

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **HOLMER CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hereford

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116820

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson  
25406

Dates of inspection: 13-16 January 2003

Inspection number: 247699

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled<sup>1</sup>

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Holmer Road  
Hereford

Postcode: HR4 9RX

Telephone number: 01432 273301


Fax number: 01432 342614

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Heather Cantrill

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

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<sup>1</sup> Because Holmer School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school the inspection of collective worship is carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996 (Denominational Education) by the inspector approved by the  Diocese and appointed by the governing body.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25406 Paul Nicholson Registered inspector	Physical education Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9561 Husain Akhtar Lay inspector	Inclusion	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29988 Lynne Thorogood Team inspector	English Art and design Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21372 Ken Hobday Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics History	How well are pupils taught?
20097 John Griffiths Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Geography	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holmer Church of England School is a large primary school situated on the northern edge of Hereford close to the racecourse. It serves a large area with mixed social and economic backgrounds that includes both Victorian and modern housing, retail outlets and light industry. Currently, there are 310 pupils on roll (146 boys and 164 girls) aged from four to eleven years. Six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Less than one per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, none is at an early stage of acquiring the English language. Less than one per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. The school has identified 19 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. When children enter the reception classes, their attainment varies, but overall it is similar to that expected for their age.

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

The school gives a satisfactory education to its pupils and has some good and very good features. Standards by the time pupils leave the school are average. They make sound progress and reach satisfactory levels of personal achievement. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and often it is better. The school is soundly led and managed and it provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve good standards in art and design and in music as a result of good teaching in these subjects.
- The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good and this fosters their very positive attitudes and very good behaviour.
- The school takes good care of its pupils so that they feel secure and happy.
- There are very good relationships between all members of the school community, including the pupils, the enthusiastic staff team and supportive governors.

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

- The standards achieved by Year 6 in science, information and communication technology and history.
- The planning of activities so that the skills the pupils need to learn are more clearly identified, taught and assessed.

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

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

Against a background of falling rolls and a large turnover of teachers, the school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in November 1997. The school has improved teachers' subject knowledge. It has greatly improved the resources for information and communication technology through the development of a computer suite but this is not yet fully operational and so has had very little impact on raising pupils' standards to date. The school has introduced schemes of work for all subjects, which provide continuity in pupils' learning, and assessment procedures to monitor their progress as they move through the school. Further development in both of these areas is now required to ensure pupils make better progress. The role of the governors in monitoring the work of the school has improved and their partnership in working with the headteacher is more effective. The school has improved its provision for pupils' personal development and maintained the overall average standards observed at the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Children make steady progress in reception and most reach the expected learning goals set for them in all areas of learning, including their language and mathematical development. They make good progress and exceed the set goals in their personal, social and emotional development and in their early reading skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress and continue to do well in their reading. By Year 2 their overall standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are average. This is confirmed by the school's results over recent years in national tests for seven-year-olds, which have been gradually improving. In all other subjects, pupils' standards by Year 2 are average and in art and design they are above average.

The school's performance in national tests for eleven-year-olds has been improving broadly in line with the national trend but the results do not compare favourably with those from similar schools. Test results over recent years have varied reflecting the different groups of pupils in Year 6. However, overall standards by the age of eleven, including those in literacy and numeracy, are average. Pupils' standards in English and mathematics are average because about three-quarters of the pupils achieve Level 4, the expected standard for a typical eleven-year-old, and about a quarter go on to achieve the higher standard, Level 5. Standards in science are below average because higher-attaining pupils are not given sufficient challenge. Consequently, fewer pupils achieve Level 5 than is normally found. Pupils gain average standards in design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education. In art and design and in music, standards are above average because of good teaching in these subjects. Standards in information and communication technology and in history are below average as not all the skills required in these subjects are covered in sufficient depth.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They enjoy coming to school and approach their work enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave with consideration and courtesy. They conduct themselves very well in lessons, which helps their concentration and learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond very well and show respect for others. Pupils form very good relationships with adults and other pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Levels of attendance are similar to the national average.

Pupils' very positive attitudes, very good behaviour and very good relationships are important strengths of the school.

## 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.*

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and often it is better. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. During the inspection half of the lessons seen were good, there were a small number of very good lessons and the remainder were satisfactory. There is sound teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the school and the teaching in art and design and in music is particularly strong. A strength in the teaching is the positive and effective way in which all teachers manage their classes. Consequently, pupils make good use of their time, concentrate well and put plenty of effort into their work. In the main, teachers meet the needs of all their pupils and they provide work at the correct level for each pupil. In some lessons the skills to be taught are not clearly enough identified to ensure better progress. Classroom assistants make a positive impact on pupils' learning but sometimes the absence of additional support means the teacher is unable to give enough attention to all pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the school provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the skills to be taught and assessed are not always clearly identified.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall provision is satisfactory and so these pupils make sound progress. They receive good support in lessons, particularly when support assistants work along side them. Their individual education plans are not always specific enough to ensure better progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	None of these pupils is at an early stage of acquiring English and so the school currently makes no specific provision for them. They make similar progress in learning to that of their classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is very good. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' personal development. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff are very caring and there are good procedures in place to ensure child protection and the health and safety of pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Links with parents are good and these have a positive impact on pupils' learning at home and at school. Communication with parents is satisfactory.

The school has satisfactorily implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. It has recently introduced new guidelines to support teachers' planning in other subjects but has not yet adapted these to clearly identify the key skills that are to be taught and assessed. This means that teachers are not as effective as they could be in planning future work.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides sound leadership and, through her personal commitment, plays a large part in creating the caring and friendly atmosphere within the school. She is well supported by the staff, who are developing into an effective team. Together, they manage the school satisfactorily.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive and successfully carry out their statutory duties. They play a satisfactory role in monitoring the progress of the school and in shaping its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school satisfactorily evaluates its performance and monitors its teaching and learning. Its development plan does not provide a clear enough focus on whole-school priorities for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes sound use of its financial resources including grants. It satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has an adequate number of teachers but a low number of support staff. Overall, the accommodation and resources are satisfactory but the number and range of books in the junior library is unsatisfactory.

The headteacher's committed leadership is particularly successful in achieving high standards in pupils' personal development. Governors and the hard working staff successfully support her in this aspect. The staff and governors have a clear commitment to raise pupils' academic standards but progress in this area has been slower. The school recognises the need to have a clearer focus on how the school is to improve.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Eleven parents attended a meeting with inspectors and 111 (36 per cent) completed questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like school and they are well behaved.</li> <li>The school has high expectations and it helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>The staff are approachable.</li> <li>The teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information they receive about children's progress.</li> <li>The management of the school and how it works with parents</li> <li>The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Parents, in the main, are satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. The inspection findings broadly support their positive views of behaviour, expectations and the staff, though teaching and progress are judged to be satisfactory. While the school provides satisfactory information on their progress, the annual written reports do not provide sufficient information on pupils' standards. The inspection found that the school is soundly managed, homework satisfactorily supports pupils' learning and there is a very good range of extra curricular activities. The school recognises the need to more effectively explain its work and decisions to parents in order to gain their full confidence.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. At the time of the school's last inspection (November 1997), pupils made satisfactory progress. However, standards overall were requiring some improvement as there were weaknesses in the school's curriculum and in teachers' subject knowledge. In particular, standards in information and communication technology were below national expectations as pupils did not systematically build upon their previous learning and there were too few opportunities to use computers. The school has worked hard to develop its curriculum and now provides pupils with satisfactory learning opportunities. It has greatly improved the resources for information and communication technology and is awaiting the installation of its new computers prior to their use by pupils. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and the school has maintained the overall average standards achieved by pupils by Year 6 despite a large turnover of staff in the last three years. Standards in information and communication technology remain low and currently standards in science and history are also below expectations.
2. Attainment on entry to the reception class varies from year to year. Overall, it is similar to that expected for this age group. Teachers' assessments made early in the autumn term of the reception class show that children have typical early literacy and numeracy skills for their age. Their personal and social skills are in the main average though not as high as those reported at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of the reception year, most children achieve the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> set for them in each of the nationally recognised six areas of learning because of satisfactory and at times good teaching. They achieve above average standards in personal, social and emotional development because of the very good relationships between children and all staff. As a result of a strong emphasis upon work in literacy, children make good progress in their early reading skills. In all the other areas of learning, including their mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development, they achieve the expected levels for their age. Better progress in some areas of children's development is limited by the lack of a suitable outdoor area and by a lack of clarity in teachers' planning and procedures for assessing children's progress.
3. Over recent years, results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 have been improving. In 2002, the results in reading and writing tests were well above the national average and in mathematics they were above average. Almost all pupils achieved Level 2, the expected standard for a typical seven-year-old in reading, and all achieved it in writing and mathematics. The proportion that went on to achieve the higher standard, Level 3, was above the national average in writing and mathematics but was below average in reading. The school has introduced several new initiatives to address this weakness. Overall, these results compared very favourably with those of similar schools. Teacher assessments in science show that in 2002 all pupils achieved Level 2, which is very high, and almost a quarter went on to achieve the higher standard, which is similar to the national average.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards in the current Year 2 are average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Almost all pupils are on target to achieve Level 2 in each of these subjects by the end of the year and a similar proportion to that found nationally is set to achieve Level 3. Higher-attaining pupils achieve the higher standard as they receive sufficient challenge in their work. As a result of the school's recent

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<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning: communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, ~~for example~~ ~~for example~~ in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

focus on developing pupils' understanding of phonics, standards in reading have improved and are currently above average. By the age of seven, standards in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in these subjects. Standards in art and design are above average and progress is good because of good teaching in this subject. The overall standards gained by Year 2 represent satisfactory levels of personal achievement for the pupils.

