
Expenditure per pupil	2,505
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,037
Balance carried forward to next year	54,435



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	96

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	4	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	4		2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	60	4	1	
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	44	17	1	5
The teaching is good.	48	48	3		1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	44	17	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	42	4		2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1		1
The school works closely with parents.	29	49	17	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	43	45	6	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	6	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	43	17	2	7

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

### **ENGLISH**

53. By the end of Year 6 the overall attainment of pupils in English is below average. The pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills, in learning to read, and in writing. However the school recognises that English overall is an area for development and in particular standards in reading could be higher. All the pupils are provided with equal opportunities to participate in the learning activities provided in English; pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported in literacy sessions and make good overall progress.
54. In speaking and listening skills, standards by the age of eleven are below the national average. Good use is made of the whole class discussions at the beginning of the Literacy Hour and in the introductory sessions to other subjects to promote speaking and listening skills. The adults in the school take good opportunities to extend the pupils' vocabulary and language structures using questioning and discussions. The pupils respond well at these times, listen carefully to the teachers and other pupils and try hard to offer answers. They are often hampered by a lack of development in vocabulary and language structures, particularly in the early years of the school. There are regular opportunities for pupils to develop spoken language, as in circle time, lessons and class assemblies when pupils' ideas and opinions are listened to and valued by adults working with them. The pupils consequently make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school. In two very good Year 6 lessons the pupils prepared questions to ask a visiting author about her life and work. They understood the difference between an 'open' and a 'closed' question and modified them accordingly. In the second lesson they spoke confidently to the visitor and were able to follow up the prepared questions with perceptive additional ones. For example, pupils asked if she would change anything in her life given the opportunity, and, if she were Prime Minister what her priorities would be.
55. By the end of Year 6, the number of pupils reading fluently and accurately at the higher level and, at an average level is below that expected for their age. Although the pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to read in relation to their prior attainment when they entered the school the standards could be higher. A significant number of younger pupils struggle with unknown words and do not always have a range of strategies to tackle them. Although most pupils can recap on what has happened in a story many find it difficult to predict how the plot might develop. Only the more able pupils can discuss characterisation or the way in which authors develop plots and create different atmospheres. Whilst better progress is seen in whole class or group reading sessions, the school needs to encourage the pupils to read independently more often. The home-school reading diaries record few comments on progress or points for improvement, nor do the pupils express their own opinions or feelings about what they have read. There is a home-school reading partnership in place but overall it is not having the desired effect of helping to raise standards of reading; all of the pupils take books home but only some read regularly to their parents or carers. However, in Year 3, the pupils read regularly on an individual basis to the teacher or teaching assistants and the teachers check their progress carefully to see what help they need to improve. Most of the pupils understand that they can find information from different sources, including the Internet, but only a minority of the older pupils know how the information library books are catalogued. The library is inadequately stocked with non-fiction books; it is used irregularly and library skills are not systematically

taught; consequently opportunities for the pupils to develop independent research skills are unsatisfactory.

