

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Credenhill

LEA area: Hereford

Unique reference number: 116799

Headteacher: Mr J Moynihan

Reporting inspector: Barbara Crane
21227

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th October 2002

Inspection number: 247694

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Credenhill Hereford
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Holmes
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21227	Barbara Crane	Registered inspector	English Art and design Religious education Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? 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?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24895	Kath Hurt	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Special educational needs Educational inclusion	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary controlled Church of England school is smaller than most primary schools and serves an area that includes an armed forces base, housing association property and the local village. There are 181 pupils and the roll is rising. A very high number of pupils join and leave the school each year. Last year, for example, almost a third of the school's population changed. This means that few of the pupils who leave the school started in the Reception class. The children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. About 28 per cent of the pupils, which is above average, are on the school's register of special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need, which is average. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. Nearly all of the pupils come from white families and speak English as their first language. A very small number of pupils come from Traveller families. The school has had staffing problems over the last two years and this has led to a very high turnover of teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school provides a sound education for its pupils and it has some good features. The pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school because of the good provision for their personal development. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science but below average in some other subjects. Most pupils make the progress expected but the more able pupils should be doing better in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is satisfactory. The pupils use computers well because of better teaching in this subject. The teaching is also good for pupils with special educational needs and these pupils make good progress as a result. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but more needs to be done to check that the curriculum is consistently taught and that more able pupils' needs are met. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils' work in ICT (information and communication technology) is better than expected for their age.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and so these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and have a good attitude to their work; pupils of all ages and backgrounds get on very well together.
- The teachers expect pupils to behave well and so pupils' behaviour is good.
- The school provides well for the pupils' personal development.

What could be improved

- Teaching does not always meet the needs of the more able pupils and some of these pupils should be doing better in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in design and technology and art and design are too low by the time pupils leave the school.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils good guidance on how to improve.
- The school does not always effectively check that what it plans for each subject is taught.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 and, in spite of considerable barriers to improvement, the school is better than it was. The teaching has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The high turnover of teachers has meant that managers for subjects have changed frequently. Nevertheless, standards by the end of Year 2 have improved and the pupils' work with computers now exceeds the expectations for their age. The improvement in design and technology has been too slow and so pupils still do not reach the expectations for their age by the time they leave. The school's planning for improvement is better, with staff and governors more involved in drawing up priorities. The school's procedures for child protection have been strengthened. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved. The school now has a system in place to appraise teachers and set targets for development. While there has been some effective work to enable teaching that builds on pupils' prior learning, to check their progress and to plan appropriate activities for pupils of different abilities, this has not been as successful for the

more able pupils and there is still work to do here. The school is in a good position to further improve because of the present stability of staffing and the good teamwork evident amongst the staff.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	E	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	C	C	C	
Science	E	C	C	C	

The results for the eleven year olds who took the tests in 2001 were below the national average in English and well below those in similar schools. In mathematics and science results were in line with those seen nationally and in similar schools. The trend in standards up to 2001 was in line with the national trend. Results for the Year 2 pupils in the 2001 tests were in the lowest five per cent of schools in reading, well below the national average in writing and below the national average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, the results were well below in writing and mathematics and in the lowest five per cent in reading. As yet, there are no comparators available for the 2002 results of the tests taken by seven or eleven year olds. However, results in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 showed that more pupils were achieving the level expected for their age, and more reached the higher level in reading and mathematics, although very few pupils reached the higher level in writing. The results for eleven year olds in 2002 show that a similar number of pupils gained the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science but that relatively few pupils reached beyond this level. In writing, no pupils gained the higher level. On the basis of the work seen now, standards are average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. The lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work builds upon what they already know and they are well supported through good teaching. The few pupils from Traveller families make good progress through well-planned support. Average ability pupils make the progress expected but some of the more able pupils should be doing better. This is because the work that they do lacks consistent challenge for these pupils. The pupils' work in ICT is good and they use computers effectively to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils' work in art and design and design and technology reaches the expectations for their age by Year 2 but falls below expectations by Year 6. In all other subjects the pupils' work reaches a broadly average standard and their progress is satisfactory. The children in the Reception year make satisfactory progress in all of the areas of learning and most reach the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour in lessons. Pupils are polite and helpful.
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development means that pupils develop confidence. Relationships are very good and pupils of all ages and backgrounds get on very well together.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly average and pupils are punctual.

The pupils come to school ready to work and they enjoy school. A great number enthusiastically take part in the activities outside lessons. The pupils work and play well together and although there is some boisterous play at lunchtime, the pupils are not aggressive towards each other.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 and often has some good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and plan some interesting activities so that pupils want to take part. All of the teachers manage pupils well so that their behaviour is good and they are keen to learn. Good quality teaching enhances the rate of learning for pupils with special educational needs because their needs are quickly identified and met through careful planning. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupil's progress. There is good teaching in ICT and pupils learn rapidly because teachers plan good opportunities for them to use computers as everyday tools to support their work. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. The basic skills of reading, writing and number are taught thoroughly. Handwriting and spelling are very well taught. The weakness in teaching is that work in English, mathematics and science is not always pitched at the right level to challenge the more able pupils and it is also occasionally too hard, so pupils sometimes make slower progress than expected. The school has a good policy to guide teachers' marking of pupils' work but it is not implemented consistently. As a result, teachers' marking does not always give pupils appropriate guidance on how they can improve their work. Teaching for Reception children is more effective when activities involve the whole class or are directly supervised by adults. When children work without an adult, the planning for activities does not always ensure that they are using or extending their prior learning. This means that children make slower progress in some sessions.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects are suitably planned to cover what is needed but there is some unnecessary repetition of work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils' needs are met through well-planned support that results in good progress towards targets set.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The school provides firm guidelines so that pupils gain a good understanding of what is right and wrong. The school plans plenty of opportunities for pupils to work together and form very good relationships. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and think about important questions. They develop a good understanding of different cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is satisfactory. The teachers know the pupils well and offer suitable advice when they meet problems. The excellent Breakfast Club provides a good start to the day for many pupils.

Strengths in the curriculum include the way in which ICT is used in lessons to support pupils' learning and the good range of extra-curricular activities. A weaker aspect is that teachers sometimes do not teach aspects of subjects, such as the designing and evaluating elements of design and technology, in sufficient depth. The school has developed some good systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment, for example, in mathematics and science. These developments are too recent for the impact to be seen. However, the information about what pupils can already do in English is not recorded in a clear and manageable fashion so that teachers can quickly plan work at the appropriate level for the more able pupils.

Pupils who join the school during the year quickly settle down and make friends because of the school's welcoming atmosphere. While the school's care for pupils is satisfactory, there are occasions at lunchtime when the organisation of supervision limits the effectiveness with which adults can quickly intervene when play is too boisterous. The school checks the site and buildings for safety but the problems are not always recorded and this makes checking on whether issues have been resolved more difficult. The school has a satisfactory

partnership with parents and provides them with good information about what is taught and their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy head have successfully steered the school through a challenging period of staff change. Good teamwork has been established and there is a climate where teachers willingly offer support to each other. There is, however, too little checking of how well teachers are using the school's long-term planning for the curriculum, meeting the needs of more able pupils in Years 2 to 6 and ensuring consistent progress for the Reception children through all activities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors work hard in supporting the school and they have a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They have given good support to the school over a difficult time.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The senior staff and subject managers have mostly identified the next things that need to improve through checking the school's performance. Standards by the end of Year 2 have risen as a result of effective action.
The strategic use of resources	This is mainly good. There is effective financial planning and control. Additional grants are well used, for example, to provide for pupils with special educational needs, for those who need an extra boost to reach the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics, and to improve teachers' expertise in ICT. The school is good at seeking the best value in these respects but is less rigorous in ensuring the best value is gained in the performance of more able pupils.

The roles of the subject managers have been suitably extended, in spite of the changing staff. There are clear action plans for most subjects that identify the right priorities. Much of this work is too recent to show impact on teaching and learning but there is evident commitment to improvement that places the school in a strong position to move on.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school. • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • The school helps children to become more mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some concern over children's behaviour. • The organisation of homework. • Some parents do not feel comfortable to approach the school. • Some parents do not feel that the school works closely with them.