5. Results in National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 have, over recent years, been improving in line with the national trend. Results have varied each year reflecting the differences in each year group. In the main they have been average but at times below average. For example, the school's overall results in the 2002 tests for eleven-year-olds were below average. Standards in mathematics were average as three-quarters of the pupils achieved Level 4, the expected standard for a typical eleven-year old, and a third went on to achieve the higher standard Level 5. However in English and science, fewer pupils than are normally found achieved Level 4 and the proportion achieving Level 5 was also below average. Overall, these results do not compare favourably with those from similar schools. The school recognised the need to raise these standards and has recently put in place a number of initiatives to raise levels of attainment, particularly in English.
6. **These initiatives have begun to positively impact on standards as inspection evidence confirms that standards by the age of eleven are now average overall. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in literacy and numeracy with higher-attaining pupils achieving the appropriately higher standard. Pupils achieve good levels of attainment in speaking and listening and the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science, however, remain below average. While a significant majority of pupils achieve the expected standard insufficient numbers of pupils achieve the higher level partly because teachers are not stretching higher-attaining pupils sufficiently.**
7. In other subjects, pupils in Year 6 achieve average standards in design and technology, geography and physical education. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. Standards in art and design and in music are above average as a result of good teaching, extra-curricular activities and the high profile given to these subjects within the school. Standards in history and information and communication technology are below average because pupils have not sufficiently developed their skills in all aspects of these subjects. Overall, pupils make sound progress through Years 3 to 6 and their overall standards represent satisfactory levels of personal achievement for the pupils. Standards are beginning to improve because of the pupils' very positive attitudes and the satisfactory and at times good quality teaching they receive.
8. The school is currently addressing weaknesses in information and communications technology, including both the development of pupils' knowledge and skills and the use of computers to support learning in other subjects. Its new computer suite, which is intended to improve pupils' access to computers, is due to open shortly. Teachers make satisfactory use of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, for example in writing letters in history and retelling stories in religious education. Although pupils make some use of their numeracy skills in subjects such as science and design and technology, this is quite limited. For example, older pupils make little use of accurate measurements or scale-drawings when designing their models or of graphs and charts to record their results.
9. The school is effective in ensuring the inclusion of all its pupils. There are no significant differences between the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment. They receive good levels of support from class teachers and teaching assistants, though their individual education plans are not always specific enough to ensure better progress. Higher-attaining pupils

make satisfactory progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics because teachers make effective use of ability groups in literacy and numeracy lessons. In other subjects, including science, higher-attaining pupils are not always fully challenged and there are too few opportunities for these pupils to develop independent learning strategies. The two pupils who speak English as an additional language are not at an early stage of acquiring English and currently require no additional support. Individual pupils who show a specific talent in subjects such as music are given additional support to ensure that they develop their interest and skills.

10. The school recognises that although standards of achievement are satisfactory, they could be improved. The raising of standards is a key priority for the headteacher, governors and staff. The school has set itself challenging targets in literacy and numeracy. Its focus on developing literacy skills is appropriate and an important step in raising standards. The teachers have had some success in achieving their aim and standards in reading in the infant classes are improving. However, the recent initiatives have not had time to impact on the standards of older pupils.

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

11. The overall picture is better than that reported by the last inspection: pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now very good, as are the relationships in the school. Pupils arrive in good spirit in the mornings, many well before the start of the school day. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents endorsed that their children like the school and pupils spoken to confirmed that this is so. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very good. For example, younger pupils responded readily and they enthusiastically practised spellings in a phonic session. They enjoy lessons; this was evident in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils showed a love of poetry. Another example of their enjoyment is their joy of singing in assemblies and music lessons. In a Year 4 music lesson, for example, pupils accompanied their teacher tunefully and with enthusiasm in singing to her piano-accordion. Pupils also participate very well in outside lesson activities, for example in the play and work activities provided during the lunchtime and after school. They are seriously involved in the school council, which is very popular. Those pupils with special educational needs respond well to the support that they receive and this helps their progress. Very good relationships and opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development positively influence pupils' performance and personal development.
12. Parents, at their meeting with inspectors, acknowledged pupils' very good behaviour in the school. They are right. Pupils behave very well in lessons and this supports their learning effectively. They quickly settle down to do the tasks and concentrate well. A very small number of pupils are not sufficiently interested in the work and can be challenging but they are managed very well in lessons. Behaviour is especially good in the playground, where pupils play together and so lunchtime is pleasant period. Pupils' respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is a strength of the school. Inspectors saw no incidents of any oppressive behaviour. Bullying is not a problem in the school, because lunchtime supervisors and members of staff are continually vigilant and effectively apply behaviour procedures. Pupils treat school property, including displays, with care. Exclusions are not a feature of the school. There was only one isolated incidence of a fixed period exclusion in the sample period and correct procedures for the exclusion were followed.
13. The children show independence from adults and organise themselves well. They take turns and share equipment fairly and achieve very good standards in their personal and social development, including behaviour. As pupils progress through the school, they develop a good level of self-discipline. They demonstrate that they understand the impact that their actions have on others. They show good care and concern for others, for example by following safety instructions in practical activities.

14. The parents quite rightly feel that children become mature and more responsible. The school is very successful in developing pupils' personalities. Pupils are respectful. Their personal development is very good. Pupils respond positively to whatever opportunities are provided by the school. They, including younger pupils, confidently take the attendance registers to the office and help out in tidying up their classrooms. They keenly participate in the work of the school council. Pupils in Year 6 run a tuck shop quite independently. Pupils who take part in out of school visits organise themselves well. Pupils willingly take the initiative in choosing their work and how to do it, for example in art and design and in design and technology.
15. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, being broadly in line with the national average. The school strives to improve attendance but is dependent on the collaboration of all parents. Most parents understand the importance of good attendance and its impact on children's learning. Whilst illness accounts for most of the authorised absences, a significant number of absences are due to some parents taking their children on holidays during term time. There is no truancy or unauthorised absence.

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

16. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory although there is much that is good or occasionally very good. The proportion of better teaching is slightly higher in Years 1 and 2, although good and very good teaching was observed in every year group. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
17. During the inspection, all lessons were at least satisfactory and just over a half were good or very good. A similar judgement was made at the last inspection but the proportion of very good teaching has declined slightly. However, the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated, and a higher proportion of teaching is now good. There has been satisfactory improvement in most of the teaching issues identified in the previous report. Most deficiencies in subject knowledge and expertise have been eliminated. Teachers identify the new skills and understanding they wish pupils to gain during each lesson, but not always precisely enough. The use of assessment information has improved, but the assessment of gains in specific skills remains inadequate in several subjects because these skills have not been clearly identified.
18. A feature of teaching that remains very strong is the positive and effective way in which all teachers manage their classes. They have clear and consistent expectations, fully shared by non-teaching assistants, that pupils behave responsibly and politely, and remain focused on the work in hand. Teachers, at whatever stage in their teaching career, display very good control skills, gaining the attention of their pupils quickly. As a result, there are very few interruptions to the learning process in each classroom and pupils make good use of their time, concentrate well and put plenty of effort into their work.
19. There is sound teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the school. In the reception and Year 1 and 2 classes, these important subjects are invariably well taught. All teachers are using national guidance well to plan effective lessons. They make good use of their secure subject knowledge as, for example, in an English lesson for Year 6 pupils in which the teacher asked pupils to 'think about the descriptive language - it's more than just a string of adjectives'. They are very aware of the need to provide work at the correct level for each pupil. In mathematics, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are regrouped according to their attainment level in the subject. Extra attention is given to those with lower ability or special educational needs in the subject, either by a classroom assistant or because the group is smaller. In Years 1 and 2, tasks are appropriately adapted for up to five separate groups within each class. Because pupils have appropriate work, they are able to use their time productively without interrupting the teacher working with another group. Teachers make good use of any support staff allocated to them particularly to support those pupils

with special educational needs. Sometimes, the absence of an additional adult in the room means that the teacher is unable to give enough attention to all pupils. It was evident that, as a result, some groups of pupils complete less work than they might. However in the best lessons, teachers use quick reminders, such as 'you have five minutes more', to ensure all pupils maintain a good rate of working. In both subjects, because pupils have very good relationships with their teachers, they are confident and enthusiastic learners.

20. The teaching of other subjects is satisfactory. Good subject knowledge combined with some specialist teaching contributes to the good standards in art and design and in music. Most lessons are planned satisfactorily. Teachers with pupils of the same age plan together, contributing more significantly in areas in which their expertise is greater. This ensures that all pupils in the same age group cover the same ground in their lessons. In some subjects, planning is weaker because the skills to be progressively developed have not been identified. Consequently the objectives for individual lessons are too broad. Teachers do not plan sufficient use of information and communication technology to address the needs of particular pupils, but when the new computer suite is in use, it is intended that classroom computers will be freed for this purpose.
21. There is a very good emphasis on making learning enjoyable. In better lessons, teachers use exciting resources and active approaches to learning to ensure that pupils retain their concentration and enthusiasm. These features contribute strongly to pupils' very good behaviour. Lessons start promptly to indicate to pupils the importance of making the best use of time. Teachers often inform pupils of how much time they have to complete a task, in the case of younger pupils by attaching an arrow to the classroom clock. Particularly in the reception classes, they are aware that children need to move around from time to time and plan a good variety of activities to meet this need.
22. Better lessons are characterised by a lively pace and high expectations about the level and amount of work pupils are capable of completing, combined with effective teaching methods. Successful lessons including these features spanned the subjects and age groups in the school, from language work in reception to art and science in Year 6, via mathematics in Years 1 to 4, music - both singing and playing steel drums - in Year 4, and English in Year 5.
23. Teachers value the efforts of their pupils. In oral feedback they give praise appropriately and often tell pupils how they can improve. Written marking is carried out conscientiously. There is good practice in some classes as teachers indicate clearly what has been learnt and what needs to be done next. In these classes, teachers allow pupils time to examine what has been written and ensure that corrections are completed, but this practice needs to be extended.
24. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory. Regular tasks in English and mathematics help to consolidate pupils' learning. However, some homework tasks require more careful consideration. In a few instances, pupils are set more extensive projects to complete with insufficient guidance or consideration of the knowledge and understanding they will gain from the exercise.