56. The school has recognised that standards are not high enough in reading and has an action plan in place to help address this issue. Recently extra time has been put into the timetable to provide opportunities to develop good reading habits; each day twenty minutes are devoted to reading outside of the main literacy hour, to practise and develop the skills needed. The pupils are encouraged to tackle a range of texts, including poetry and non-fiction and some are slowly developing a critical appreciation of the books they read. Throughout the school the majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards the books they read and say that they enjoy reading. The school has recently improved the number and range of group reading books and 'big books' for use during the literacy sessions. However, the action plan does not clearly identify how the pupils will be taught to read more effectively and the strategies that need to be put in place to promote this objective.
57. In writing, the standards achieved by the pupils by the time they leave the school are below average. Starting from a very low base the pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but standards in writing are not as high as they could be. Insufficient numbers of pupils reach the expected or higher levels although over time there has been a steady improvement in standards. The school has recognised that writing can be improved and has already put some positive measures in place. It is making very good use of structured programmes such as the 'Additional Literacy Strategy' to improve pupils' progress in learning to spell and to increase skills in developing and using a wider and richer range of words. A strength of the writing is the way in which the teachers plan opportunities for pupils to write across a range of forms throughout the school. These include stories, recounts, note-taking, persuasive writing and writing that puts forward reasoned and balanced arguments. There are good classroom displays to give the pupils help in remembering literacy structures and features, to remind them of spelling rules and to extend vocabulary to use in writing. The school is building up *focus* writing books where pieces of extended writing are produced on a regular basis. Where the best practice is seen the work is well marked, levelled against the requirements of the national curriculum and annotated with points for improvement. However the targets that are then set for the pupils are not always carried forward into the planning and day-to-day work.
58. By the end of Year 6, the pupils can express themselves in their writing using simple and more complex sentences and can write in a variety of styles. They are confident in their use of adjectives to help them write more interesting sentences and some pupils fully understand the use of adverbs. The pupils have a good understanding of how to punctuate their sentences and the most able pupils can use speech, question and exclamation marks appropriately. They show some imagination and flair in pieces of writing. When describing a journey to a planet a pupil writes, " As they cascaded through the stars and Mercury's atmosphere they landed with a thud on the rocky ground". Good examples of descriptive writing are seen when pupils write alternative endings to Cinderella, although this traditional tale is overused as a focus for different work. The pupils have opportunities to write of happenings in their own lives, and through the medium of a diary they often write with clarity and immediacy of what is important to them. Good work was seen when pupils write for a purpose as they formulate questions for their interview with an author and when they write letters to appeal for a retired horse to be sponsored by the school.
59. There are areas for development in writing. In general some use is being made of writing skills across the curriculum, for example when writing about educational visits, but this could usefully be extended to include more writing opportunities. The way in which the pupils' work is marked



varies across the school. Work is generally marked regularly but teachers do not all make it clear what the pupils have to do to improve. The school has put in place a number of standardised tests and from these, together with the end of key stage tests, the strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' work are being analysed. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when monitoring the progress of pupils was identified as a key issue. The school has recently begun to track individual pupils' progress and set targets for the level that the pupils should achieve by the end of each year. However, the information that is gathered is not yet being fully used to plan further work in order to raise standards in writing. Targets are set for pupils but these are unavailable when the pupils are working to remind them what they are aiming for. Nor are pupils given clear information about what they need to do to achieve the next level. Spelling lists are given out at the beginning of each week but little attention is paid to teaching techniques for the pupils to self-check, identify and correct errors. In addition, standards of handwriting across the school are below those expected, and in many cases the teachers accept immature handwriting without giving pupils pointers for improvement. Pupils are now being taught a joined script but have not been encouraged to use it on a regular basis in all curriculum areas. By the time they are eleven only a minority of the pupils use a joined up handwriting style as a matter of course.

60. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; there were no lessons in which the teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching has some significant strengths. The teachers manage the pupils very well and this promotes the good standards of behaviour seen. The pupils try hard in their lessons and work consistently to complete tasks set by the teachers. The teaching assistants give good quality support, reinforcing and developing the teaching points for the less able pupils. In the best lessons seen, the pupils are made aware of what it is they are to learn by the end of the lesson and the teachers make good use of resources to support the learning, including interesting presentations of the material. In a very good Year 3 lesson the teacher brings the features of note-taking to life by very good modelling of the process and enthrals the pupils by his acting out of the imaginary animal. Year 6 pupils and their teacher having assembled a collection of words to describe the character of Macbeth at the beginning of the play, review the word bank and consider if the words remain appropriate when they have completed their study of the play. There are, however, some weaknesses in the teaching. The pupils' work is marked regularly throughout the school but the quality of the marking could be better. It recognises work done and efforts made, but even when annotated with helpful comments and guidance this is not translated into clear targets for the pupils to use to improve their work. Overall the teachers do not always make the best use of the information they have about pupils' progress to plan further work or to explain to pupils how they could reach a particular level.
61. The subject manager has put in place some useful strategies to improve standards such as the 'focus' books for writing and the 'First Steps' guidance for literacy development. Good use has been made of government initiatives to raise standards of spelling and grammar and of local education authority support in monitoring the implementation of the literacy strategy. Further opportunities to check what is happening in other classes to support the school in raising standards by monitoring teaching and learning are planned. The Governors are playing a supportive role in evaluating standards in the school and overall the school is enthusiastic about establishing ways to improve the standards in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

62. The standards attained by the end of Year 6 in mathematics are below average. Overall the standards have continued to rise steadily since the last inspection. The pupils are making at least satisfactory progress when standards are compared with the well below average levels at which they were working when they entered the school. A significant number of pupils make better

than the expected progress. The performance of boys and girls is in line with that of boys and girls in other schools. The pupils are taught in mixed year groups that are set according to prior attainment. This system is largely successful although work is not always matched well enough to the pupils' abilities and this slows the rate of progress particularly for more able pupils.