The inspection evidence mainly supports the parents' positive views, but found that teaching was satisfactory and that more able pupils are not always achieving their best. The inspection findings do not support the parents' concerns. Behaviour is good. The recent introduction of homework diaries ensures that children and parents know what is to be done and homework is suitably organised for pupils' ages. The school seeks to work closely with parents and the staff are approachable.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has a high mobility of pupils, for example, nearly a third of its pupils changed last year, with more pupils joining than leaving the school. In the present Year 2, only half of the pupils joined the school as five year olds and in the present Year 6 only a fifth of the pupils started at the school at the normal time.
2. The children in the Reception year make satisfactory progress in all of the areas of learning and most are likely to reach the goals for their age in all of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Their progress is satisfactory but in some lessons it is better in those activities that are directly supervised by the adults. In other activities, such as when they work with sand and water, their learning is slower because the planning for these activities is less clear about what the children are to learn.
3. The 2001 results for eleven year olds were below the national average in English and well below those in similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were average compared to results nationally and in similar schools. The trend in standards up to 2001 kept pace with the national trend. Results in the 2001 tests for seven year olds were in the lowest five per cent of schools in reading, well below the national average in writing and below the national average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools' results, the pupils' performance was well below in writing and mathematics and in the lowest five per cent in reading.
4. There are no comparators available for the 2002 results of the tests taken by seven or eleven year olds. However, results in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 show that more pupils achieved the level expected for their age, and more achieved the higher level in reading and mathematics, although very few pupils reached beyond this in writing. The results in the tests for eleven year olds in 2002 show that a similar number of pupils gained the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science but that relatively few pupils reached beyond this level. In writing, no pupils gained the higher level.
5. On the basis of the work seen now, standards are average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and the lower attainers make good progress in these subjects because the work is well planned to meet their needs and they are supported through good teaching. The few pupils from Traveller families make good progress through well-planned support. Average ability pupils make the progress expected but some of the more able pupils should be doing better. This is because the teachers do not always pitch the work at the right level for these pupils; it is sometimes too easy and occasionally too hard for them. Too often, the more able pupils are given the same work as the average ability pupils and this slows their progress. This results from the teachers not always taking account of the changing overall ability of groups in the class, as pupils join the school. The identification of pupils with special educational needs and the lower attainers is better and work is more quickly matched to their needs. More able pupils are not identified as rapidly and this results in some lower expectations of their ability.
6. The pupils' attainment in ICT is better than expected for their ages in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils use computers effectively to support their learning in other subjects and use them as an everyday tool. Pupils' work in art and design and design and technology reaches the expectations for their age by Year 2 but falls below expectations by Year 6. The oldest pupils have gaps in basic skills in art, such as observing closely and creating different qualities of line in drawing. This is because they have not benefited in the past from the curriculum that is now planned. In design and technology, pupils have had too little experience of recording their

designs, adapting these to improve the quality and evaluating how well the finished product met the design brief.

7. In all other subjects the pupils' work reaches a broadly average standard and their progress is satisfactory. The pupils' progress is sometimes restricted, however, by the occasional repetition of work, in history for example. In addition, the pupils' learning in some subjects is slowed because of the considerable time that elapses before they continue studying a particular subject. They often find it hard to remember what they have previously learned or relate new learning to previous knowledge.
8. Pupils learn about a good range of faiths in religious education and by the time they leave the school they understand different religious practices and how these guide people's lives. The pupils' spiritual development is well supported through their work and they can relate what they learn to what is important in their lives.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' good attitudes to school, their good behaviour and very good relationships have a positive impact on their personal development and academic achievements. This picture is similar to the previous inspection but relationships have improved.
10. Pupils like coming to school and are keen to take part in activities. Their participation in extra-curricular activities is particularly good, with a large number of pupils eagerly taking advantage of what is on offer. Pupils show good attitudes to learning in lessons. Although the teacher has to work hard to keep the attention of Reception children, especially towards the end of sessions, the children quickly settle into the daily routines and know what is expected of them. Pupils show a good interest in their work and try hard to learn. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils worked hard on a range of tasks about metric measurements, including a group who worked together on calculating the perimeter of a netball court.
11. Behaviour is good because pupils know what is expected of them and they are keen to please their teachers. There have been no temporary or permanent exclusions over the last year. Pupils develop a good sense of fairness and awareness of how their actions affect others. Their behaviour in assemblies and in the dining hall is very sensible. Older pupils help the younger ones, creating a very warm and friendly atmosphere. They are polite to each other and to adults. Boys and girls work and play well together. There is some lively and boisterous play, especially at lunchtimes, but the pupils are not aggressive.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. They willingly undertake a good range of duties and responsibilities. For example, house captains and school council members take their duties seriously and are eager to contribute to the school community. Improvements to the school toilets came as a result of consultations with the school council and pupils have also been instrumental in drawing up a set of playground rules. Class monitors take on responsibilities from an early age, as in a Year 1 lesson where they showed a very good level of responsibility and care when collecting and carrying scissors. Pupils' independence and self-confidence is developed well, for example through the provision of residential visits, and pupils talk enthusiastically about their experiences of working together in a different environment. They take pride in their achievements, especially when receiving house points or stickers for good work or effort. Pupils are very keen to show their work on display. They are sensible and thoughtful when discussing issues about moral values, such as respect and pride in assemblies and lessons. Year 5 pupils discuss issues relating to drugs, tobacco and alcohol in a sensible and mature manner. The pupils' response to health education issues is good, especially in relation to healthy eating.
13. Relationships are very good and pupils are friendly and helpful to others. They enjoy celebrating each other's success. For example, pupils of all ages were very appreciative of the performance of Year 6 in a class assembly when they performed a play about wisdom. Pupils

co-operate well in lessons. For instance, in a Year 1 music lesson, they worked in pairs, sharing resources well.

14. Overall attendance levels are satisfactory and are similar to the national average. Few pupils are late and lessons start promptly. The level of unauthorised absences is lower than average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The teaching is satisfactory and has some good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach and plan some interesting lessons so that pupils want to learn. All of the teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and so classrooms are calm and orderly. Relationships are very good and pupils want to please the teachers. Pupils feel secure in asking for help if they need it and respond well when praised for their efforts. In the best lessons, there is a fast pace that keeps pupils alert, with a good range of varied activities that keep pupils interested.
16. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is consistently good, both in classrooms and in withdrawal groups. These pupils learn at a good rate because their needs are quickly identified and met through careful planning. The classroom assistants are clear about what they are doing to support pupils' learning and they talk to teachers about how well pupils have progressed over lessons. There is good support for the few pupils from Traveller families, that enables these pupils to make good progress.
17. Teaching for Reception children is satisfactory. At this early stage of the year, the teacher is giving an appropriate emphasis to developing children's listening skills and insisting that they take turns in speaking. Good routines are being established so that children feel secure. When the children are taught as a class, the teacher takes good account of children's different abilities when asking questions. She is careful to sensitively involve those who are more reticent to join in. However, teaching for Reception children is more effective when activities involve all children, or in the groups directly supervised by adults. At these times, it is clear what will be learned through activities. When children work without an adult, the planning for these activities does not always ensure that they are using or extending their prior learning. This means that children make slower progress in some sessions.
18. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. The basic skills of reading, writing and number are taught thoroughly. The first parts of mathematics lessons have a fast pace that enhances pupils' skills in mental calculation. Handwriting and spelling are well taught and teachers ensure that pupils use the skills they have learned in future work. When teachers hear pupils read individually or in groups, they ask probing questions that extend pupils' understanding of how language is used to create the setting, develop the plot or define characters. Teaching in science is giving greater emphasis to developing pupils' investigational skills, as the school has identified this as a weaker area. The main weakness in teaching in English, mathematics and science is that work is not always pitched at the right level to challenge the more able pupils. Work is sometimes too easy and it is also occasionally too hard, so pupils' learning is sometimes slower than expected. This often arises because the teachers do not have the information they need about pupils' prior learning to quickly enable them to plan work at the right level for these pupils.
19. There is good teaching in ICT and teachers are confident with computers. Teaching in the computer suite ensures that the pupils acquire skills quickly and they continue to learn rapidly because teachers plan good opportunities for them to use computers as everyday tools to support their work.
20. Teaching in all other subjects is satisfactory, except in design and technology in Years 3 to 6. The weakness here is that the designing and evaluating elements of the subject are not given sufficient emphasis and this leads to lower than expected attainment by the pupils. Teaching in art is satisfactory, but there are considerable gaps in the oldest pupils' knowledge and skills

from the past because of the previous lack of suitable planning. Good support for pupils' spiritual development is evident in religious education lessons, where teachers use questions well to make pupils think about important issues. In some subjects, teachers' interpretation of the school's planning strays too far from what was intended, for example in history and geography, and this lessens the effectiveness of pupils' learning over time.