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

25. Overall, the school provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. The curriculum for pupils in the reception classes is satisfactory and based on recent national guidance. All the required areas are taught and sufficient attention is paid to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are provided with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets the statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Additionally French is taught for one hour per week in Year 6.
26. Teachers have used national guidelines to develop and improve curriculum plans since the last inspection, and the key issues concerning planning for pupils' progress and defining learning objectives in lessons have been satisfactorily addressed. The key issue concerning the use of information and communications technology has been addressed in some subjects, and firm plans are in place to ensure that requirements are met in all subjects following the commissioning of the new information and communications technology suite in the very near future.
27. The national literacy and numeracy policies have been implemented successfully and are having a positive effect on teaching in these areas and on the standards achieved by pupils, particularly in the infant classes. There is a whole-school curriculum overview, which is successful in ensuring that there is no repetition of material in the mixed-age classes or as pupils progress through the school. The content of lessons becomes more complex and demanding as pupils mature and move up the school. However in all subjects except English and mathematics schemes of work fail to identify what key concepts and skills are being taught and assessed. In particular, this has resulted in below average standards in history. Pupils' knowledge and skills therefore do not build consistently on prior achievement and understanding. There is some monitoring of the curriculum by subject co-ordinators, but this is not consistent for all subjects.
28. The school's strategies for inclusion are good overall. They ensure that all pupils, regardless of age, ability or gender, have equal access to the curriculum and activities within school. Consequently, pupils value and respect each other. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. However, many individual educational plans are not specific enough in identifying the small, manageable steps required in helping these pupils make good progress.
29. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, which includes drugs awareness and sex education. Personal development is an area of particular strength. Discussions in personal and social education sessions help pupils self esteem, self-discipline, confidence, a sense of fairness and concern for others. Some aspects of personal, social and health education are taught through subjects such as science, but classes also have dedicated curriculum time, known as Circle Time<sup>3</sup>, in which to study a range of issues. Outside speakers teach specific lessons, for example the school nurse contributes to the teaching of sex education. The caring and supportive ethos of the school also helps pupils develop personally and socially.
30. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to improve their skills in a range of areas including sports, music, dancing, chess and art. They may also begin to learn Latin and develop their French. The music groups, including hand-bell ringers and the full-sized steel band put on public performances including at the Hereford Festival. Pupils of all abilities are included in these performances.

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<sup>3</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

Visits to events outside school, such as concerts, are also arranged. The older pupils have opportunities to go on a residential visit each year. In Year 4, pupils visit a outdoor education centre, pupils in Year 5 visit London and in year 6 pupils camp and take part in activities such as climbing, canoeing and archery. As well as enhancing curriculum provision these visits successfully promote social skills and independence. A range of day visits to museums and other places of interest are arranged for the younger pupils.

31. The school has established good links with the local community and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. For example, links with a local architect's practice have enabled Year 6 pupils to experience conservation work in the local environment, as they look at plans for the restoration of a local church and then visit the completed building. Local retail businesses give regular donations of materials to the school. Visiting clergy from a range of local churches contribute to school assemblies. Local policemen are regular visitors to the school and contribute in a number of ways to the pupils' education and development.
32. Links with the playgroup, which shares the school's premises, mean that many children enter the reception class with a good understanding of the routines of school life. There are also positive relationships with the secondary schools the pupils will transfer to when they reach the age of eleven. Meetings between teachers from a local cluster of schools result in the sharing of good practice. The school provides for student teachers to undertake placements, and offers support and mentoring for them. This provides an additional group of adults to support pupils' learning and an additional range of appropriate role models.
33. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does very well to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness. Cultural development remains good. Spiritual development is promoted mainly through assemblies and religious education lessons. For example, pupils have an opportunity for reflection in assemblies, some of which are taken by leaders of local Christian churches. This is further reinforced by involving pupils in parish events and through the work in Circle Time. Religious education lessons provide pupils with very good knowledge of Christian traditions as well as introducing them to those of other faiths, for instance, through the stories from different religions. Opportunities for reflection arise in other lessons. For example, in English pupils show delight at the richness of vocabulary and language and wonder at how a poet creates atmosphere by manipulating words, but these opportunities are not a consistent feature of lessons. Pupils' achievements are valued by teachers and acknowledged in assemblies, as was observed in an assembly for younger pupils where they were awarded stickers as a 'child of the week'.
34. Pupils' moral development is very good. Staff provide very good role models for pupils, reinforcing the respect cultivated through the school's Christian ethos. No opportunity is missed to remind pupils about being caring towards one another and in lessons they are expected to share materials and take turns. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and are aware of expectations of work and behaviour. They respond very well to rewards and sanctions. Social development is very well provided for. From an early age those of different age groups are encouraged to work and play together. English lessons feature 'discuss with your neighbour' sessions. Personal, social and health education through Circle Time is effective. Circle Time sessions give pupils the opportunity to develop a shared understanding of personal and social matters. In a Year 6 Circle Time, pupils, in response to a local situation, focussed on 'feelings' and freely aired their views. Pupils are expected to take responsibility within the classroom and undertake some duties. There are opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility in the school, for example to take part in the school council, which helps them to understand their rights and responsibilities.
35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They learn to appreciate the cultural traditions through the curriculum, including the visits. French and Latin clubs are useful provisions. In art, pupils look at the work of famous European artists. The school



environments are enhanced by purposeful displays. Religious education lessons make a contribution to pupils' understanding of the culture and traditions of other countries. The school's annual religious education week includes the study of non-Christian faiths and cultures. However, pupils' awareness of a multicultural Britain is only satisfactory.

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

36. The overall picture has improved since the last inspection in that the school now cares and supports pupils more effectively. Staff are very caring, know pupils well and respond quickly to their personal needs. They ensure that new children settle into school quickly. Supervision at break and lunch times is good. There are good arrangements to look after unwell pupils. The school provides a secure and supportive learning environment, hence pupils like coming to the school and are able to learn well. Parents' pre-inspection response confirmed this. The school pays good attention to pupils' needs and provides them with good support, and this includes the support for pupils who have special educational needs. The day-to-day care by individual staff is very good.
37. The headteacher, the designated child protection officer, is knowledgeable in child protection issues and keeps other staff informed of relevant matters. The school has appropriate links with the support agencies. The child protection practice is good. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters and the staff pay good attention to safety. The site manager helps in assessing any health and safety risks and in ensuring the cleanliness of the buildings. The school has effectively addressed the health and safety concerns reported by the last inspection. Pupils are guided on matters relating to their well-being and development through the curriculum and by visiting specialists such as the school nurse.
38. The procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Registration requirements are met and absences are appropriately identified. Good performance is acknowledged. Attendance figures for the year 2000-01 reported to the authorities were incorrect due to an error in calculating the figures; the school is set to use a computer to process attendance information with increased accuracy. Parents are contacted where there is an attendance concern but not on the first day of an unexplained absence. The school has limited success in discouraging family holidays during the term time. Monitoring of punctuality is satisfactory.
39. The school is very effective in promoting good behaviour; for example by creating a calm atmosphere, and reinforcing self-control and developing skills to defuse 'conflict'. Regular Circle Time is particularly helpful in this respect. The school's policies on bullying and other oppressive behaviour are well understood and regarded by the pupils and the staff. A system of rewards and sanctions, incorporated in the school's behaviour strategies, is consistently applied and works effectively. Pupils know that high standards of behaviour are expected of them and respond positively. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. There is good adult supervision and staff provide pupils with good role models for calmness and respect. All this helps pupils to learn in a stress-free environment.
40. Procedures for supporting and monitoring personal development are very effective. The teachers' management of the pupils in lessons is very good. Procedures for recording and monitoring inappropriate behaviour are firmly in place. Pupils' personal development, including behaviour, is monitored through the progress reports, which are regularly checked by the headteacher. The reports, along with individual targets to improve behaviour, help to check any inappropriate behaviour.
41. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are satisfactory. They include nationally recommended tests in

Years 3, 4 and 5 and then the standard assessment tests in Year 6. The results of these tests are carefully analysed by the subject and assessment co-ordinators to provide the school with indicators of pupils' progress. This data is also used satisfactorily to highlight any weaknesses in the curriculum that require more attention. Assessments are carried out in the reception classes and the data from these and subsequent assessments are used to track an individual's progress through the school. This tracking helps teachers to set individual targets for pupils to achieve in English, mathematics and science. Every pupil has a useful assessment file covering the time from when they enter the reception class to Year 6. The files contain the results of tests as well as targets and reports to parents.

42. Teachers also carry out assessments in other subjects at the end of each topic. However, coherent systems for assessments in the non-core subjects of the curriculum are not yet in place and are unsatisfactory. Co-ordinators of the non-core subjects such as history, geography, and design technology have not sufficiently identified the skills that should be taught from the programmes of work provided by the national guidance. This makes it more difficult to assess achievements and has a negative impact on pupils' progress. Teachers evaluate the lessons they teach but lesson planning is not sufficiently detailed to identify the skills to be taught. Consequently, it is difficult to focus exactly on exactly what and how well pupils achieve. Without a clear knowledge of pupils' standards teachers find it difficult to plan for the next stage of learning.

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

43. Links with parents are good but not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection where parents were kept well informed and were pleased with how well the school worked. However, parents are satisfied with most aspects of the school's work as indicated in the inspection questionnaire. Their involvement in the life of the school is good. Whilst parents are supportive of the school, some do not fully co-operate with the school in keeping pupils' absences to a minimum.
44. Parents are pleased with the teaching, which is satisfactory and at times good, and well satisfied with school's expectations. They are happy with the support for their children's personal development, which is very good. Parents, quite rightly, hold the view that pupils' behaviour is very good and they like school. In contrast with these favourable views, a minority of parents are not so happy. A few parents have concerns about the management of the school, how it works with them, having mixed year classes in some years, the amount and consistency of homework and the range of extra-curricular activities.
45. The school reaches out to parents well. For example, reception staff offer home visits to prospective pupils. Open day and curriculum meetings for parents are held. Parents can see their children's work and talk about it with teachers at parents' evenings. There are opportunities for parents to come to festival celebrations. Inspectors found that pupils usually take work home and the amount is appropriate. The school offers a sufficient variety of extra-curricular activities. The school is soundly managed but some aspects of the school, like the mixed year classes, are not sufficiently and effectively explained to parents. The school has not been sufficiently successful in explaining to parents what exactly constitutes the homework or the extra-curricular activities offered.
46. Communication with parents is satisfactory, as is the quality of information provided for them. There is a fortnightly newsletter as well as letters sent home to keep parents informed about the general life of the school. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented, providing the essential information. The annual progress reports whilst informative, give little information about what pupils should be doing, particularly with reference to National Curriculum levels, or what their parents can do to improve academic standards. Targets for improvement are too general.

47. The contribution by parents to their children's learning is good, since most parents are well committed to their children's education. They provide support, for example by making costumes, raising funds, charity sponsorships and showing a willingness to accompany classes on trips including residential visits. Parents also give a high level of support to the school through the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, which provides significant funds to support school developments and resources. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately kept up to date with their children's progress.