63. The pupils in Year 3 solve addition and subtraction problems involving two digit numbers and are becoming more accurate when multiplying and dividing small numbers. The teachers plan effectively and share ideas and resources for pupils in each of the ability groups. More able pupils can find the position of a point on a grid where the lines are numbered. In one lesson pupils were using co-ordinates to find points where water was hidden on their desert maps and they understood that (4,1) and (1,4) describe different points. Other pupils can use simple regular shapes to create other irregular polygons. They can combine a rectangle and a triangle to make a new five-sided shape, describing this shape as an irregular pentagon. Lower attaining pupils still have difficulty with basic number skills and are not able to count back in ones from a two-digit number without using mathematical equipment. Most pupils have a secure understanding of number facts. However, there are a significant number of pupils who lack the confidence and skills to solve problems and they need considerable help and guidance. By the time they leave Year 6 most pupils have developed sound strategies for solving mental arithmetic problems. The pupils in the higher ability groups for mathematics attain above average standards overall and these pupils make good progress in lessons. They confidently find fractions of numbers such as  $\frac{3}{10}$  of 80, and can recognise and order negative numbers. They understand the probability scale 0 to 1 recognising that an even chance is at  $\frac{1}{2}$  on the probability scale. Most pupils in other groups are working at average levels when handling data. In one lesson pupils investigated the most common shoe size of pupils in their class and are beginning to understand the mode of a set of data. They are developing an understanding of the language of probability and can express this as no chance, poor chance, even chance or good chance.
64. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. The support they receive from classroom assistants and other staff from the school's Enhanced Resources provision is very good. In Years 5 and 6 most pupils with special educational needs can plot points on a grid although some of them find it difficult to follow the correct direction on the axes of the grid. Lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 can find but cannot name some common 2-D shapes.
65. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. Teaching was good or better in ten of the sixteen lessons seen during the inspection and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and identify clear objectives for learning which they share with the pupils. They use a wide range of methods to motivate pupils and help them make progress in lessons. Lessons are structured carefully in line with the recommendations of the national numeracy strategy. Teachers plan co-operatively to ensure that the work is broadly matched to pupils' abilities. Some teachers make good use of assessment activities to plan work for pupils that is matched well to their abilities and this impacts well on the learning in the lesson. In some other lessons the level of work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of the individual pupils within the mathematics sets and this slows the progress made by these pupils. Although the time allocated to the teaching of mathematics overall is appropriate, many lessons exceed the fifty minutes recommended by the national strategy and this can slow the pace of learning. In those lessons where teachers maintain a good pace throughout the lesson, the time available is used well. Classroom assistants are well informed about the main teaching focus for each lesson and are able to give effective support to pupils, including those with special educational needs. The quality of the homework tasks set for pupils is good and supports the learning in the classroom. This additionally provides

an opportunity for parents to become involved in their children's learning, although not all pupils return homework for marking.

66. Although the quality of teaching has improved overall there are some areas of weakness. In lessons where work is not carefully graded to meet pupils' learning needs, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils and they are not confident in their approach to mathematical problems. The marking of pupils' work does not always show what pupils need to do next to improve.
67. The behaviour of pupils is good overall in most lessons. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory behaviour in mathematics lessons. Teachers have good class management skills and lessons are organised efficiently. As a result, pupils enjoy mathematics and have positive attitudes to learning. They show high levels of concentration and involvement in their work. Teachers and other adults develop very good relationships with pupils through the effective use of humour and praise, and as a result pupils co-operate well with each other. They respond well when given opportunities to discuss their ideas or share their work. These opportunities enhance their learning and make a significant contribution to the social, moral and personal development of pupils.
68. The curriculum provided for pupils meets the requirements of the national curriculum. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of number skills especially in the additional lessons provided in Years 3 and 4. Work on shape, space and measures, and handling data is well developed. The use and application of mathematics and numeracy in other subjects is less well developed. There are too few opportunities for problem solving activities and investigations, and there is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in mathematics.
69. The recently-appointed co-ordinator for mathematics has made a good start on identifying the actions the school needs to take to further develop the teaching and learning of mathematics in the school. She demonstrates a good understanding of the management of mathematics in school. She is a leading teacher for the subject and has made effective links with the school's numeracy consultant. The school has taken advantage of a range of appropriate in-service training and this has impacted on the quality of teaching, which is good overall. There are good quality mathematical resources in each classroom and the school is beginning to develop good practice in setting targets for pupil progress. The school has good capacity to continue to improve teaching and learning in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