21. The school has developed a good policy to guide teachers' marking of pupils' work but it is not implemented consistently. There are some good examples of marking that help pupils understand what they need to do next but there is also marking that does little to give pupils appropriate guidance on how they can improve their work.

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

22. The school provides a satisfactory range of curricular and other learning opportunities for its pupils. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Improvements in planning mean that there is now a clear long-term plan showing how each subject will be taught. Detailed medium-term plans give teachers sound guidance about what the pupils in their class are to learn. This means that lessons now have a better focus, with a range of interesting activities that lead to good progress in some lessons. This is particularly evident in mathematics lessons where planning to the National Numeracy Strategy has had a good impact. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' skills in mental calculations through rapid-fire questions that generate a keen enthusiasm and greater accuracy. Planning for children in the Foundation Stage provides suitable experiences across each area of learning. However, it is sometimes not as clear what children will learn through activities that are not led by the adults.
23. Where subjects like design and technology, art and design, history and geography are taught in blocks, with considerable gaps of time between one unit of work and the next, pupils sometimes struggle to remember what they have learned. There are also occasions when some work is repeated, for example in history, when pupils in Year 6 repeat some work on World War II that they have previously done in Year 3. Sometimes what is planned is only partly achieved, as in design and technology, where the designing and evaluation elements are under-represented. Although the school plans to use the local area for fieldwork in geography, this work is not undertaken in sufficient depth and as a result pupils' skills in mapping and interpreting evidence are not as secure as they might be. Whilst regular checks are made on the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for teaching English and mathematics, managers of other subjects are not yet checking sufficiently that teachers are interpreting the schemes of work correctly so that weaknesses are found and dealt with more quickly. As yet, there has been an insufficient focus on checking that Reception children maintain an appropriate rate of progress in activities that are planned where they choose for themselves and work without support from adults.
24. There are regular planned sessions where pupils can explore and become more aware of issues like sex education, drugs misuse, social responsibilities and the need for a healthy lifestyle. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in using ICT in subjects like mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 developed good data recording skills in a science lesson, for example, when they produced a graph to show the results of their investigation into how substances dissolve. In Year 4, pupils developed good word processing skills when they produced a newspaper on computers, successfully using columns and adding illustrations. Some opportunities are missed in subjects like history, geography, science and design and technology for pupils to use their skills in writing because of some over-use of worksheets. However, the school has recognised this and there are signs of improvement in recent work, such as when pupils write about wartime evacuation or Boudicca's revolt in history.
25. All the pupils are fully included and have access to all the experiences on offer. However, the school is not yet sharp enough in adapting the curriculum to take account of the different

abilities of pupils and the stages they are working at. This works best for pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families. For these pupils, the school has good procedures in place. Their needs are quickly identified, targets are set and an effective programme of action is established. In lessons, the work is adapted at a suitable level, and teachers and classroom assistants support them well. This means that they make good progress. The curriculum is not adapted so well for the more able pupils. In most subjects they are too often set similar work to others, when they are capable of work at a higher level. This means that they do not move forward as fast as they might.

26. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils with many pupils taking part. All of the teachers contribute enthusiastically to these clubs that include football, netball, and a fitness club for pupils in Year 2. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions with other schools locally, such as the City Football Tournament and Rural League. These make a good contribution to pupils' physical development. Other opportunities, like the chess and nature clubs, successfully promote children's social and environmental skills. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 extend their horizons considerably in the residential visits arranged by the school. Visits to Malvern and Tregoyd mean that pupils take part in exciting, new activities like abseiling and canoeing, whilst also developing valuable skills in independence and teamwork. Subjects like history benefit from visits to places like Credenhill Hill Fort and Hereford Old House that bring history to life for pupils.
27. There are good links with the community. Opportunities like the 'Crucial Crew' session and visits by the fire brigade and local police mean that pupils have a good awareness of personal safety issues and community services. The school forges good links with the local church, for instance through regular visits by the vicar to take assembly, and classes visiting the church to see how it works and to celebrate their Harvest festival. The Breakfast Club and family literacy courses provide good support for parents and families. Participation in the Hereford Music Festival by the school choir boosts pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage.
28. The personal development of pupils is well provided for. Spiritual and cultural provision has improved since the last inspection and pupils' development in these areas is now good. Pupils' moral and social development continues to be good, as it was at the time of the last inspection.
29. The school provides many opportunities for the spiritual development of all its pupils. Themes in assemblies, such as feelings and emotions, are used well to help them explore a range of values and beliefs that inform their life and behaviour. A visiting group of local players, for example, acted out a play about 'How much God loves you'. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were encouraged to think about how much they loved someone, quietly and with their eyes closed, and some pupils smiled to themselves at the pleasure this gave them. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and value their contributions to lessons. For example, the contributions of pupils with special educational needs are just as appreciated as others. This raises their self-esteem and the respect of all pupils for the ideas and opinions of others.
30. The school actively promotes an environment where pupils are able to explore and develop their moral principles. Evidence of how sensitively this has been developed is seen in the 'Tree of values' display in the hall, where all pupils have contributed a 'leaf' expressing their concerns and cares for not only their own life, but for that of others. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of what is right and wrong and displays around the school help them to think about issues around them. All adults in the school provide good examples for pupils so that they are able to develop a sense of what is fair and good. For example, during a hymn practice when pupils learnt songs to be sung at the harvest festival, they were helped to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves by the governor who is supporting the teaching of music.
31. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Good teamwork is promoted in games lessons. Teachers organise lessons so that pupils work in pairs or small groups. As a result, they learn to share, take turns fairly and take responsibility. Assemblies are used well to help

pupils develop a sense of belonging to the school community and visits to outdoor centres for older pupils develop skills of getting on with each other. The school council provides a selection of pupils from each year group with the opportunity to experience decision making and taking responsibilities.

32. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Examples of the ideas and values of others are promoted through art, literature, music, history and geography. Pupils in Year 5, for example, understand the beliefs that underpin the art of the Aborigine people of Australia. Lessons in religious education help pupils understand how other people worship and what others believe. The language and imagery of a display of prayers and valued objects from other faiths in the hall are a constant reminder to pupils of the beliefs of others. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own culture are enhanced by visits to Hereford Cathedral for an arts festival.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides satisfactory care for its pupils and has improved its provision since the previous inspection. Pupils feel secure and cared for. Health and safety procedures and monitoring are satisfactory. The school has adopted a good policy since the previous inspection and measures have been put into place to identify issues. However, assessments of risks are not always recorded and this makes it difficult to check whether issues have been resolved. Child protection procedures are good and staff are aware of their responsibilities. First aid arrangements are good with adequate staff receiving training. Pupils' personal development is monitored well and staff provide good personal support enabling pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are seen and treated as important by all staff. The direct provision of free school meals and the establishment of a very successful Breakfast Club is testament to how the school strives to care for all the personal needs and welfare of its pupils.
34. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are generally effective. The behaviour policy with an emphasis on the use of rewards and praise has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils see the house point system as very fair and effective. There are times when the supervision of pupils at lunchtime is not organised to ensure that problems that arise can be dealt with quickly. Although pupils' behaviour is not generally aggressive there is some boisterous play that is missed because of this. Procedures to discourage and deal with bullying, racist or sexist behaviour are good and any potential incidents are monitored and recorded rigorously. For example, incidents of name-calling were dealt with very sensitively and effectively last year. The lack of any exclusions shows the school's positive attitude towards the inclusion of all pupils.
35. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. There have been shortcomings in the past, resulting in inaccurate calculation of the rate of attendance and inadequate monitoring. Registers are now well maintained and the secretary has introduced secure procedures to follow up absences and ensure the correct recording in registers, enabling the correction of the inaccurate figures for the last reported year.
36. The school has developed some good procedures for checking how well pupils are doing, in science and mathematics, for example, but these are too new to show an impact on enabling the teachers to match work more closely for the more able pupils. While there is some good assessment in the Reception class, insufficient information about children's attainment by the end of the Reception year is passed to the next teacher so that work can build quickly on what has already been achieved. In English, there is a great deal of information about pupils' attainment but the way in which it is recorded means that it is not quickly interpreted or understood by new teachers of classes. This limits the effective use of information to inform teachers' planning. The school recognises the need to streamline its recording of assessments so that teachers can more rapidly gauge the range of ability in the class and pitch work at the right level for more able pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. A satisfactory partnership has been established with parents and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements and attitudes to school, especially in relation to homework and reading. This is an improvement on the previous report, especially in relation to information to parents on progress and provision of homework.
38. Parents, however, have mixed views of the school as expressed during the pre-inspection meeting, through responses to the questionnaires and in discussion during the inspection. Whilst some parents consider that teaching is good, that there is an interesting range of activities and pupils are helped to become mature and responsible, they are less pleased with other aspects. They are not happy with the behaviour of children, the levels of homework and the school's links with parents. Inspectors generally agree with the parents' positive views but found the teaching is satisfactory. Inspection evidence does not support parents' concerns; the school does attempt to work closely with parents, staff are approachable, pupils' behaviour is good and homework is set regularly and at an appropriate level.
39. Parents have a satisfactory involvement in the work of the school by helping in classes and providing good support through the Parents' and Teachers' Association. The school is making good efforts to involve parents further in the school and in their children's education. Newsletters are attractively presented and give good information on school life and also on how parents may help in their children's learning. Curriculum consultation sessions, although not well attended, are a further example of how the school tries to involve parents. Annual reports give good details of pupils' achievements but no consistent or specific information in relation to areas for improvement and development. Parent's contribution to encouraging their children's learning is satisfactory. They ensure their prompt and regular attendance, and some support homework well, especially reading. Homework diaries provide a good opportunity for dialogue between teachers and parents and many parents take advantage of this. The school makes positive efforts to consult with parents through questionnaires and takes their views into account. This has resulted in the setting up of the very successful Breakfast Club.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The school's leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully led the school through a difficult period of staffing problems. He has been well supported by the deputy head and other senior staff. Together they have ensured that there is a good team spirit amongst the staff and an evident commitment to improvement. With the present more stable staffing, the school is in a good position to put in place the improvements outlined in its planning for development. Staff who are new to the school are well supported. There is now a good system of appraising teachers and setting targets for improvement.
41. While there has been slower progress in some areas identified from the last inspection, such as raising standards in design and technology, there has been satisfactory progress overall towards resolving most of the issues raised. The school's management has ensured that teaching is better than it was and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. However, much of the work undertaken in checking the effectiveness of teaching and learning has had a limited impact as teachers have changed so frequently in recent years. Nevertheless, the signs are that more pupils are reaching the levels expected for their age in Year 2 and Year 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good because their learning is closely tracked, the provision for them is well managed and pupils who join the school with special educational needs are quickly assessed. There is still work to do to ensure that the more able pupils' needs are met as effectively.
42. The school tracks pupils' progress from year to year, but the system is not sufficiently flexible to take account of the more able pupils who join the school. The school sets targets for each year group, but does not review these often enough in the light of the school's changing population. As a result, teachers are not always aware of how the overall profile of ability of

pupils in their class has changed and this leads to some lower expectations of the more able pupils.

43. The roles of the subject managers are clearly defined, but several are new and have had a limited opportunity to check teaching and learning. This is also the case with the manager of the Foundation Stage, who is providing good support for the newly-qualified teacher of Reception children but has not yet had the opportunity to check the effectiveness of how well her planning for activities promotes children's learning when they are not directly supervised. The good management of mathematics has led to improvements in standards by the end of Year 2, and effective action by the English manager has led to improved standards in handwriting. In science and mathematics, some good work on better recording of pupils' attainment has been undertaken but it is too early to see the impact of this on teaching. The weaknesses in subject management arise from the lack of checking to see whether the curriculum is being taught to reflect the school's planning and is meeting the needs of the more able pupils.
44. The school's planning for development has improved and the right priorities have been identified. The staff and governors are now much more involved in drawing up priorities. The governors work hard through their committees and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have given good support for the school over a difficult time. They visit to see what is happening in classrooms. A governor gives very good support for music in the school through her support for teaching.
45. Financial planning and management are of good quality. The school's higher than average underspend last year was due to refunds connected with teacher absence. The carry-forward figure returns to about four per cent of total budget in the current year's allocation of funds. Additional grants, especially those designated for pupils with special educational needs, for booster classes and to improve teachers' expertise in using computers, are used effectively. The school checks that it gets the best value for money in these areas but is less rigorous in checking that the more able pupils are getting what they need. The headteacher and governors have a clear grasp of finances and funding issues especially in relation to the fluctuation in pupil numbers. Administrative systems are very good, enabling the school to plan and monitor its finances well. The many issues raised in the audit report of 2000 were dealt with very promptly and effectively by September of that year. The expert support provided by the school secretary keeps the administrative burden on the headteacher and other staff to a minimum.
46. The school's staffing, resources and accommodation are adequate. Good resources for ICT support the pupils' good attainment and the computer suite is well used. Support staff are well deployed to enhance learning for the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve the progress made by the more able pupils in English, mathematics and science by:

- ensuring that teachers plan work at the right level and provide consistent challenge for pupils;
- ensuring that the system for recording pupils' prior attainment is easily understood by teachers so that they can quickly plan work at the right level for more able pupils;
- reviewing the targets set for year groups more frequently to take account of the more able pupils who join the school.

(Paragraphs 5, 18, 25, 36, 41, 42, 56, 59, 61, 65, 68, 69)

Raise standards in design and technology and art and design by the end of Year 6 by ensuring that the teaching covers all aspects of these subjects and that pupils build skills progressively in each year.

(Paragraphs 6, 20, 71, 75)

Implement the school's marking policy so that teachers consistently give pupils better guidance on how to improve their work.

(Paragraphs 21, 58, 64)

Improve the quality of the curriculum and promote pupils' better progress by:

- ensuring that subject managers check that what is planned is taught in sufficient depth and that work is not repeated;
- checking that Reception children's progress is more consistently promoted through activities that are not directed by adults.

(Paragraphs 2, 7, 17, 22, 23, 43, 47, 84, 100)

In addition to the issues above, the governing body should consider the following points when drawing up its action plan:

- Ensure that the headteacher and governors record the areas for improvement that are identified when assessing the safety of the school, so that they can better track their work in resolving problems.
- Review the organisation of supervision at lunchtime so that any problems that arise in outdoor play areas can be dealt with more quickly.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	12	19	0	0	0
Percentage	3	16	31	50	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		181
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		22
Special educational needs		YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		51
English as an additional language		No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language		0
Pupil mobility in the last school year		No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission		33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving		19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	13	15	15
	Total	19	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (77)	76 (72)	86 (81)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	21	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (72)	83 (88)	86 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	8	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	17	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (59)	77 (76)	91 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	13
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (65)	82 (88)	91 (94)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

*Because fewer than ten boys and fewer than ten girls took the tests in 2001 the numbers at each level are omitted from the tables in line with the governors' reporting arrangements to parents.

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	161		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	1		
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1
Average class size	25

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	407598
Total expenditure	390160
Expenditure per pupil	2243
Balance brought forward from previous year	20433
Balance carried forward to next year	37871

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	181
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	48	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	50	10	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	56	17	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	56	17	2	2
The teaching is good.	37	52	2	2	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	44	6	10	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	46	0	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	29	48	17	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	29	52	12	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	48	10	2	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	52	10	2	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The school takes children into the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five years old. The Reception teacher is new to teaching and to the school. An experienced teaching assistant supports her. The teacher's planning covers all of the areas of learning for young children and at this early stage of the year an appropriate emphasis is being placed on children's personal and social development. The teaching is satisfactory in each of the areas of learning. It is often good in the parts of lessons where the children are taught together as a class and when the adults teach groups of children, following the whole class session. This is because teaching here focuses more sharply on the skills that are to be learned. When children move to activities they choose for themselves and work without adult support, their rate of learning drops because it is not as clear what will be learned. As a result, some children do not persevere with activities because they are not sure what to do and they do not sustain interest. The new teacher has good support from an experienced teacher who reviews with her what is working well and areas that need to be worked on to improve the effectiveness of teaching. As yet, this mentor has had limited opportunities to check the effectiveness of how well all activities that are planned are promoting a more consistent rate of learning for children.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. The teaching is satisfactory and children are progressing at the expected rate. The children are on track to reach the expected goals by the end of the year in this area of learning. There is a good emphasis on establishing routines that are helping children to settle into the pattern of the school day and work together. Some of the children have a short span of attention and concentration and the teacher is good at drawing children into discussions when their attention wanders. The warm and supportive relationships ensure that children develop confidence. They readily approach adults for help because they feel comfortable and secure in doing so. Some children shout out answers or comments and the teacher uses a puppet very successfully to engage their attention and point out that they need to take turns in speaking and listen to others. Her praise for those who do so has a good effect on others, who then attempt to take turns, because the children are keen to please her. There are good opportunities planned for children to work together, for example in the role-play area where the resources encourage co-operative play.