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

48. At the time of the last inspection the management and efficiency of the school required some improvement. The roles of the governors and staff required development in order to address weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Since then there has been a large turnover in staff, a deputy headteacher has been appointed and the school has become a member of a Beacon Partnership<sup>4</sup>. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection, though some require continued development. Currently, the school is soundly led and managed and provides a satisfactory education to its pupils.
49. The school has a clear ethos statement that is published in its prospectus. It aims to provide a loving and caring Christian environment in which children can enjoy their learning and develop their academic and social skills. Governors, headteacher and staff have a shared commitment to providing a caring community in which pupils can develop. The headteacher, through her committed leadership, ensures that pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development. The school has been particularly successful in this aspect, which has improved since the last inspection. Adults establish trust through care and commitment, which successfully promotes very good relationships and supports the inclusion of all pupils. A very positive, caring ethos permeates all aspects of school life.
50. The school's aim for all pupils to succeed in their academic development is less well fulfilled. Since the last inspection overall standards have improved in line with the improving national rate. The school has experienced difficulties with staffing. There have been several changes to the teaching body, with more than half of the teachers having left the school in the last three years. Fewer teachers have replaced them because of the drop in pupil numbers. At present, not all subjects have a co-ordinator to ensure continued development of the subject. This lack of continuity has contributed to the slower than hoped for rate of progress the school has made towards higher academic standards.
51. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning and consequently raise standards the school has undertaken a number of initiatives since its previous inspection. It has satisfactorily introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, new schemes of work based on national guidelines for most other subjects and has developed assessment procedures. Procedures for assessment have improved in literacy and numeracy but are not yet fully developed in all other subjects. The school has improved teachers' subject knowledge and greatly improved the resources for information and communication technology. New programmes to improve pupils' reading and investigative skills have also been introduced. Many of these initiatives have not had sufficient time to fully impact on pupils' standards by the time they reach Year 6. Consequently, the overall average standards observed at the last inspection have been maintained.
52. The school's senior management team is effective in supporting the headteacher in the management of the school. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. They have developed schemes of work and

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<sup>4</sup> A Beacon Partnership is a group of schools that co-operate in the sharing of good practice.

ensured adequate resources are available. Their involvement in monitoring and evaluating their subject is developing satisfactorily. Co-ordinators, particularly those for literacy and numeracy, are beginning to monitor teaching, though they do not always focus sufficiently on what needs to be done to raise standards. The special educational needs co-ordinator is more involved in the monitoring of individual education plans than at the time of the last inspection but she does not always ensure that these are specific enough to ensure those pupils who require additional support make good progress.

53. The governing body is supportive of the school. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities well by ensuring that all legal documents are in place, including a school prospectus and its annual report to parents. The chair of governors ably carries out her various duties, including liaison with the headteacher. The governing body meets regularly and has an appropriate structure that includes committees for finance, curriculum and maintenance. The role of the governors in monitoring the work of the school has improved since the last inspection and their partnership in working with the headteacher is more effective.
54. Governors, who feel more involved in the life of the school than at the time of the last inspection, have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and so play a satisfactory role in shaping its direction. They receive useful information from the headteacher. Some gain further knowledge of the school through informal visits. However, their visits do not have a clear focus that would provide more effective information to support their decision making and monitoring of the work of the school. Governors see questioning policy and practice as an important part of their role. They satisfactorily monitor spending, which has supported the school's priority of maintaining staffing against a background of falling rolls and improving resources for information and communication technology. The school makes effective use of specific grants and has improved its use of modern technology, including the use of computers to store pupil data and financial information. These initiatives and the school's efficient office staff are having a positive impact on supporting the work of the school.
55. The headteacher has developed a good team spirit amongst the staff. There is a shared commitment between headteacher, staff and governors to further school improvement. Procedures for performance management are satisfactorily in place. The school's improvement plan is a detailed document that satisfactorily identifies appropriate priorities for each subject. The headteacher and governors regularly monitor progress towards its targets. However, the plan does not clearly identify whole-school priorities to give a strong lead to school improvement. The targets do not always clearly focus on improving standards, and their success criteria are not always specific enough to measure progress towards the targets. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection regarding financial control of the budget. The most recent local authority internal audit (2001) shows that the school now has satisfactory systems in place. Governors monitor spending, which is now more closely linked to the school's targets for development. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value to its decision making.
56. There are a satisfactory number of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a good range of experience and subject expertise amongst the teaching staff. Their very good relationships and the teamwork amongst all staff, means that expertise and experience are willingly shared. At present the low number of support staff is such that their expertise has to be shared amongst classes and this reduces their impact on pupils' overall learning. There are good systems in place for the mentoring and support of all adults new to the staff including newly qualified teachers. The newly qualified teachers currently in their first year of teaching consider they are well supported by all staff. There is an effective system for appraisal and performance management that in turn brings about opportunities for the professional development of all staff. As a result of training and the way teachers and support staff share experience and expertise, all staff are now more confident and

competent with information and communication technology skills which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. The school also provides opportunities for students on work experience as well as providing places for students training to be teachers. These students too are well supported during their time at the school.

57. The well-presented accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. There are attractive displays and pupils' work in the entrance, corridors and classrooms. The Foundation Stage children in the reception classes benefit from a large shared area for practical work. Outside the space for children in reception is adequate but it is difficult to supervise from the classrooms. The staff has worked hard to make all areas colourful and pleasant for the children in reception. There are two libraries in the school; one used by the reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and the other by Years 3 to 6. However, access to the libraries for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 is difficult as they are not located near their classrooms and pupils can only access these facilities with an adult because of the security arrangements. The range and number of fiction and non-fiction books in the library for Years 3 to 6 is very limited and is inadequate for the number of pupils in these classes. Whilst there is the beginning of some computer aided administration in this library, it is in its early stages.
58. There is a constant threat from flooding from the adjacent racecourse and the barriers that have been erected are inadequate. Consequently there is a need to keep a supply of sandbags by each doorway in case of emergency. However, the school is kept to a very high degree of cleanliness by the caretaker supported by an efficient team of cleaning staff, which is a considerable achievement considering the occasions that the school has been flooded. Learning resources across all subjects are adequate and generally well used.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. To further improve the quality of education provided and to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

(1) raise pupils' overall standards by the age of 11, particularly in science, history and information and communication technology by:

- providing greater challenge for higher-attaining pupils so as to ensure they achieve higher standards of attainment;
- ensuring all aspects of the subjects are taught in sufficient depth (see (2) below);
- implementing the planned development of the new computer suite so as to:
  - improve the teaching and learning in information and communication technology; and
  - provide pupils with more opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning in all subjects.

(Paragraphs: 1, 6, 7, 98, 104, 105, 121, 132)

(2) develop the planning in subjects other than literacy and numeracy so that the skills pupils need to learn are more closely identified, taught and assessed, by:

- clearly identifying within the topics being taught the skills pupils are to learn as well as the activities and content to be covered;
- ensuring that pupils build systematically on the skills they have learned as they move through the school;
- developing whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using this information to guide curriculum development;

(Paragraphs: 20, 27, 41, 42, 110, 115, 126, 137, 151)

In addition to the key areas for development above, the school should consider the following minor issues for inclusion in its action plan. They are indicated by the following paragraphs:

Area for development	Paragraph/s
Develop the school improvement plan so as to provide a clearer focus on whole-school priorities.	55
Continue to develop the governors' understanding of the work of the school and their role in shaping its future direction.	54
Improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.	28, 52
Improve the number and range of fiction and non-fiction books available in the junior library.	57, 77
The provision of additional support in the classroom.	19, 56, 61

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	4	29	26	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	49	44	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	310
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	28	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	24
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	51	52	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (91)	100 (91)	100 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	24
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	51	51	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (91)	98 (91)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	32	34	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	28
	Girls	23	25	28
	Total	44	49	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (75)	74 (68)	85 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	25	30
	Girls	23	24	28
	Total	42	49	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (68)	74 (66)	88 (81)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	308	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.66
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	666,872
Total expenditure	688,727
Expenditure per pupil	1,913
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,945
Balance carried forward to next year	13,090

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.66
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.66

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate 36%**

Number of questionnaires sent out	310
Number of questionnaires returned	111

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	46	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	52	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	59	5	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	51	13	2	3
The teaching is good.	37	58	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	49	22	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	44	8	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	59	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	58	16	6	2
The school is well led and managed.	29	51	10	8	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	59	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	53	14	5	6

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**

60. Children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the school year containing their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, 39 children were taught in two classes. Most children have previously attended a playgroup, usually the one that meets on the school premises. Their attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is mostly as expected for children of this age, except that personal, social and emotional development is more limited. It is not as high as that reported at the time of the previous inspection. There is a good programme to ensure children are well prepared for entry, including home visits and several visits to the school in the term prior to entry. There is an effective partnership between several playgroups and Holmer and another primary school. This enables staff to gain good prior knowledge of new entrants and their achievements.
61. The school has maintained the satisfactory provision and teaching noted at the previous inspection. It has made small improvements to the provision for outdoor play. However, the arrangement of teaching spaces outside the classrooms and the lack of free access to a suitable designated outdoor area for children in the early years imposes limitations upon outdoor learning. The programme is further restricted by the recent reduction in support staff to a single classroom assistant shared between the two classes.
62. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, there are some good elements. In contrast to the previous inspection, there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The strongest features of teaching are in developing basic skills and in improving children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result of the very good management of children by all staff and a strong emphasis upon work in literacy, by the end of the reception year children achieve above average standards in personal, social and emotional development and in reading. In all the other areas of learning they achieve the expected levels for their age. One child who with identified special educational needs is supported well and consequently is making good progress.
63. There are areas for development in planning and assessment. The school has benefited by its participation in national projects, notably the Effective Early Learning Project, which have enabled it to focus on the ways in which children learn and to provide the activities to enable this to happen. The balanced programme covers all the areas of learning. However, planning documents are insufficiently clear about which of the early learning goals children are working towards in particular activities. The progress individual children make towards each of the goals is not precisely assessed and the criteria to determine whether children have been successful are not defined closely enough. Consequently, teachers are unable to provide activities that match the exact needs of each child. There are good opportunities for children to choose their own activities but their choices remain unrecorded. This makes it difficult to ensure that all children receive a well-balanced programme. However, teachers are careful to include every child in the tasks upon which they are focusing during each week.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

64. Many children entering the school have weak social skills and the school places a good emphasis upon developing this aspect. Relationships between staff provide a very good role model. All staff have clear and consistent expectations about good behaviour. As a result of their high levels of expertise in managing individual children and in controlling their classes in a calm, friendly, yet firm manner, children behave very well. Children are encouraged to share and to take turns. They mostly succeed in doing so but occasionally a few children demand more than their fair share of the teacher's attention in whole class discussions. Not all children understand the importance of paying full attention and not

talking whilst the teacher gives instructions. Children are encouraged to be independent and to be able to make choices. For example, on arrival they register themselves by placing an 'apple' on a chart, although some forget on occasions. Following a whole-class session, they are able to choose freely between playing in the classroom or going to the shared area for activities supervised by the classroom assistant. They display high levels of confidence as they move around the school or undertake responsibilities such as taking the register to the office. Children show good levels of independence in areas such as dressing and undressing for lessons in physical education.