70. The standards achieved by the pupils by the end of Year 6 are below the national average, but they are improving and are better than at the time of the last inspection. The school's national test results have improved steadily over recent years matching the national trend, but more able pupils could do better.
71. When pupils enter the school their level of attainment in science is well below average. As they move through the school most pupils achieve well and make steady progress. The pupils are given appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of science and by the end of Year 6 they have covered a wide range of work. There are occasions, however, when the lack of challenging work, particularly for the most able pupils limits their progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from the learning assistants and make good progress.

72. Each year group is taught a wide range of scientific topics. During the inspection the pupils in Year 3 learned, as part of a health programme, the important features of tooth care. The pupils in Year 4 were able to recover undissolved solids through filtration and found out that they could not recover materials that had already dissolved. In Year 5 the pupils improved their understanding of the conditions for ideal growth in plants and were able to relate this to human growth. The scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals that by the end of Year 6 the pupils have covered all of the elements of the science curriculum. They have a sound understanding of light and its sources. They are able to use a force meter and can measure in Newtons. They can construct electrical circuits with a bulb and a switch and understand how to break a circuit. Many pupils understand shadows and the basic concepts of sound and vibration. The pupils learn how materials can be transparent, opaque or translucent. Despite covering this wide range of work and the majority of pupils attaining the average Level 4 the level of their learning is, however, not developed sufficiently. They lack skills in planning their own work. The pupils recognise the need for a fair test but many pupils are not able to draw good conclusions and give clear explanations from their findings.
73. The scrutiny of the pupils' work and the lesson observations made in all four year groups indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teaching has a number of strengths: the teachers plan lessons well, have clear learning objectives for the pupils to follow, use explanation effectively, and establish good relations with the pupils from whom they demand high standards of behaviour. As a result, the pupils waste little time and work sensibly in groups. There are, however, some common weaknesses in the teaching that affect the standards that the pupils attain. All pupils, regardless of ability usually cover the same work at the same level of difficulty and teachers need to ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils. Teachers provide the pupils with opportunities to experiment that lead them to pre-determined conclusions but do not give them the chance to investigate in depth for themselves. This prevents the pupils from consolidating and extending their own knowledge through posing questions and finding answers from their own scientific investigations. This was evident in a lesson in Year 4 when the pupils were provided with one substance to use in their filtration experiment and had little opportunity to select other substances for themselves and to carry out an open-ended investigation. The teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to record their findings in different ways or to choose their own ways of recording the information. Opportunities for the development of the pupils' writing skills through the subject are often missed. When teachers do make effective links with literacy, for example in a Year 3 lesson when the pupils used the script form a television recording to make their own notes, both their scientific knowledge and their writing skills were improved. The teaching of scientific vocabulary also requires greater emphasis.
74. There is an effective scheme of work to guide the teachers' planning and the pupils are assessed at the end of each year. However, the results of these assessments are not being used by all teachers to plan work that matches the different abilities of the pupils. The subject leader is new but he has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the subject. He is working closely with the deputy headteacher to increase the amount of investigational work by the pupils. An audit of the subject has been carried out; strengths and weaknesses in the subject have been identified and an appropriate action plan has been devised. A good range of quality resources has been provided and is added to regularly. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used more effectively to support science teaching since the computer suite has been installed, but it is in an early stage of development and not all staff are aware of the range of software they can use.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