Communication, language and literacy

49. Most of the children are likely to reach the goals for their age by the end of the year. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress. The children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. They know that writing has meaning and are learning to write their names. The teaching is satisfactory but better in the sessions when the whole class is taught together. In one session, for example, the teacher used a teddy's visit to a child's home successfully to extend children's skills in speaking and listening. She asked the children to work in pairs to think about what the teddy had done on the visit. While some were initially reticent, the teacher's good prompting and encouragement led to all children taking part. The teacher very successfully enabled the more able children to go further and extend their explanations. She then wrote the key words in their ideas on the whiteboard and children referred to these later in the session. The group supported by the teacher following this session made good progress in deciding what they would pack to go on a visit and further extended their vocabulary and ability to speak in extended sentences through her good questions. Another group made good

progress on learning the sounds of letters as they worked with the classroom assistant. Other groups, who were not directly supervised by an adult, made slower progress. For example, children working in the water tray used a fishing rod to extract fish shapes with initial sounds on them, but quickly lost interest because they were unsure of what they were doing because the planning for this activity was weaker.

Mathematical development

50. The teaching and learning are satisfactory and most children are on track to reach the expectations for their age by the time they start Year 1. Most children recognise the symbols for numbers up to 10 and some go beyond this. In an activity in sorting number cards up to 10, all of the children achieved the correct order. Some are confident in counting back from 10 and the good support from the teacher enabled the less able children to make rapid progress in this over one session. The children recognise shapes such as a triangle, square and circle and use the correct terms. They sort objects by size and colour but some find it harder to sort for two properties. At this early stage of the year, most children find it hard to find one more than a given number under 10, without a visual clue. In one session, the good support from the teacher enabled children to further extend their ability with numbers through a shopping game, where items were added to a basket. The classroom assistant worked effectively to extend the lower attaining children's ability to count up to five objects. Another group, however, who worked unaided, found it hard to play a number game and placed numbers randomly after attempting to play by the rules.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. Most of the children are likely to reach the goals for their age by the end of the year. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory. There are appropriate activities for children to find out more about the world and extend their experiences, such as when they smell and taste exotic fruit as part of their work on healthy eating. The teacher has effectively used a story about starting school to explore the children's feelings about what they can now do and how they have changed since being toddlers. Their work on 'ourselves' has involved looking at how they have similarities and differences, such as colours of eyes. In one session, the children had to decide what they would include in a packed lunch to create a healthy meal. They remembered what they had previously learned about the importance of fruit and vegetables and readily suggested ideas. The teacher successfully involved all children in the discussion through sensitive prompting. When children in a group working without an adult created food items from play dough, one child remembered that an apple had a small indentation where the stalk attached to the branch and created this carefully on the fruit. Others, however, soon drifted from the task and made models of cars or people. A group who were creating a fruit salad in the role-play area sustained their play for some time, selecting items and acting out how they would cut up and prepare the fruit.

Physical development

52. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress. The teaching is satisfactory and most of the children are on track to reach the goals for their age by the end of the year. There is a suitable area for outdoor play, with direct access from the classroom, and appropriate activities are planned for imaginative play. In addition, children have lessons in the school hall. The teacher promotes children's independence well, but help is at hand when needed. The majority of children change for physical education lessons unaided, although a few require help with fastenings. The children run, jump and side-step confidently. Their awareness of space is often limited, but they are learning not to bump into each other as they move. There is some good and effective coaching that enables individuals to improve. In one session, for example, the teacher worked with a child on his technique for jumping and landing and he made good progress in a short time. The teacher sets clear expectations for behaviour, but some children find it hard to overcome their sense of excitement and do not listen carefully to

instructions. There are times when adults do not quickly intervene to improve this. The children's finer movements, when using pencils, scissors or paintbrushes, show an average level of control. There are plenty of opportunities planned to develop these, for example, when children work with play dough, they pinch, roll and squeeze the dough to create the required shape.

Creative development

53. Teaching is satisfactory and children make the expected progress. Most are likely to reach the goals for their age by the end of the Reception year. The children enjoy singing a good range of familiar songs and they sing enthusiastically and tunefully. They start and finish songs together and move rhythmically to the beat. Children fit actions to the songs and most clap the rhythms accurately. Some children lack control when they paint and the adults do not always provide the support they need to keep the shapes within the paper, but most children create pictures that show appropriate control of colour and shape. There are opportunities for making models and collages using an appropriate range of materials, over which children have choice to develop and try out their ideas. There are good resources for role-play and children play out parts as customers and shopkeepers, giving change and using the telephone to order goods.

ENGLISH

54. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, with particularly good improvement in standards in handwriting. Pupils' performance in reading and writing in Year 2 has dipped over recent years but the latest results show improvement, with more pupils reaching the level expected for seven year olds in reading and writing and a greater number reaching beyond this in reading. Too few pupils gain beyond the expected level in writing. The performance of eleven year olds shows some steady improvement in the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age but, again, too few pupils are doing better than this.
55. On the basis of the work seen now, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and speaking and listening by Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils usually listen carefully to each other and the teacher and follow class discussions so that they can make appropriate contributions of ideas. Their vocabulary widens as expected as they become older. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils offered words to describe how a character in a poem felt and offered suggestions such as 'furious' and they remembered the term 'alliteration'. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils discussed how to devise questions to ask visitors and took account of each other's ideas. The pupils' handwriting is neat and well formed. By the end of Year 2 most pupils create a setting for a short story and introduce characters. The average pupils choose words for effect, such as "the lightning was zooming down and blasting the earth" and they vary the way in which they construct sentences. By the end of Year 6, pupils write a balanced argument for and against topics such as fox hunting. They know how to adapt their style of writing in a formal letter in which they object to the building of a leisure centre. The pupils' reading in Year 2 is often expressive and they enjoy reading poetry. Pupils talk about their favourite stories and poems and are developing opinions about which authors they prefer. They competently gather information from books, using the index and contents pages to help them locate what they want. Pupils in Year 6 read a good range of books and become quietly absorbed in the text. They express preferences for different types of stories such as adventure, fantasy or mystery. Most pupils understand how writers use language to create settings or move the plot along and they refer to the text to pick out pertinent sections to exemplify their opinions. The pupils use their literacy skills well to support learning in most other subjects, although the occasional over-use of worksheets sometimes limits opportunities for them to use their skills in writing.
56. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attainers make good progress because of work that is closely matched to their needs and well-focused support in reading and writing. Classroom assistants and teachers give them good support. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, good teaching enabled lower attaining pupils to understand that the main clause of a sentence contains the subject and that some sentences start with connectives. The good support

provided in Year 4 enabled lower attaining pupils to improve their setting for a story. Average ability pupils make progress as expected but the more able pupils should be doing better. This is because the work that is planned for them is often too easy and sometimes too difficult. This arises in Years 1 and 2 because the teachers do not receive information from the previous teacher about the pupils' prior attainment that is easy to interpret and can be quickly used to pitch work at the right level. In Years 3 to 6, better information is passed from class to class but there is still some lack of detail about pupils' prior attainment, particularly in writing. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 set targets for pupils, based on an overall level for English, but do not focus sufficiently on the reading and writing elements.