65. Teaching in this area is good, much is lively and well paced so that children's interest is engaged. Teachers add excitement and interest even to regular routines. For example, in one class the weekly helpers are identified when one of the suspended balloons is burst to reveal the names it contains. As a result, children exceed the early learning goals for this area, enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Their enjoyment was evident when a group spontaneously broke into song as the class changed after a physical education lesson. Others joined in, all singing tunefully and happily, although when they began to add actions to their song, the teacher wisely reminded them that they were supposed to be getting changed!

### **Communication, language and literacy**

66. This area of learning receives suitable prominence in the reception class programme and teaching is sound. A daily literacy lesson of an appropriate length forms the backbone of this provision. A systematic and effective programme to teach children phonic skills supplements this. There are good opportunities for children to speak and listen. These include more informal occasions when adults join children as they play or work. For example, the classroom assistant questioned children as they painted, effectively developing their knowledge and vocabulary. In both classrooms there are areas for role-play in which children talk and share resources. These are well planned to provide a variety of roles in several areas of learning. However, in some instances, greater care is required to ensure that all children have the opportunity to be included and to prevent domination by single gender groups.
67. Teachers promote a love of books by skilfully reading interesting stories containing opportunities for children to participate. As well as using books for guided reading sessions, children use the adjacent library to choose books to take home. A reading diary enables parents to help by recording their children's home reading and also acts as a channel of communication with the school. For more able children, it provides an opportunity for writing as they record their own brief comments about some of the books that they read. Teachers make good use of literacy lessons to model the writing process, teaching children the correct way to form letters as they learn their sounds. However, there are no designated writing areas in classrooms where children can experiment with a variety of writing implements. The potential to use computers to write for a range of purposes, such as producing labels or lists, is underdeveloped.
68. Children are on course to attain all the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Most are likely to exceed them in reading. Children have developed appropriate skills in speaking and listening. They readily engage in conversations with each other or with adults, but answers to questions rarely extend beyond short phrases or sentences. They enjoy reciting stories and rhymes, suggesting *cricket* as a rhyme for *it*, for example, and are developing an interest in learning new words. Because of the skilful teaching they have received, almost all pupils know the sounds of single letters, though more rarely their names. They are enthusiastic about reading and take books home regularly. Lower attaining children tell a story by using illustrations, but some higher attaining children know a good number of familiar words, often reading quite expressively. Writing skills are developing appropriately. Most children form individual letters well and write their own names. They are starting to use their growing knowledge of

familiar words and their phonic skills to write short sentences, although many lack the confidence to do this independently.

### **Mathematical development**

69. This area of learning is also given a strong emphasis through the daily numeracy lesson. The whole-class teaching in each lesson is effective. Teachers ensure that activities are varied and fun, so children remain interested and active. More formal teaching of aspects of number, shape and space, making good use of resources, are combined with action songs and rhymes. The activities that children undertake later in the lesson are less effective, for two reasons. Firstly, as there is only one classroom assistant between two classes, in many numeracy lessons there is no additional adult to help with group activities by focusing children's attention and helping them to derive maximum benefit from the games they play. Secondly, some of these games fail to extend particular mathematical skills. However, there are good opportunities for children to select mathematical activities later as they play more freely.
70. Children count at least to ten and mostly well beyond this. They identify, using a number line, which numbers are one or two more than a given number, but find it more difficult when asked which number is one or two less. All recognise numerals up to six and most up to twelve. Although the great majority of their work is oral and they have few opportunities to write numbers, many do so successfully up to nine. Using toys, they add together single digit numbers. They understand and use simple mathematical language, referring to lighter and heavier parcels in 'The Jolly Post Office'. Most children are expected to reach most of the early learning goals in this area by the end of the school year.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

71. The overall provision for this area of learning is satisfactory. Teachers use visits and the school's own outdoor facilities well to provide opportunities for children to investigate and explore. For example, children have visited local woods and travelled on a train. They learn about the world of work through visitors, such as the local policeman. The teacher help groups of children to investigate physical phenomena, for instance melting ice, laying well the foundations of future scientific understanding by asking them to predict and observe with care. They notice that ice melts quicker in warm water. Some explain why warm water becomes colder as the ice is introduced and recognise that the process of melting is reversible. However, there are few opportunities for children to investigate more independently. Timetable constraints do not always permit them to extend their explorations sufficiently or to investigate in enough depth. Children learn to design and make a moving toy and have ample opportunities to use small construction apparatus. They begin to develop a sense of time through examining photographs of themselves as babies. Although each classroom has a computer, these are not always used effectively to support children's learning. For example, a group of children using the machine leave the task to one of their number, talking amongst themselves instead of watching what is happening. Children are on course to meet, but not to exceed most of the early learning goals in this area.

### **Physical development**

72. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. The limited provision for an outdoor play area for reception children slows their development in all areas of learning but particularly in physical development and this prevents better progress. The school is aware of this and takes appropriate action to redress the balance. It uses the outdoor environment whenever possible and provides two physical education lessons each week in the hall. However, these lessons would benefit from being slightly longer to enable teachers and children to evaluate what they do and practise to improve it. There are wheeled vehicles for outdoor use, some of which are designed to be used by more than one child and so to promote co-operative play. Because of the constraints of space, larger construction apparatus is not often used. Children have insufficient opportunities for

activities to develop stamina and control, such as balancing and climbing, although there is an area for digging. Children demonstrate, as they move around the hall, that they can move safely and are aware of others around them. In the classroom they have developed the control and co-ordination necessary to colour accurately. In spite of the limitations in provision, these children are likely to attain most of the early learning goals for physical development.

### **Creative development**

73. The provision for this area of learning is satisfactory. There are weekly lessons in music from a teacher with good expertise in the subject, giving children good opportunities to sing and play instruments. Singing games are used to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers provide good resources and time for imaginative play, such as the well-equipped 'garage' in one classroom. There are clothes in which to dress up and 'story sacks' containing tapes and characters or objects from well-known stories. An area is available for children to engage in artwork, but the effectiveness of this provision varies with the level and quality of supervision. The overall quality of provision for children to explore media and materials is weaker because there is less direct teaching of the necessary skills than there is in music. Children have few opportunities to respond imaginatively to their experiences through more spontaneous art, music and dance.
74. Children's progress towards the individual early learning goals reflects these differences in the quality of provision. In music, children sing pleasantly and, for their age, accurately. Because the teacher has introduced them correctly, children know the names of instruments and play them competently, experimenting to produce varying sounds. Children confidently adopt contrasting roles and characters as they play, co-operating well in pairs and small groups. Some children produce paintings of a good standard, but others lack the necessary technical skills, such as the ability to mix colours or to load a brush with the correct amount of paint. These children may not meet the relevant early learning goal, but in other areas of creative development, children are likely to reach the expected level.

### **ENGLISH**

75. Pupils' overall standards of attainment in English by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 are average. Standards in writing across the school are in line with national expectations. Reading is above average in the infant classes and speaking and listening are above average in the older junior classes. This reflects pupils' attainment in national tests at the age of seven and indicates an improvement in standards since the last test results at the end of the junior stage. The school's results in the 2002 tests for eleven-year-olds were below average. Overall, standards in English have declined since the last inspection, when they were judged to be above average in all aspects of English at seven and eleven years. The school recognises the need to return to this position, and has put in place a number of initiatives to raise standards. These include:
  - a new phonics and spelling system introduced into the infant classes and additional time scheduled for this;
  - a new spelling scheme for the junior groups, extending the provision recommended in the National Literacy Strategy;
  - provision for extended writing in the junior classes;
  - additional time for guided reading activities in the junior classes;
  - a teaching focus on handwriting and presentation skills in all classes;
  - analysis of areas of weakness in tests and targeted teaching to improve these aspects;
  - provision of prompt sheets so that pupils themselves know the features of writing at each National Curriculum level.
76. The impact of these developments is already evident in improvements in pupils' achievement in English throughout the school. The good attainment in reading in the infant

classes indicates the success of the new phonics system, as pupils use their knowledge of the sounds groups of letters make to help them tackle new and complex vocabulary they encounter in their reading. A below average reader was able to combine phonic knowledge with the use of picture clues to work out the words 'wheelbarrow' and 'shears', showing sound reading skills. The majority of pupils read confidently and with expression, even in the youngest age groups. A small number of lower-attaining pupils guess words and read as they speak, for example using words such as 'comed'. The most able read fluently and say they enjoy reading both fiction and non-fiction books, as well as a range of other material they encounter at home, such as comics. The good standards in reading are due to the focus on phonics combined with the way the school encourages pupils to read for pleasure and interest. Pupils experience a good range of authors during Literacy Hour and are encouraged to tackle increasingly demanding books both at school and at home, where attainment in reading is further supported by the involvement of parents.

77. In Years 3 to 6, standards in reading are sound. The majority of pupils read their chosen books accurately, and they have good levels of understanding of characters, motives and feelings. Pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs make good progress with their comprehension skills. The less able use a limited range of strategies for tackling unknown vocabulary, offering only phonics and the partitioning of words. All pupils read a wide range of books and are enthusiastic readers. The National Literacy Strategy has led to a love of poetry, and some pupils choose to read poetry for pleasure. All pupils take their books home and good use is made of their reading diaries, which contain book reviews as well as a record of books read. Freedom of choice in their reading means that some pupils select books that are either too easy or too hard for them, which inhibits the systematic development of skills. The school recognises this, and the additional time for guided reading in the older classes is addressing this issue effectively. The development of library skills is restricted because of the limited range of books available in the junior library and the way it is organised. Pupils' understanding of how to use reference books is sound, and they find information by using the contents page or index. Many pupils are members of the local public library and use it regularly.
78. Standards in writing are satisfactory throughout the school, and are typical of standards seen nationally. The quality of the pupils' handwriting, particularly in Year 6 is well above average as a result of the focus of teaching in this area and the specialist teaching that pupils receive. In the infant classes, pupils attempt a good range of writing including poetry. The focus on phonics helps pupils to develop independence in spelling, enabling them to write at length without interruptions to find spellings in dictionaries or by asking adults for help. However, accuracy in spelling is developing more slowly as there is insufficient focus on the correct spelling of frequently used words. For instance, in one exercise book the pupil had written the word 'with' as 'wiv' on several successive pages and this had remained uncorrected. Pupils use a growing vocabulary to express their ideas, and in Year 2 there is some good work completed in comparing and contrasting the settings of two stories. Work is well structured and usually correctly punctuated.
79. As they progress through the junior classes, pupils write for an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences and use an increasing range of vocabulary and more complex sentences. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn how to summarise by selecting the main points and key words in a non-fiction text about space travel. Older pupils make story plans that lead to well-structured writing. Poetry writing has a high profile throughout the school, and



by Year 6 the most able pupils include wit and humour in their poems:

Dear Auntie,  
Oh what a nice cardy!  
I've always adored Army Green  
And fancy you thinking  
Of orange and red –  
For the spots  
How clever you've been!