75. By the time the pupils leave the school their attainment in art is in line with that expected for their age. All the pupils have good access to the art curriculum and make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding, and in developing art and design skills. The school is using the national guidelines for what should be taught in art and the teachers carefully plan and organise the lessons following the guidelines. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when there were found to be serious weaknesses in the attainment and progress of pupils in art. In particular, the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils and extends and enriches their personal development. The pupils have some opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work. All the adults in the school value pupils' efforts and this helps them to develop confidence and self-esteem in working on artistic projects. The pupils are given appropriate opportunities to experience and use a good range of media and materials throughout the school. They enjoy art activities, and talk with enthusiasm about how they have tried to achieve the effect they want. Good use is made of sketchbooks to try different techniques and media before starting on a finished piece of work. The pupils' work is well displayed around the school.
76. In Year 3 the pupils produce interesting portraits showing emotions using oil pastels on a marbled background. They consider a range of portraits from different artistic traditions and discuss ways in which the artists have achieved the different effects to portray the moods of the sitters. They quickly sketch the head and facial features and, with concentration, mix and smudge colours to get the effect they want. The pupils' work is sometimes linked to other areas of the curriculum being studied. For example, in Year 4, the pupils have complemented the work being done in history by exploring patterns and designs from Viking artefacts. Good use of information, communication and technology skills is made when the pupils design and produce lively and colourful repeating patterns for wrapping paper. The Year 5 pupils' work on Picasso and his Blue Period has produced good quality paintings that are dramatically displayed against a backdrop of vivid blues. The pupils explore colour mixing as they create a background of graduated shades of blue and superimpose a figure or animal painted in the style of Picasso. Collages using bright strips of paper show how well the pupils have observed work in the style of Matisse and this is further explored using a paint program in ICT work. Year 5 pupils have made a recent visit to the Denby pottery where they have used clay to produce frog models from moulds. In school they are making clay pots to complement their work on the Ancient Greeks' use of pottery. In Year 6 the pupils' work is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. They design and make covers for their play-scripts and create delightful copies of men's top hats and Queen Victoria's lace caps.
77. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in art. In the good lesson seen the teacher had high expectations of the pupils to behave well, work independently and use their creativity. The lesson was lively and engaged the pupils' interest. Pupils talk about how they enjoy art activities and enjoy trying out new techniques. The subject leader is recently appointed to the curriculum area. She has made a good start by auditing the school's planning and resources and has enthusiastic plans to further raise the profile of art in the school. Whenever possible the school makes good use of visitors and visits to stimulate pupils' interest and to teach different techniques and crafts.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

78. Standards in design and technology are now in line with national expectations by the time that the pupils leave the school. The pupils make satisfactory progress in gaining design and

technology skills, knowledge and understanding. This represents a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be below national levels and progress was unsatisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to the design and technology curriculum.

79. The problems identified in the last inspection have been largely addressed by using the national guidelines on what should be taught and when, to the different year groups. The teachers' planning shows that work carefully builds on previous learning and indicates a good range of projects through which pupils develop important skills. By the time that the pupils leave the school, they have had opportunities to learn to measure, mark, cut and fix various materials. They design, make and evaluate models and can say what they like about their design and what they would change. In Year 3 the pupils construct photograph frames and learn how to make the structures stable. They design and make their own toppings for pizzas and decide which ones are the tastiest. Year 4 pupils design and make Story Books with moving parts. The pupils in Year 5 use cam mechanisms to create toys with parts that will move in different planes. They design, make, test and evaluate fairground models.
80. No lessons were observed during the inspection. However, it is clear from the discussions with the pupils that they enjoy design and technology. They enthusiastically explain how they arrived at the finished products, they use the correct vocabulary to describe features of their work and they know how to evaluate the end product in terms of purpose and appearance. The subject leader has recently taken over responsibility for design and technology and has made very good progress in providing and organising resources to support the teachers in their delivery of the curriculum throughout the school. She recognises that ensuring that the teachers all have the required subject knowledge and confidence to promote pupils' learning can further raise the status of the subject. There is scope for the use of information, communication and technology skills to be developed in the subject. In the recent past good use of community links to help the pupils see the relevance of learning design and technology skills have been made and the school plans to continue these.

### **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

81. Standards in geography and history have improved since the last inspection. Throughout the school the pupils are interested in, and enjoy learning about, geography and history topics. Strengths of the geography and history curriculum are the good use made of local resources and the educational visits made further afield to support teaching and learning. The school now has long and medium term planning in place to support the teachers in knowing what to teach to each age group. The pupils produce a good range of written work and the school has moved away from the worksheet approach that was criticised in the last inspection. In both subjects, opportunities to use literacy skills, in the form of extended writing, are missed. The use of information and communication technology skills is in the early stages of development in both subjects.
82. No lessons were seen in geography during the inspection as the subject is not taught during the first half term of the year. The judgements on the standards of the pupils' work and their progress are based upon the scrutiny of the pupils' work and the discussions that were held with the pupils.
83. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are attaining standards in geography that are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. The pupils can research topics in some depth, including a study of mountain environments using a range of secondary sources. They know that different places may have similar and differing characteristics. The pupils have a sound knowledge of their local environment and are able to discuss ways in which they would like to see it improved.