57. Teaching is satisfactory. The teaching of handwriting and spelling is good. These aspects are taught thoroughly and pupils make good progress throughout the school. The sounds of letters are also taught well and pupils use these well when they meet unfamiliar words. For example, Year 1 pupils were effectively taught that 'ee' and 'ea' have the same sound and quickly found words that had this sound. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used the sounds they had previously learned to offer alternative ways of spelling words and the teacher's instruction to "put the spelling you think is right and see if it looks right on your whiteboard" enabled most pupils to select the correct spelling. There is some good questioning that prompts pupils to think about how language is used to create atmosphere or build up characters in stories. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher pressed the pupils to explain what a particular section of a story told the reader about a character. Teachers set a good example when they read aloud and most pupils reflect this lively, expressive reading when they read. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, more able pupils' reading of poetry showed that they had learned how to respond to punctuation and how to stress particular words in a poem. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to use ICT to present their work. Year 6 pupils word process and redraft their writing very competently. Year 2 pupils quickly create lists using the enter key. Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to work together. Year 6 pupils, for example, worked in pairs to devise interview questions to gather information about visitors' war experiences.
58. Teachers' marking is sometimes very helpful in showing pupils what they need to do next to improve their work, but this is not always the case. The comments made do not link often enough to the pupils' targets in writing, and opportunities are missed to help the pupils improve. There are examples of good assessment of pupils' progress when they read in groups or individually, but again, this is not consistently helpful in pinpointing what pupils need to work on next or in providing useful information for the next teacher about the level at which pupils are working.
59. There is too little account taken of the more able pupils' abilities in some parts of lessons. Sometimes the discussion in the first part of the session is pitched too low for the more able pupils, the pace is too slow for them and does not challenge them to think more deeply. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the opportunity to explore why certain verbs are more powerful than others was missed and the more able pupils easily completed the task set for the whole class. At other times the tasks they are set when they work independently lack challenge or are too difficult. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher asked a group to write instructions and they struggled with the task.
60. The subject manager is providing a satisfactory lead and has had a great deal to do since he took on the role. There has been some good work in improving handwriting and spelling, which were identified as weaknesses through checking pupils' work across the school. He is aware of the need to improve the recording of assessments so that teachers can more quickly meet the needs of more able pupils.

MATHEMATICS

61. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There has been a significant improvement in standards in Year 2, which have been below average over the previous four years. Good teaching in that year group shows clearly in the improved results of

national tests in 2002 and the standards found during the inspection. Most pupils reach the expected levels, and an increasing number now reach the higher level 3. This establishes a much better base for their work in the junior classes. Although pupils now make sound progress in their mathematics work in Years 3 to 6, their overall progress year on year has been slowed in recent years by the overwhelming number of staff changes and numbers of pupils moving in and out of the school. This means that some of those now in Year 6 have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and insecure skills. Effective teaching in their final year helps the majority to reach the expected levels so that the school meets the targets set in mathematics. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable, because they are not always set challenging tasks.

62. There has been a good improvement in pupils' ability to count and calculate in their heads, which was a weakness found in the last inspection. This is where the planning to the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines has been particularly successful. Teachers manage this part of their lessons well with lively, rapid-fire questioning that pupils find exciting. A good example was seen in a lesson in Year 2 where pupils were learning number facts to 10. The teacher's use of 'flick, flack' cards and a pirate money game successfully sharpened pupils' counting skills. This helped them in their new work on subtraction, so that most pupils counted back quickly, often without using the number line. In Year 5 a game of 'Shoot the Sheriff' where boys competed against girls created high levels of enthusiasm and a good spirit of competition. The teacher targeted her questions carefully according to pupils' level of ability so that they became more quick and accurate in their mental calculations using the four rules with numbers over 100. However, some pupils in Year 6 struggled to calculate fractions because they were unsure when asked questions like "How many 6s in 30?"
63. Improved planning means that most pupils now make equally sound progress across all the aspects of mathematics because there is appropriate provision for each. The pupils use their skills in numeracy well in other subjects and there are also regular opportunities for pupils to use their new skills in investigations. Data handling is one aspect where pupils strengthen their skills through practical investigations in mathematics and other subjects. An investigation into pupils' favourite drinks and a traffic survey in Credenhill are good examples of work in Year 2 where pupils developed sound skills in tallying and interpreting graphs and charts.
64. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory, with some good and very good teaching seen during the inspection. Pupils enjoy their lessons because there is a good rapport between teachers and pupils and they find activities interesting. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject, and has been instrumental in bringing about the improvements in the teaching of mathematics. He has a good overview of what needs to be done, because he has analysed pupils' responses to test papers and this has led to a better focus on weaker areas, like mental skills. A programme of staff training and feedback from lesson observations mean that teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject's requirements. This shows in their confident explanations and introductions. Lessons move at a brisk pace and are well focused on what most pupils are to learn. Teachers take note of what pupils achieve in lessons, but they do not always communicate this information clearly to pupils. The quality of teachers' marking is not always informative and consistent. Whilst there is evidence of thorough marking in some classes, with useful comments that show pupils what they need to do next, this is not yet evident in all classes. More could be done to provide comments that help pupils see what their next steps should be, and then to ensure that these are followed through. Target setting has been introduced and this has the potential to speed improvements. However, it is not yet firmly linked with the use of assessment information or used consistently in all classes. These features lessen the impact of otherwise good teaching.
65. The system for checking and recording what pupils can do has improved considerably. There is now a good bank of useful information from tests and teachers' checks available to them about the pupils in their class. This is particularly efficient in the junior classes where a colour-coded grid highlights clearly those who need extra help and those who are capable of work at a higher level. It is too early to see the impact of the use of this system. Insufficient information

is passed to the Year 1 teacher about the children's attainment at the end of the Reception year. At present the Year 1 pupils' progress is slowed because the teacher has to check what pupils can do and so pitch the work at the right level. Information from assessments is used well for pupils with special educational needs. Their targets are clear, and activities are often adapted so that they work at a similar, but easier, level. Classroom assistants provide good, close support for them as they work. As a result, these pupils make good progress, sometimes reaching the expected levels for their age group. An area for development, however, is the use of this information to adapt the curriculum and lessons for others, particularly the more able pupils. Whilst most teachers readily identify these pupils, they do not yet adapt their work well enough to challenge them at a sufficiently high level. Often, they work on similar tasks involving bigger numbers rather than more complex work. A good example of this was seen in a lesson in Year 2, where it soon became apparent that some pupils had advanced skills. When the teacher explained that the larger number is written first when subtracting, a pupil commented, "you can take 9 from 3 ... it's minus 6". In spite of the teacher's best efforts during the lesson, and good encouragement for the pupil to explain his thinking, his task was not pitched at a high enough level to move him forward in his mathematics work. At present there is not a sufficiently clear focus in teaching on what such pupils need to learn next to improve their progress and attainments, and the school's standards overall.

66. The subject manager gives a good lead and has effectively brought about improvement in pupils' performance by the end of Year 2. The right areas are being worked on.

SCIENCE

67. Standards in science by the end of Year 6 are average. The school has maintained the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level but has not sufficiently raised the proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels. This reflects the position at the time of the last inspection. Satisfactory progress has been made, overall, since the last inspection, but the school is not yet always planning activities that take into account the previous learning of more able pupils and their work sometimes lacks sufficient challenge to enable them to achieve as well as they might. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with national averages for both the expected and higher levels and this is reflected in the pupils' current work.
68. Scrutiny of previous work shows that pupils by the end of the infants are making satisfactory progress in developing a body of scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils have recorded the growth of bean seeds and can name the main parts of a plant. They can sort a range of materials according to such properties as hard or soft, rough or smooth. They have a sound knowledge of push and pull forces as was seen in a lesson that made effective use of a computer to support their learning. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body after an energetic lesson that effectively develops their investigational skills. Talking to pupils and a scrutiny of their previous work show that more able pupils have a better understanding of science. For example, after testing how far a toy car will travel down a ramp they are able to link the height of the ramp with the distance travelled, whilst other groups of pupils relate it to how fast the car goes. A scrutiny of the work of junior age groups shows that the majority maintain satisfactory progress. However, too much emphasis on the use of worksheets, particularly in Year 3, inhibits the opportunities of more able groups of pupils to record their own ideas and opinions on what they have found out. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have a sound knowledge of materials and their properties and know why these can be described as solids, liquids or gases. Some use is made of their numeracy skills to record their findings in the form of graphs and tables as seen in a Year 6 lesson. Good speaking and listening skills were evident in a Year 5 healthy living lesson on the dangers of drugs and Year 4 have investigated the effects of air resistance as a force. Pupils with special educational needs in all classes receive good support and the work is better planned to take account of their needs, so they make good progress.

69. Teaching is satisfactory. The school has identified the development of investigation skills as an area of improvement and this is already evident in current science lessons. Teachers' knowledge is secure and used well in questioning pupils. Most teachers are careful to frame their questions to the average and less able pupils, but sometimes they do not challenge or extend the understanding of more able pupils. When this is done well, as in the lesson on the dangers of drugs, it enables all groups of pupils to learn very effectively. Other lessons seen, and the scrutiny of previous work, shows that often average and more able groups of pupils follow the same range of work and so their achievement is only satisfactory. The planning of different work for different groups of pupils that more closely matches their previous learning is an area of development for the school.
70. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory with some good features. For example, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to more closely monitor teaching and learning across the school to build up a better idea of current standards and what needs to improve. This is a target on the current school improvement plan for the subject. A new system of recording the attainment of pupils has been introduced to enable teachers to quickly gain an overview of where to pitch the work for different ability groups but it is too early to see the impact of this on the more able pupils' achievement. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and are used more effectively to support teaching and learning across the school.