80. Pupils use language to good effect in most other subjects. In science they use the correct technical vocabulary to describe their experiments. In music they use specialist vocabulary such as stave, pitch and rhythm. Art inspires poetic writing, particularly in Year 6:

Brown, brown, lots of brown.  
Reddish coffee,  
Lots of toffee.  
Chestnut, sorrel roan and bay,  
Milky chocolate,  
Mahogany.

81. Pupils attain satisfactory standards in speaking and listening in the infant school, and by the time they progress to the older classes in the junior school their skills are good. The younger pupils are confident to talk about their work and speak up well in class. They listen carefully and follow instructions. In Years 3 to 6 oral skills develop well, largely as a result of discussions in subjects such as art, and design and technology, when they evaluate their own and each other's work. Discussions in personal, social and health education enhance listening skills. Pupils listen carefully to each other and the teacher and offer thoughtful contributions. At the present time, drama does not contribute significantly to the development of oral skills.
82. The teaching of English is sound throughout the school, with some good and very good teaching observed during the inspection. The best teaching is characterised by thorough planning, very good subject knowledge and good questioning skills. This results in well-paced activities, the enthusiastic presentation of new material and high expectations, particularly of handwriting and presentation.
83. In a lesson in one of the older junior classes the teacher's appropriate intervention helped a pupil with special educational needs to produce writing of good quality when he was helped to understand that really descriptive language is not just a string of adjectives. In a lower junior class the teacher effectively modelled drafting and revising of a text using the editing facility in a word processing package, supporting pupils' understanding of the process of writing. In both infant and junior classes, the most able pupils are sometimes given work which is insufficiently challenging to encourage them to produce work that is at the necessary level required to attain a higher grade in the end of year tests. Often pupils of average and above average ability are given tasks that are the same, with the expectation that the more able will simply produce more or better work. All teachers assess pupils' progress regularly, and set targets for improvement. In some classes the targets are too general and pupils do not know what they have to do to achieve them. For example, 'Improve descriptive writing' is difficult for a child to act upon, but 'Remember to use capital letters, full stops and commas in your writing' is achievable. A prompt sheet provided for the older pupils is effective in helping them to understand what they have to do to improve their writing and achieve a higher standard.
84. The subject is effectively led and managed. The two co-ordinators work together as a team and have worked hard to devise strategies to raise standards. Resources for English

teaching are satisfactory. There are firm plans to improve and develop library facilities for the juniors with the addition of more non-fiction texts, and to expand the use of information and communications technology in the teaching of English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Pupils' standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 are average. Boys and girls achieve similar levels in the subject. In 2002, the results of the national tests for Year 2 pupils indicated that all pupils reached at least the expected level and that an above average proportion reached the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that most of the current Year 2 pupils will reach the expected level but a much lower proportion will exceed it. Standards in relation to the national average are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.
86. Over the past few years, results at the end of Year 6 have been improving slowly but steadily. In 2002, this improvement continued despite a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs; about three-quarters achieved the expected level and a third the higher level. The results in 2003, on inspection evidence, are likely to be broadly similar, although slightly fewer are on course to attain the higher level. Again this is similar to the findings at the last inspection.
87. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2. They achieve appropriate standards when their initial levels of attainment on entry to the school are taken into account. Pupils with special educational needs or lower levels of ability in the subject also make satisfactory progress as teachers often concentrate their efforts on these pupils. Much of the teaching is good, or even very good, and this helps to compensate for the scarcity of support staff.
88. Pupils in Year 6 achieved above average results when they were tested in 1999 as Year 2 pupils. Their progress over the intervening years has thus been rather disappointing. There have been many changes of teaching staff and some teaching in the past was unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in teaching have now been largely eliminated, helped by the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Grouping of pupils into sets based on ability in the subject has enabled pupils of lower ability to be taught in smaller classes; this is proving to be particularly beneficial in Year 5. As a result of these changes, pupils in the junior classes are now making sound progress, so that the steady improvement in Year 6 standards is likely to resume from 2004 onwards.
89. In Year 2, pupils know which pairs of numbers add to ten. Lower ability pupils double amounts of money by using coins, but those with higher levels of ability demonstrate their increasing understanding of place value by doubling 35p without using coins. Their speed and accuracy is handicapped by a lack of proficiency with doubles to ten, with some pupils having to calculate 3+3 using fingers. Pupils understand odd and even numbers and count in twos. They identify which number is one more or less than a given number and most extend this to state which number is ten more or less, but often fail to answer the question, 'How many more?' They have a satisfactory knowledge of shape and space through work on common two-dimensional shapes and on lines of symmetry. They have begun to learn ways to represent data and to interpret block graphs and pie charts.
90. By the age of eleven, most pupils have mastered the basic arithmetical processes. They know all their tables, multiply and divide by ten or 100 and are beginning to manipulate fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils work with co-ordinates in the first quadrant and understand negative numbers in the context of temperature. More able pupils calculate fractions, such as one-tenth of an hour, and relate fractions to percentages. Those with lower levels of ability complete a narrower range of work. They multiply decimals by a single digit number and double simpler three-digit multiples of ten. However, their

understanding is often limited; for example, they do not recognise that 7.9 is ten times smaller than 79 and they find equivalent fractions hard to understand.

91. Standards in space, shape and measures and in handling data are at the expected levels for this stage in Year 6, but the work covered includes too little at a higher level to enable some pupils to experience sufficient challenge. Pupils construct and measure angles with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They calculate the perimeter of a rectangle and classify quadrilaterals according to their properties. They understand the various ways of identifying the average of a set of data but, as yet, their understanding of probability is at an early stage. Pupils have not progressed to the construction and interpretation of a wide range of graphs.
92. Understanding how to use and apply the mathematics they have learnt is less developed in Year 6 pupils. The school is aware of lower standards in this aspect of the subject. Most pupils identify the operation they need to carry out to arrive at the correct answer. They are encouraged to estimate their answer in order to check whether their results are reasonable but, unless reminded, do not always do so. Most pupils know how to use an inverse operation to provide a further check. Pupils have insufficient experience of mathematical investigations. In the few investigations that are carried out, pupils fail to set out their working clearly to indicate the methods they have used.
93. The standard of teaching is satisfactory overall and a significant proportion is good or very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection. This is a similar picture to that reported at the previous inspection. A feature common to all teaching is the good, and often very good, management and control of pupils. Teachers have established very positive relationships with their pupils. In most lessons, they incorporate elements of challenge, seeking to improve on previous performance, and this adds to pupils' evident enjoyment. As a result, pupils behave very well and interruptions to the smooth flow of lessons are very rare.
94. The three-part structure of the lesson, suggested in national guidance, is firmly established and each part is used well. Lessons begin promptly with oral or mental work. In most classes this is conducted at a good pace, is of sufficient length and carefully planned to involve all pupils by, for example, asking quieter pupils specific questions. Occasionally it is less successful because too much time is spent discussing answers to questions. In better lessons, resources such as white boards are used so that all pupils respond to each question and the teacher is able to assess the level of comprehension by looking at the answers displayed. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils were given time to discuss with a partner as they ordered three two-digit numbers and were given open tasks, such as 'How many number bonds to ten can you say to your partner?'
95. The central part of the lesson is mostly well taught. Teachers demonstrate their secure knowledge of the subject by providing clear input, working sufficient examples to ensure pupils have grasped each new process. They provide work at varying levels, ensuring that all pupils are included and have the opportunity to make progress. They often set time constraints to ensure pupils work at a good pace. Teachers provide practical tasks that actively engage pupils' interest. For example, in one class of Year 3 and 4 pupils, a game was introduced to enable pupils to practise adding and subtracting 9, 19 and 29. In another class, pupils used time efficiently as they investigated whether numbers can be added or subtracted in any order. Teachers assess the gains in knowledge and understanding made by pupils and make sensible adjustments to their future programme to ensure pupils learn well. They indicate the purpose of each lesson and in their marking often show pupils the new learning they have achieved. In some of the less successful lessons, there is insufficient input or teachers have insufficiently high expectations about the amount or level of pupils' work. The potential of information and communication technology to provide

programs enabling pupils to overcome specific learning needs is underused, although it is used well to provide speed practice.

96. The school has recently examined the use of the final plenary session and made adjustments to good effect. As well as using it to consolidate pupils' learning and to revisit areas causing difficulties, it is often used to introduce new ideas or to look forward to the next stage of the learning process. Occasionally, as in a Year 6 class, a game rounds off the lesson appropriately.
97. Pupils' skills in mathematics are assessed regularly and thoroughly. However, because this assessment takes place at the end of each topic, there is no time for pupils who show they have not understood to have additional teaching to catch up. The experienced subject leader sets a very good example to other staff by the high quality of her teaching. She is aware of some areas for improvement and of standards in Year 2, but less of those in Year 6. Systems of classroom observation are established but not always strongly focused on pupils' learning. The feedback to teachers that follows is insufficiently evaluative, so reducing the potential for improvement. A popular Maths Games Club operating out of school hours for part of each school year enriches the mathematics curriculum. Classrooms include displays in the subject, but these rarely include interactive elements inviting pupils to become more involved or to extend their learning.