They have investigated contrasting localities in Mackworth and Matlock. Younger pupils can begin to justify some of their observations and judgements about places, for example, by expressing a view on the possible building of three hundred houses on farmland in Mackworth (a very real issue prior to the inspection). The pupils' knowledge of other countries is less well developed although they enjoy learning about how people live in other countries. The pupils' work shows satisfactory progression through the geographical strands of *places* and they can explain why there are variations in population, for example in different parts of the country. They have a basic understanding of *patterns* of geographical development such as why some areas have lots of industry and they know that environments can be improved or damaged by the actions of people. There is evidence that the strands of enquiry and geographic skills are less well developed and procedures for assessing pupils' learning are not in place. The pupils' experiences of generating geographic questions using ICT, for example devising data bases to present information about different countries is limited. They also need more opportunities to develop fieldwork techniques such as using cameras, other equipment and drawing sketches.

84. By the end of Year 6 the pupils attain standards in history that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The pupils make good progress over the four years at Brackensdale. By the end of Year 6 they can talk confidently about historical events and have a well- developed understanding as to how we can find out about the past from a variety of sources.
85. By the time they leave the school the pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. They have a secure sense of chronology. They confidently describe the life of Henry VIII, and can discuss the reasons why Henry married six times. They have a sound knowledge of life in Victorian times and are able to describe the differences between the lives of the rich and poor. The pupils reflect on how things changed and the reasons behind some of these changes. The older pupils find out what life was like for children at school during the Victorian era. A good feature of the work is the way in which comparisons are drawn with peoples lives at different periods in the past with the pupils' lives to-day This topic is tackled imaginatively and good use is made of a visit to the Black Country Museum. Other topics are also well supported by visits to Massons Mill and Pickford House and visiting experts reconstruct a *Tudor Day*. The pupils organise and present their work well in history and geography. The pupils speak with enthusiasm about their work in both subjects and they particularly enjoy the visits .
86. Teachers plan the work together in year groups and this secures consistency of subject coverage between classes. Two lessons were observed in history: one good and the other satisfactory. In the better lesson the teacher made good use of pictorial evidence that enabled the pupils to compare the social conditions during Viking times with those of today. Video material was also well used to consolidate the pupils' understanding. The subject leader for geography is enthusiastic but has only been responsible for the leadership of the subject for a few weeks. She recognises the need for teachers to make better use of the opportunities for assessment that is identified in year group plans and has plans to provide in-service training on "Practical strategies for improving teaching in geography". She has improved the level of resources through the purchase of new books and a CD-ROM for geographical investigations. The subject leader for history monitors curriculum coverage and she has analysed how well the learning outcomes in each year group topic matches up with the teachers' planning. This has been useful and it has identified that the work planned needs to be matched more closely to the pupils' differing abilities and that subject needs more resources. Inspection findings confirm these findings. In both subjects there are some links with literacy through the *What's in the news* topic but overall the school could develop the key skills in literacy more effectively through history and geography. The work on Mackworth, "Then and Now", brings elements of

geography and history together for pupils in Year 3. Both subjects contribute well to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