ART AND DESIGN

71. The pupils' work by the end of Year 2 reaches the expectation for their age but falls below by the time they leave the school. Standards for the older pupils have not been maintained and there has been unsatisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. This is because the oldest pupils lack basic skills, such as in observing and drawing. Their use of perspective and sense of composition are weak. The Year 6 pupils have a very limited knowledge of artists' work. This lower achievement is due to these pupils not having benefited from the good longer-term planning that is in place for the subject; the pupils have considerable gaps in their knowledge and experience.
72. The Year 1 pupils try out their ideas using different media to represent images. They mix colours to achieve some subtle shades when they paint from imagination or from what they see. Year 2 pupils observe closely when they look in a mirror and make a good attempt to represent facial features and the texture of skin and hair. They practise with charcoal in sketchbooks to try out different lines to create texture and mix different skin tones to use in the finished work. The pupils have looked at a good range of portraits by different artists to see how faces have been interpreted and represented in different times and cultures. The Year 3 pupils have created some collages that successfully capture Picasso's style through their study of his work. They match the colours well, showing an appropriate use of shape and line. The Year 5 pupils' work based on Aboriginal art shows careful control of pattern and they practised the design to be painted on stones. The junior pupils' sketchbooks, on the whole, show too little development of ideas or concerted effort to refine skills. In Year 6, the pupils' work on landscape lacks finer skills of observation and a lack of composition to show depth. Few of the pupils remember the names of the artists' work that they have studied to inform their painting, or how the styles varied.
73. The teaching is satisfactory and helped by good guidance from the subject manager, who has provided useful notes with ideas to support each unit of work. This level of planning and support is fairly recent, however, and teachers have to compensate for the pupils' lack of skills because of the previous lack of guidance in planning their lessons. Teachers work with pupils to improve their work and give good demonstrations, as in a Year 6 lesson, when the teacher showed the class how to create a wash with watercolour. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher

stopped the pupils to make good teaching points about how to better control the application of paint and this led to more accurate results.

74. The new subject manager knows what is needed to bring about improvement and is providing sound leadership. She is compiling samples of pupils' work so that teachers better recognise the standard and range of work to aim for. The subject manager is aware of the need to check that the school's new planning is being followed closely, and interpreted so that skills and knowledge are built upon more successfully. The good quality sketchbooks that have recently been introduced are an improvement over those used last year but the extent to which these are used effectively to promote learning is very inconsistent.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. Standards in design and technology are the same as at the last inspection. As then, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is similar to that found nationally but attainment by the end of Year 6 is still below the expected levels. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been too slow. All of the elements of the design and technology process are not taught in Years 3 to 6 and teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are sound in Years 1 and 2 because the design element of the work is better represented and pupils are starting to think about how to improve what they have done.
76. Due to the way the subject is taught in blocks of time, it was only possible to see one lesson in the infants. However, a scrutiny of the previous work from last year shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Younger pupils have developed their skills in cutting and shaping card and paper by designing and making a calendar and a shelter. In their science work they designed and then made a fruit salad, and Year 2 pupils have worked with cloth and wood to design and make a moving puppet and vehicles with axles and moving wheels. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was good. There was a good emphasis on the safe use of scissors in cutting and shaping and pupils themselves take responsibility for handing out and collecting them safely. Pupils were able to cut and shape coloured paper decorations for a magic hat, which they did with pride and pleasure.
77. The scrutiny of previous work in Years 3 to 6 shows that pupils have made a number of constructions. For example, Year 3 pupils made a shaduf as part of their topic on Egypt, and Year 4 pupils made a model of an iron age fort after a local visit. Older pupils made a moving boat using an electric motor. However, there is little evidence to show that these were the result of pupils' own designs. Many products were of a very similar nature and showed little evidence of individual ideas or design. Drawings of what pupils planned to make lacked some care, detail or labelling and there was no evidence of pupils evaluating their finished products to suggest how it could be improved.
78. Planning for the subject has improved since the last inspection but the school has not yet ensured that this is matched in its practice and that the designing and evaluating elements are sufficiently well developed in older pupils' work through an appropriate emphasis in teaching. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a month and has already drawn up plans for the future development of the subject. For example, pupils in the infants make good use of an evaluation and recording sheet in their work but this is not developed across the school. The co-ordinator needs to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject and the current school improvement plan has this as a target for development.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

79. Due to the way the school teaches history and geography in blocks, the only lessons seen during the inspection were history lessons in the junior classes. Evidence gained from discussions with pupils about their work and examination of their workbooks, shows that standards in each subject are broadly as expected by the ages of seven and eleven years, as

they were when the school was last inspected. The school has a clear plan for teaching the different aspects of history and geography. This clearly identifies what pupils will learn in each year group. However, there is still some repetition of units of work when teachers do not use the guidance consistently. An example of this is when Year 6 pupils repeat work on World War II previously covered in Year 3. This takes away valuable time and opportunities to work in depth on their planned topic on Britain since 1948.

80. The teaching of history and geography are satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good understanding of why events happened in the past. They explained clearly why the Great Fire of London spread so quickly and why Samuel Pepys' diary was so important in our knowledge of what happened then. In geography they know something of the features of other places. For instance, through the story of Katie Morag, they learned something of life on an island. Sometimes, because of the way the subjects are taught in short blocks in the infant classes, with long periods of time between units, their learning is not as secure as it might be. They struggled to remember what they had learned about Florence Nightingale, and to explain how the Island of Struay is different from Credenhill.
81. Pupils show enthusiasm for their history topics in the junior classes, particularly when teachers organise practical, interesting activities. Pupils in Year 4 were asked to think of questions about what it was like for those involved in fighting against the Roman invaders in Britain. Because they had a sense of purpose and were absorbed in their teacher's lively reading of a report about Boudicca's Revolt, they listened intently, remembering the facts well. When a classroom assistant took on the role of Boudicca, they asked thoughtful questions. A well-managed discussion about the Revolt meant that pupils developed a deep understanding of the reasons why people acted as they did, and their feelings. Pupil's knowledge of how these events fitted into a sequence stretching back in time was further strengthened by a prominently displayed timeline on which events were clearly marked. Good use is made of visits and visitors in history. Examples are when local residents come into school and talk about life during wartime, or when pupils visit Credenhill Hill Fort and the Old House in Hereford. These all help pupils to learn at first hand, which reinforces their understanding of life in the past.
82. Evidence from pupils' work in their notebooks and from discussions indicates that there is less learning from first hand experience in geography. The best examples of practical activities were a traffic survey in the local streets that meant the pupils in Year 2 learned more about transport in the local area. In Year 4, pupils developed a good understanding of environmental issues as they thought hard about the pros and cons of using Llangore Lake for water sports. The school has rightly identified the lack of fieldwork as an area for development. Improvements in this aspect will boost pupils' skills in such aspects as mapping and interpreting evidence for themselves. These skills are currently not as secure as their knowledge of the topics they study.
83. Too often, particularly in the junior classes, pupils work from textbooks or worksheets that are sometimes unfinished, and add little to their understanding. Pupils usually have similar work. This means that less able pupils struggle to complete it, and more able pupils find it too easy. However, there are signs of improvement in some recent work. Whilst unchallenging worksheets are still evident, teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to write in response to their topic work. A good example of this was when pupils in Year 6 worked in groups, creating a list of questions for visitors who described wartime issues, such as rationing. They made notes as they listened to them speaking, to use when writing their own reports later. This helped them sift through the information, identifying important points.
84. While the management of the subjects is satisfactory, there are some weaknesses. The subject manager does not check what pupils can do, so that progress is patchy as pupils move through the school, particularly in developing geography skills. Weak spots occur because too little is done to check on pupils' achievements, and how well the subjects are taught in line with the agreed planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