## SCIENCE

98. Current standards in Year 2 are average and overall standards by Year 6 are below average. By age eleven, a significant majority of pupils achieve the expected standard, Level 4, which is similar to the proportion found nationally. However, fewer go on to achieve the higher level of attainment partly because teachers are not stretching higher-attaining pupils sufficiently. Currently, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across the school. However, a small number of higher-attaining pupils make insufficient progress in order to reach an appropriately high standard. This is a similar picture to the last inspection and the most recent teacher assessments and test results in 2002.
99. In the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes, pupils look at sources of electricity and, as a result of satisfactory teaching, recognise the differences between mains and battery sources. They know that appliances using mains electricity should have a lead that is plugged into a socket. For example, in an information and communications technology lesson pupils controlling a programmable toy knew that it had batteries because it had not got a lead. Some pupils understand that the electricity arrives in their school and homes through underground cables. A pupil in Year 2 knew that cables on pylons carry some electricity. Pupils did not know that electricity comes from a power station but through satisfactory teaching all pupils could state this at the end of the lesson.
100. Year 1 pupils are learning thinking skills through a specific focused programme of short lessons. In a good lesson within this programme, a group of lower-attaining and immature pupils were learning to listen to and follow instructions whilst they were sorting cards with different animals on them. It was evident that their ability to listen and follow instructions is unsatisfactory and that these lessons play an important part in their learning.
101. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 correctly sort materials in to groups so that each material in a particular group has similar properties. They repeat these processes to show that materials can be sorted in many ways. When sorting liquids, pupils tended to look at the containers that hold them rather than the liquids themselves. Teachers are good at introducing the correct terminology and vocabulary in science. They also ensure that pupils know what the terminology means, are able to pronounce the words and put them in context. A group in one class knows what transparent and opaque is when sorting materials and can explain

what they mean. However, there are occasions where incorrect words have not been corrected in the marking. Words are often spelt as pupils pronounce them.

102. Groups of pupils in Year 5 research the planets in the solar system. They show good links with information and communication technology when using information gleaned and downloaded from the Internet. In another topic they look at the dangers of smoking and use a 'lung machine' to show how tar from cigarettes coats the lung surface. Through investigating reversible and irreversible changes, pupils in Year 6 gain a good knowledge of experimental procedures and they are quite clear as to how to make a test fair. They can predict, record results and draw conclusions from their results. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show they are not sure what a hypothesis is but further questioning indicates that they are writing hypotheses in their experiments without knowing what the word is. In a good lesson exploring what happens when a vitamin C tablet dissolves in water, the teacher skilfully questions pupils so that they learn from practical experience and thinking rather than by just telling them.
103. When working in groups in science pupils work collaboratively, handling resources carefully and sharing tasks and ideas. This is particularly evident in both Year 5 and the Year 6 classes. Here teachers ensure that pupils know what good collaborative group work is by asking them to repeat what the main criteria for group work are before setting them off on their tasks.
104. Throughout the school, teachers are mindful of including those pupils with special educational needs. This is evident during activities at the start and end of the lessons, when teachers ask questions to find out what pupils' know and what they have learned during the lesson. Teaching in science is never less than satisfactory and in some lessons it is good. This helps pupils to progress satisfactorily throughout the school. Teachers manage pupils very well, which contributes positively to the good behaviour in science lessons. They show confidence in what they do and plan lessons to include the different ability ranges in each class. However, whilst more able pupils are provided for in the planning, there is insufficient emphasis on extending the higher-attaining pupils during the lessons by giving them time targets and providing higher expectations.
105. The school is aware that at present there are too few opportunities provided to use the skills of information and communications technology to support science. Plans are in hand to make full use of the newly arrived computers for the suite once they are installed. The co-ordinator for science, who is giving a good lead to the subject, has a clear vision and plans for the development of the subject. Close links are made with a nearby Beacon school for support and to share ideas in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

106. Work completed in both the infant and junior classes is at a higher standard than that seen in the majority of schools. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection, when standards were in line with national expectations. Standards have been improved through the development of a detailed scheme of work, based on national guidelines, an increase in the range of materials and media available for the pupils to use and the appointment of a temporary co-ordinator with a very high level of subject expertise and skill. Provision is enhanced by the activities of an art club, in which pupils are able to experience using techniques that are usually beyond the range of primary school provision, such as silk-screen printing.
107. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum that covers all elements of the national curriculum for art and design, including study of the work of established artists. Well-produced and carefully mounted displays of pupils' artwork enhance the environment of the school. In all classes pupils produce individual work and pieces on which several pupils or

groups have worked co-operatively. This co-operative work enhances the provision for social development. Cross-curricular links are used effectively, particularly as art and design feature in all technology projects. For instance in a Year 6 slipper-making project, pupils use pattern and colour to decorate their slippers. Art also supports work in other subjects, and pupils use their drawing skills to illustrate work in history, for instance, producing pictures of Tudor figures.

108. Pupils make good progress. They use a range of materials to good effect, including paint, pastels, papier-mâché, collage and clay. From Year 1 to Year 6 pupils record and develop ideas from direct observation. The detailed scheme of work ensures that tasks becomes increasingly demanding as pupils become more mature, but systematic monitoring and assessment of the acquisition of skills is inconsistent and under developed. This means that most teachers do not have detailed information allowing them to specifically meet the developing needs of different groups of pupils. Teaching observed during the inspection was good, with teachers using demonstration and questioning to help pupils to improve their work.
109. By the end of Year 2, pupils have worked in a range of media and begun to use both observation and imagination to develop their work. They use photographic images as starting points to develop collage work in paper and fabric. In the junior classes pupils keep a sketchbook in which they record examples of techniques they have learned. The younger junior classes print using blocks, mono-print techniques and found objects to make impressions. They mix a variety of tints and shades of blue to make patterns after looking at pictures from Picasso's 'Blue Period'. Year 5 pupils use a modelling material to create three-dimensional sculptures of figures. They print and dye fabrics, using a range of methods including tie-dye. In Year 6 portfolios the influence of L. S. Lowry is evident in the watercolour paintings of buildings. This work demonstrates a mature eye for detail and interesting composition. In a Year 6 lesson the most able pupils produce increasingly refined studies of moving figures, and discuss the use of different drawing materials with a high level of understanding of selecting materials for different purposes. There is some evidence of the development of computer-generated art in both infant and junior classes, but this is limited. Pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their ability in art lessons. They behave very well and treat resources with care. Pupils develop their skills of evaluation effectively when analysing their work and that of others in lessons. Art makes a positive contribution to the development of speaking and listening in the junior classes.
110. The temporary co-ordinator is well qualified, knowledgeable and keen to spread her expertise through the staff. She recognises the need to organise a consistent policy for assessment of skills development and the importance of ensuring that pupils develop skills systematically. Firm plans are in place to review the scheme of work to ensure that this is the case. Resources for art are satisfactory, but the range of posters and examples of the work of established artists is not extensive, and limits the teaching of this element of the art curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

111. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' standards in design and technology are at the expected levels for their age. The pupils carry out design and make projects throughout the school and they have a satisfactory range of experiences in all areas of the design and technology curriculum. There is a good range of examples such as models and projects present in the school.
112. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 satisfactorily design and make sandwiches. Photographic evidence shows that they use a wide variety of fillings. These classes make hand puppets and they satisfactorily cut out the pieces of fabric and then show appropriate sewing skills for their

age when fixing the seams. They trim and decorate them satisfactorily with appliqué work. Although not observed during the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 experience a satisfactory variety of construction kits in the practical area outside the classrooms.

113. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make purses, moving toys made from wood and card and model chairs for a dolls' house. Their designs show a satisfactory understanding of how their models are to work though insufficient use is made of pupils' numeracy skills in measuring and planning their models. These pupils make sound progress in their making and construction skills. Pupils have a good knowledge of materials and they make suitable choices when selecting items. They satisfactorily cut out shapes and show appropriate skills for their age when joining wood, paper and fabric. Their presentation skills are good and they paint their models with care. Pupils show good levels of interest and perseverance even when they find making their model chair into a rocking chair a difficult task.
114. Pupils in Year 5, including those with special educational needs, successfully combine their work in design and technology with their work in art and design. They show good practical skills in using textiles as when they produced a collage of the story of Orpheus. The finished work shows good design and making skills and also illustrates how well pupils collaborate in the completion of an activity. Pupils in Year 6 have made slippers and also hats for a pantomime. The samples on display show sound planning, making and evaluation skills.
115. Assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are not fully implemented across the school and there is insufficient emphasis on assessing the development of skills. Little use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. There is a policy statement but at present there is no co-ordinator to lead the subject forward.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. By the ages of seven and eleven pupils achieve the expected standards for their age. Pupils make sound progress as the relevance and context of geography are made through good links with other subjects. For example, in a history lesson on the Greeks pupils in Year 6 discuss where Greece is, its climate and its people before embarking on their historical studies. The pupils have good knowledge of Greece and can locate it on a map of Europe. They know that the climate is different from that in Britain.
117. In a very good literacy lesson, pupils in the infant classes read stories from other countries. In the story *Why the Snake has no Legs* pupils talk about tropical countries, the equator and what it is, and rainforests. Then in pairs they discuss the setting and environment of their own school. Pupils are developing a sense of spatial awareness when they use the words 'behind' and 'in front of', when drawing their houses on a street map. Later they compare and contrast their school and setting with that of the story. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have drawn their routes from home to school. Good links with literacy are made when reading a story about a child who drops a favourite toy on the way to school. This inspires them to make maps and draw any distinguishing buildings and features on it in a journey from home to school. They are beginning to develop some idea of a plan view when they draw roads and roundabouts.
118. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 write water diaries in an attempt to find out how much water they use for drinking, washing and flushing toilets. However, they do not make any quantitative assessment of the water used and links with numeracy are missed.
119. Pupils in Year 5 undertake research to find out about mountains in books and on the Internet. They satisfactorily display and write about their work. Pupils show good

collaborative group work with each member of the group contributing to the project. Good links are made with history when pupils draw a map for a display of the route that the Spanish Armada took from Spain to Britain. In Year 6, pupils use co-ordinates to find a place or location on a map. They talk knowledgeably about the places they have visited. They recall a visit in order to study plants and animals in fields and woodland as well as a quarry. These pupils are aware that different types of landscape affects the life found within them.

120. No lessons were observed during the inspection but an analysis of pupils' previous work indicates that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Whilst the curriculum follows closely the nationally produced guidance, assessment procedures are underdeveloped. Currently the skills of the subject have not been sufficiently identified to ensure that they are progressively developed as pupils move through the school in order for pupils to achieve higher standards.