87. The school has made a significant investment in ICT since the last inspection and has recently converted a room into a very well resourced computer suite. There is also at least one computer in each classroom. The co-ordinator leads the subject particularly well and has the expertise to provide a good level of advice and guidance to her colleagues. She has provided information packs for staff training sessions and all of the teachers have completed their ICT training. They are competent users of computers and confident about teaching the subject. A comprehensive program of work is in place across the school and the pupils are acquiring skills progressively year-on-year. Currently the standards attained by the pupils by the end of Year 6 are below average but the levels of work seen in other year groups is appropriate for the ages of the pupils. The pupils' word processing skills are developing well and the teachers, under the guidance of the co-ordinator, ensure that they are taught progressively across the school. All classes use the computer suite twice each week and the subject leader has provided lesson plans for teachers to use during these sessions. These contain learning objectives, activities and details of assessment. The impact of this support was evident in the three good lessons that were seen during the inspection. These were taught in the computer suite. The teachers managed the pupils well and they learned effectively during the lesson. In Year 5 the pupils produced plans of the classroom from their rough sketches. They were skilled in using the drawing program to place shapes representing desks, to infill the shapes with colour and then to add text. Year 3 pupils were adept at using a paint program to produce pictures in the style of *Mondrian* and *Jackson Pollock*. The pupils made good progress in improving their skills during these lessons.
88. ICT is being used to support work in other subjects but it is still at an early stage of development and could be used more effectively. It features strongly in Year 3 when, for example, the pupils insert pictures into their writing *when planning a healthy meal* and in mathematics in work on time and money. In Year 4 the pupils have written adjectives on a poster to describe a footballer and in Year 6 the pupils have accessed a database to carry out historical research on Dr. Barnardo and used a literacy quiz to learn the story of *Macbeth*. Almost all of the pupils are able to load programs that they have previously saved in their own personal files and can close them down when they have finished. They learn to use the keyboard and mouse with control and understanding, and can use both right and left *click* commands on the mouse. They are familiar with dropdown menus and use them regularly in their work.
89. The capacity for improvement in the subject is very good. The scheme of work that the subject leader has put in place and the bank of lesson plans that she has devised ensures that the teachers plan progressively more demanding work and are able to make the best use of the equipment available to them.

## **MUSIC**

90. The school's provision for music has been maintained at a satisfactory standard since the last inspection. No music lessons were seen during the week of the inspection and it is not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching, pupils' response in lessons or standards of attainment. Judgements about the school's overall provision for music, standards in singing, and pupils' attitudes, are based on discussions with pupils and with the subject co-ordinator, as well as visits to assemblies and singing practice.



91. Standards in singing are good. Pupils enjoy singing and respond well to the dynamic and enthusiastic leadership of staff in the whole-school singing practice. High levels of staff and pupil involvement raise the status of the activity as pupils rehearse for their performance in the Harvest Festival assembly. Pupils are able to sing one of the songs in three parts, and pupils maintain their own section with confidence. Not all pupils listen carefully to others and they cannot moderate their own voices when needed. Pupils in the choir learn new melodies and lyrics quickly and easily. They practise the warm-up breathing exercises sensibly and thoughtfully, and follow the teacher's instructions on phrasing and rhythm carefully in order to improve the quality of their singing. No boys have chosen to join the school choir.
92. The school's provision for the teaching of music is appropriately set out in a whole-school curriculum plan showing what pupils will learn in each year group. More detailed medium-term planning for each year group is based on appropriate schemes of work and ensures satisfactory coverage of the curriculum. Opportunities for assessment are effectively built into the planning. The time allocation for the teaching of music is appropriate for pupils of this age. A number of staff have significant personal expertise in music and their skills are shared helpfully across the school; for example, a member of the support staff leads the work with the choir. Occasionally some teachers use background music in other subject lessons to promote an appropriate atmosphere for learning, for example in art. Pupils have enjoyed visits to the Assembly Rooms in Derby to hear performances and other musicians have visited the school. Pupils speak with enthusiasm of their opportunities for singing and music making, and pupils in Year 4 enjoy playing the recorder.
93. The subject co-ordinator has continued to review the curriculum effectively and gives good support to colleagues. She has provided staff with good support materials to assist in the delivery of the planned curriculum. Resources to support the teaching of music are satisfactory overall. There is a good balance of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, and a range of music for listening. The number and range of instruments available for music teaching is only adequate and this limits the opportunities to develop pupils' composing skills.
94. Music in the school makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils. For example, the pupils sing a good range of hymns and songs to support acts of collective worship. These include songs which are reflective, such as "Light up the fire", and celebratory, such as "Count your blessings". Pupils speak with enthusiasm of opportunities to work in groups, and to make their own instruments in lessons. They enjoy singing in the choir. Pupils remember well how music from different cultures has featured in other subjects such as history when studying ancient Greeks. The school has a good range of music from across the world for pupils to listen to.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

95. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two games lessons. The evidence from these lessons, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and conversations with the pupils and the subject leader indicates that physical education has a secure place in the curriculum. The pupils are provided with a broad and balanced physical education curriculum that includes dance, gymnastics and games. Pupils also have swimming lessons and all Year 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity to swim on a weekly basis. This amounts to the equivalent of a year's programme of swimming. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs are given equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of the physical education curriculum.