85. The pupils' attainment in ICT is better than expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when they were in line with national expectations. This has been brought about by better teaching resulting from staff training and the good use of the computer suite to develop pupils' skills. Pupils are confident and eager users of computers and so they learn at a good rate. They are quick to see the possibilities that computers offer in presenting their work and supporting their learning because of the way in which ICT is integrated into their work.
86. By the end of Year 2 pupils are confident users of ICT. They quickly enter text because they are familiar with the keyboard and use particular function keys such as space, backspace and shift to write and edit sentences. Less able pupils can save their own work with support but more able pupils do this confidently and independently. A Year 2 lesson effectively developed these editing skills and pupils made use of them in a literacy lesson later in the week to write and improve poems with alliteration. Pupils did so with enjoyment and took pleasure in their performance and choice of words. For example, in their poem on "I like..." they came up with "sizzling sausages" and "slithering snakes". Scrutiny of their previous work shows that pupils in Year 1 can position simple pictures to tell the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears by using the mouse to drag and drop 'clip art' pictures. By the end of Year 2 all the required areas of the curriculum have been successfully developed.
87. This good progress is maintained in the juniors. For example, Year 3 pupils develop their word processing skills and change the style, size and colour of the fonts they use in their writing. By the end of Year 4 pupils combine text with digital pictures in their science work on minibeasts and create wrapping paper by designing their own tiles. Year 5 pupils have produced some striking designs using mathematical shapes, which they manipulate and fill with bright colours. In their mathematics work they use computers to print out graphs, for example, of their favourite colours. By the time they reach Year 6 most pupils are very competent users of computers. This was amply illustrated in a Year 6 lesson when a mixed ability group of pupils put together a slide and sound show using a multi-media program. They were very skilled in combining graphics and text, inserting sound effects using computers, laptops and an interactive whiteboard. They corrected their errors with a minimum of supervision and assistance from the teacher and reflected on their work and how it might be improved. This lesson was a very impressive demonstration of their skills, level of thought and independence.
88. Teaching is good because the basic skills are well taught and then pupils' learning is consolidated and extended through using computers in their everyday work. The increased teacher confidence and competence in using computers are clearly seen in the ways in which teachers plan to use computers to support pupils' learning in other subject areas. Year 1 pupils used computers, for example, to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of push and pull forces in science. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils used a 'spellchecker' to confirm the spelling of 'petrified'. The interactive whiteboard was used well in a Year 6 science lesson to enable all the class to see clearly the results of their experiments. In all lessons teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and interventions are timely so that pupils are allowed the opportunity to experiment for themselves rather than simply being told how to do things. This develops pupils' confidence and they work well together, sharing resources and taking turns fairly.
89. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and although only in post for one term has already drawn up appropriate targets for the future development of the subject. For example, a good system of assessing pupils' attainment and progress is being used this year that enables teachers to effectively build upon what pupils already know and can do. The computer suite is a good facility and is well used, as are the computers in classrooms. Plans are being made to even further extend the use of computers to support teaching and learning across other areas of the curriculum.

MUSIC

90. Standards in music are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The specialist co-ordinator left at the end of the previous term and the headteacher is acting as co-ordinator, ably supported by one of the school governors. It was possible to see only one music lesson during the inspection but talking to the co-ordinator, the governor and looking at the planning file they have compiled, support the judgements. In addition, pupils were heard singing in assemblies.
91. Teaching is satisfactory and teachers' planning is supported by the use of commercial, radio and television programmes. All the requirements of the National Curriculum for music are planned for over the school year. In assemblies and hymn practices for both infants and juniors, singing is satisfactory. Most pupils can follow a melody and keep time well with the piano. They sing with enjoyment and pleasure. In the lesson seen, Year 1 pupils were able to match particular sounds to particular places and people. They identified the sounds of cannons and bells in listening to the 1812 overture and know that the composer was Tchaikovsky. Junior pupils sing with equal enthusiasm and enjoyment. In assemblies they all join in and keep in tune well. They enjoy singing well-known songs as well as learning new ones. Some pupils have additional tuition in playing the violin and a local visitor to school who is a drummer gives sessions on percussion to all classes.
92. In the past, pupils have participated in the Hereford Music Festival with great success and taken part in various musical entertainments at Easter and Christmas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

93. The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are typical for their ages, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school provides regular swimming sessions so that the majority reach the expected standards in swimming. Very good teaching means that pupils in Year 2 make good progress in gymnastics, and their standards in this aspect of physical education are above average. A committed staff provides a good range of sporting activities for pupils of all abilities in after-school clubs and competitions. The additional coaching and experience these provide give a good boost to the skills of those taking part in football, netball and other games activities in the older classes. Their success in competitions, such as winning the Rural Schools' Football League, is a measure of their effectiveness.
94. The teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well because they have a secure grasp of the subject's requirements. They are clear about what pupils are to learn, building their skills successfully through well-sequenced activities. Pupils understand the need to warm up for activity and to cool down at the end. They enjoy these activities, listening carefully to instructions and generally using space well. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, so that pupils behave well and work hard. Good coaching tips and demonstrations were a feature of all the lessons seen. In hockey and netball lessons teachers showed pupils how to pass the ball in different ways and then gave them good opportunities to practise and refine their skills. As a result, they confidently controlled the ball when they later played a game.
95. Strengths in teaching were particularly evident in Year 2 and Year 5. Pupils made very good progress in a lesson in Year 2 due to the teacher's intervention that encouraged them to think hard about what works particularly well. His telling comments highlighted particularly good features as examples for others. "Look at the curve and how she holds her head" was one such example that encouraged others to refine their body shape so that they became more imaginative and complex. He led by example, often working alongside pupils and that added to their enthusiasm and repertoire of movements. The lesson moved at a brisk pace with increasing levels of challenge introduced regularly so that by the end of the lesson most performed an interesting sequence of movements with a beginning, two high points and an

ending. These pupils, at the beginning of their time in Year 2, made very good progress and achieved standards above those expected for their age. Many of these features were evident in a good dance lesson in Year 5 where pupils worked on a 'secret agent' dance theme. Again, sensitive intervention by the teacher, with suggestions and opportunities to look closely at good examples of pupils' work, meant that pupils became more precise and imaginative in their performances. In the satisfactory lessons seen, teachers did not intervene enough, or encourage pupils to think about ways of improving their work. This meant that they repeated, rather than improved, their skills. Sometimes, the pace of lessons is slowed, and pupils are inactive for too long, when teachers' explanations and instructions are too lengthy. When this happens, and lessons lose their impetus, pupils are not so enthusiastic and progress is relatively slow.

96. There is a keen enthusiasm for physical education in the school, led by an able co-ordinator. She is fairly new to her role, but has a clear view of what needs to be done and provides a good example for others in her teaching. She has ensured that the planning systems are effective, with additional guidance that is adding to teachers' confidence. Her plans for areas in need of development are the right ones. The school does not yet do enough to check on the effectiveness of teaching or how well pupils are learning to ensure the best possible progress in all classes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

97. The pupils' work reaches the expectations set out in the curriculum that is agreed locally. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and pupils' spirituality and understanding of other religions are better promoted.
98. The pupils learn about a good range of other faiths, such as Judaism and Islam, as well as developing a firm understanding of the Christian faith. By the end of Year 2, pupils know that different religions have special books and that religions provide rules for people to follow. They understand that rules are important in their own lives and consider which are most important. By the time pupils leave the school, they have a sound knowledge of a good range of religious practices and how some religions have similar characteristics. The pupils show a good ability to relate what they have learned to their own lives and to think about what is important to them.
99. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in lessons during the inspection. The strengths in the teaching and learning spring from good opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas and consider difficult questions such as "Who is God?" Pupils enjoy lessons because they often include interesting activities, such as acting out parts in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were studying the story of the Good Samaritan. The pupils successfully related the story to their own experiences and considered how they might have reacted in similar circumstances. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to quietly reflect by asking them to "build a picture in your mind of someone you love" and led them into thinking about how God loves the world he created. Teaching in a Year 6 lesson encouraged pupils to think about why Muslims do not represent people or animals in religious art. There are some opportunities for pupils to find out more for themselves but past work indicates that in most lessons the teachers direct the pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and the lower attainers are well supported by the adaptations to work but the more able pupils are usually given the same task as the average pupils and have too few opportunities to extend their learning.
100. The subject manager provides sound leadership. He is knowledgeable and sets a good example in his own teaching. The effectiveness with which the subject promotes pupils' spirituality has improved because he ensures that this element is emphasised in teachers' planning. The new curriculum has not, however, been checked to ensure that all teachers' interpretations of the scheme of work are delivering what should be taught and there are some

examples of aspects of work being repeated. There are few opportunities for pupils to learn at first hand about other faiths from visitors or visits to different places of worship.