96. Although it is not possible to judge the standards in gymnastics and dance, the pupils attain standards in games and swimming by the end of Year 6 that are expected of eleven-year-olds and there is no difference in standards between boys and girls. The standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. All of the necessary elements of the National Curriculum are systematically taught. Indoor and outdoor resources are good.
97. The teaching observed in the two lessons was very good. The teachers planned their lessons thoroughly. They had clear learning objectives and high expectations. They managed the lessons well and a high standard of behaviour was maintained. In a Year 5 football lesson the pupils developed good control. They controlled the ball well with their feet when stopping and moving in another direction. The pupils make good progress in learning the technical skills of basketball dribbling. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils demonstrated good skills in catching, throwing and dribbling and were learning to move into a space to receive the ball. At the start of lessons the pupils revealed a good understanding of how warm-up exercises should be used to prepare them for vigorous exercise; they showed a good awareness of safety. They worked well together, had very good attitudes to learning and behaved particularly well. Records indicate that by the time they leave school, around three quarters of the pupils are able to swim 25 metres.
98. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including football, rugby, netball, basketball hockey, badminton, cricket, rounders, line-dancing and athletics. The pupils have received football coaching from coaches from Derby County Football Club and they have also received specialist cricket coaching organised by Derbyshire CC. These activities effectively provide support for the subject, enrich the physical education curriculum and extend the pupils' learning.
99. The subject leader is an enthusiastic sportsman, is new to the post and has the aim of *Sport for All*. He has already introduced hockey and rugby into the curriculum. The school has a good range of expertise within the staff and they provide good additional support for extra curricular activities

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

100. Standards of attainment in religious education throughout the school have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The subject co-ordinator has addressed the key issues for action relating to subject planning identified at the last inspection and this has had a positive impact on standards across the school.
101. The programmes of study for religious education meet the requirements of the Derby locally agreed syllabus and are well supported by units of work from other nationally produced schemes. Pupils study Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. Planning includes good opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship as well as opportunities to meet visitors who can share aspects of their own faith experiences with pupils. The religious education attainment targets of Human Experience and Religious Perspectives are supported by the major ideas of questions and answers, belief and behaviour, ways of seeing the world, belonging and worship. These are embedded in teachers' planning across all four year groups. Lessons often include aspects of other subjects. In geography pupils have considered harvest around the world and in art, they make representations of religious artefacts. All pupils have access to religious education lessons although a few pupils are withdrawn by parents. Some homework tasks are set to support classroom work and this presents opportunity for parents to support their children's learning. However only very few pupils complete these tasks.

102. The quality of teaching of religious education is satisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of religious education makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils learn to reflect on their own uniqueness. In a year 6 lesson this was developed through listening to a reading of Psalm 8 from the bible. Younger pupils learn about the need for rules by studying the Ten Commandments.
103. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, and most are working at an appropriate level for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can reflect on the significance of light in religious festivals such as Christmas and Diwali. They can identify differences between Christian and Jewish places of worship and they are beginning to explore their own feelings. Pupils find it difficult to understand some aspects of stories from other faiths, such as the story behind the celebration of Hanukah. In years 5 and 6 pupils begin to understand and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual in God's creation. They can recognise some similarities in celebrations around the world for example the celebration of the harvest. By the end of year 6 pupils can retell the bible accounts of Christmas and Easter. They recognise a number of ways to describe God as father, creator, teacher and miracle worker. They consider their own experiences such as "my moment of temptation". However some pupils do find it difficult to quietly reflect and to articulate their own thoughts and feelings.
104. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is good. Pupils work well in groups and co-operate in activities. They are very tolerant, accepting and supportive of pupils with significant special educational needs. Older pupils give honest, thoughtful and sensitive accounts of their own experiences and listen well to others. They make relevant and thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Most pupils make a very positive response to the learning opportunities presented in lessons, which encourage reflection and exploration of the needs of others. Pupils are pleased to invite their parents to attend whole-school celebrations and a large number of parents attended the school's Harvest Festival during the week of the inspection.
105. The subject co-ordinator has improved the level of planning across the school. The provision of work more carefully matched to the needs of groups of pupils, and an improvement in the level of resources, would enrich and extend the learning of pupils in religious education.