## HISTORY

121. It was not possible to observe lessons in history in Years 1 and 2 classes but an examination of previous work indicates that pupils achieve average standards. Pupils in Year 6 achieve standards below those expected and make insufficient progress through the junior classes. This represents a decline from the position at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The reason for this decline is that there is insufficient attention to the development of historical skills. They are not identified in the plans for topics in the subject, so teachers are unable to build upon the skills pupils already possess. Pupils are taught a limited number of facts about discrete periods of history, often in some depth, but do not create links between them. There is insufficient attention to investigating why things happened, so pupils' understanding of cause and effect is underdeveloped.
122. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue the process of working back from the present, started in the reception classes as pupils examine photographs of themselves as babies. They write about their own memories, prior to learning about Remembrance Day and its importance to older generations. They spend a 'history day' learning about Florence Nightingale. Activities include role-play and writing a letter to develop empathetic understanding, watching a video and making lamps. They know about the state of hospitals in the Crimea and how Florence improved them.
123. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study the Tudors, focusing on Henry VIII and the contrast between rich and poor. This and a local visit gives pupils some understanding of life in Tudor times, but little knowledge of the causes of events or of changes that occurred.
124. Pupils in Year 6 have retained little factual knowledge of the periods they have studied. They have some understanding of vocabulary, explaining the meaning of *invasion* and *conquest*, but do not know why Romans or Vikings came to this country. Although they know a few facts about the Tudors, they have no idea of the religious turmoil underlying the principal events nor of any famous people of the period apart from monarchs - this despite having studied Shakespeare in literacy lessons! They have begun to study the ancient Greeks and understand some of the sources of evidence for that civilisation, though not clearly distinguishing primary and secondary sources. Last year these pupils studied the Second World War. After two pieces of work undertaken by all pupils, they completed individual projects, mostly at home, on particular aspects, such as the life of Hitler or life in Britain during the conflict. Much of the work was copied or downloaded from the Internet. Consequently individual pupils gained, at best, only a partial understanding of the topic and historical skills were not substantially developed.



125. It was not possible to observe any teaching in Years 1 and 2, but it is evident from pupils' completed work that it includes many good features. Teachers provide a variety of interesting experiences, including visits, and link work to other subjects well. For example, in their work on Remembrance Day, pupils looked at poppies as depicted by well-known artists. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work at the conclusion of each topic.
126. The standard of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, as at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have adequate, and often good, knowledge of the subject, enabling them to bring a period of history to life. However, their knowledge of the skills pupils need to acquire is inadequate, so that planning does not always address the learning needs of the pupils. Where possible, teachers make connections with other subjects, for example by setting the ancient Greeks in their geographical context. Resources are well chosen and effectively used to create interest. For example, a teacher of Years 3 and 4 pupils dressed some in Tudor costume to create an appropriate environment for the lesson. Drama and role-play are used to develop empathy with people of a bygone age. Occasionally the tasks provided are insufficiently thought through to ensure that they add to historical understanding. The school is aware of the potential to use historical texts in the literacy hour to enhance the programme of study and intends to develop this area in the future.
127. The subject leader is enthusiastic but has had insufficient opportunity to monitor standards, teaching and pupils' learning in the subject. She is aware, however, of the challenge that the implementation of mixed-age classes presents in ensuring good progression in learning. There is an increasing range of good quality resources to support teaching of the subject, but the junior library contains an inadequate range and quantity of books to allow pupils to pursue independently their growing interest in history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

128. At the last inspection teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject was weak and accounted for the standards of attainment being weak both at the ages of seven and eleven. Currently, standards are similar to those expected nationally for pupils at the age of seven but at the age of eleven they are below expectations because elements of the curriculum for older pupils such as control, are not being taught in sufficient depth at present. This is due mainly to the fact that computers for the information and communications technology suite have only just been delivered and are awaiting technical help to fully install the system. Teaching overall is satisfactory with some good examples of teaching seen during the inspection.
129. As a result of good teaching, pupils from Years 1 and 2 show a sound knowledge of how to operate a programmable toy robot. They are able to calculate how far it has to travel on a floor map of an island. Many pupils, including the older ones, have problems identifying their left and right and so the teacher sensibly ensures that each pupil knows this before the lesson begins. The teacher makes a good link with a previous science lesson when pupils satisfactorily work out that the robot must have batteries to make it move and not mains electricity. Pupils handle equipment with care and are good at taking turns. The teacher's good rapport with the pupils strongly encourages them to listen to her careful instructions.
130. In a good lesson with a large class of Year 5 pupils the teacher confidently instructs how to organise and reorganise text and images on the computer. The teacher is particularly good at eliciting what pupils already know and building upon this knowledge. The effective use of pupils to operate the keyboard during demonstrations makes the activity more relevant for them. The teacher is also good at making use of pupils' expertise as when a competent pupil helped a group who was having a problem with a technique. This approach benefits the teacher as she is able to spend more time with pupils that need it, the competent pupil gets a chance to practise skills and the group is able to continue with their work.

131. A feature of the teaching, particularly for the older pupils, is the enthusiasm for the subject that teachers communicate to them. They also develop and reinforce good co-operative skills for group work and get pupils to recall these criteria before pupils begin their tasks. For example, in another good lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher was very effective in giving instructions when showing a new software program to develop a multimedia presentation. Because the computer suite is not yet in operation, the teacher demonstrated from a single computer. Instead of just demonstrating the teacher explored what pupils knew already and then built on this knowledge when introducing a new procedure. The teacher successfully ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have understood the procedures that they will follow in groups in subsequent lessons. The pupils make useful notes of the procedures and instructions to help them when it is their turn to use the computers.
132. Overall pupils progress satisfactorily through the school because activities in most aspects of the subject are taught and progressively developed. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection and is a direct result of the increased teacher confidence and competence in the subject. However, there are still aspects, notably in how to control objects and in monitoring, which are not taught sufficiently to ensure satisfactory progress. Teachers are beginning to incorporate the use of computers into many lessons such as literacy where at least some pupils use them in all year groups. However, as there is only one computer to each classroom it does limit the impact that computers have on supporting the curriculum. Resources that were lacking at the last inspection are now satisfactory. Once the computers that have just been delivered are up and running it is intended that the computer suite will enable whole classes to not only develop skills but also increase the support for the remainder of the curriculum.

## MUSIC

133. The standards and provision for music were judged to be satisfactory during the last inspection. They are now above average at both ages seven and eleven, which represents a good level of improvement. The co-ordinator has devised a detailed scheme of work based on published guidelines, which ensures that all elements of the National Curriculum receive thorough coverage in both infant and junior classes. Pupils have opportunities to listen to, compose and play music as well as to sing. An appropriate range of multicultural music is included in the curriculum, including the opportunity for pupils to play in a steel band.
134. The progress that pupils make is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the junior school. There are opportunities for singing both in class lessons and in assemblies, and pupils sing well. Clear instruction is given in pitch, rhythm and expression. Good use is made of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments for composition and performances, with pupils listening to teachers and following them carefully. They learn to recognise a strong beat, and even the youngest clap to a repeated pattern. A class of Years 1 and 2 pupils learns how to create rhythmic patterns with percussion instruments to develop an improvised performance. They know the names of different instruments and the sounds they make, and compare them. They rise to the challenge of making sounds that are quiet or loud, long or short, occasionally using unorthodox methods such as tapping the side of a drum rather than the skin to achieve the required effect. Pupils in Year 4 learn about traditional singing games, making a link with the history curriculum. They learn about the features of the singing games and action songs they are already familiar with, such as *Oranges and Lemons* and learn new ones. They sing tunefully, accompanied by their teacher on an accordion. Pupils respond well to the enthusiastic and encouraging teaching they experience, and clearly enjoy their music lessons.
135. A number of musical groups and clubs enhance the provision offered. Recorder groups, choral singing for performances, steel band and hand-bell groups are open to all pupils in

the junior school regardless of ability. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in music groups and in public performances. Hand-bell groups and the steel band perform regularly for outside audiences, including at the Hereford Festival. Local retail businesses encourage the steel band to visit them and perform for special events. Pupils take pride in their music and display very positive attitudes to the subject. Behaviour in lessons is very good, and pupils are careful and respectful of the instruments they use. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

136. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. In the best lessons attention is given to listening for specific features of the music and learning basic techniques of pitch and rhythm. Teachers break down new material to be learned into small manageable elements, which pupils can practise and then combine. More able pupils are asked to 'lead' groups or sections of compositions and are thus challenged to improve their own standards.
137. The music co-ordinator is effective in her role, and has a high level of subject knowledge and expertise. She offers a very good level of support to her non-specialist colleagues, providing help with planning and delivering effective music lessons. At the present time procedures for assessing pupils' progress in music are informal and insufficiently systematic. The co-ordinator recognises the need to develop a more structured assessment system that will enable staff to monitor the development of pupils' musical skills and plan for improvement. The use of information and communication technology to support music is under-developed at the present time.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

138. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils achieve the expected standards for their age. This represents a decline from the position at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were average at the end of Year 2 and above average by Year 6. The reason for this decline is that there is insufficient attention to the development of physical skills to ensure the higher standard is reached. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
139. In the infants, pupils enjoy the subject and make satisfactory progress in developing a sense of fairness when they take part in team-relay games. They understand that exercise helps to keep them fit and they show appropriate co-ordination for their age. In Years 3 and 4, pupils satisfactorily develop their skills in country dancing. Through the effective use of taped programmes, they learn to dance on the spot, clap and move around the room to the rhythm of the music. They listen carefully to instructions and so quickly put these actions together in a simple dance. Their dance movements are typical for their age with boys and girls clapping and skipping in time to the music. They satisfactorily change from one action to another at the end of a line when prompted by the tape or the teacher. Pupils in Year 6 continue to make steady progress. For example they use a hockey stick to hit, pass and control a ball with appropriate skill for their age. They develop a satisfactory understanding of positional play through small game situations.
140. The school operates an adequate swimming programme for pupils in Years 3 to 5. They attend a course of weekly lessons at a local pool for one term each year. Pupils develop their confidence in water and begin to use recognised arm and leg actions on their front and back. By the end of the programme, pupils swim unaided for a distance of 25 metres, the expected standard for eleven-year-olds. Some go on to swim greater distances and achieve life saving awards. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 take part in appropriate outdoor adventurous activities during their annual residential visits. These include walking, problem solving, rock climbing and canoeing. More regular activities based in the school's grounds are not currently planned though the school recognises the opportunities to develop activities such as orienteering. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 begin one morning per week with an energetic skipping session in order to provide pupils with an additional physical activity.

141. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers begin lessons with a warm-up, which helps pupils understand how exercise affects their bodies in the short-term. The warm-up activities, however, did not always contain activities that both stretched the pupils' muscles and increased their heart rate. Teachers manage the pupils very well and no time is lost dealing with disruptions. Pupils respond very well to the teachers' clear expectations of behaviour and their effective use of praise. Consequently, pupils are attentive and work hard at improving their performance. For example, older pupils quickly organise themselves into small groups and work sensibly at improving their passing skills in hockey, taking care not to disrupt other groups.
142. Teachers ensure pupils are kept physically active during lessons but they do not sufficiently highlight how pupils can improve their performance. Their planning identifies the activity, such as taking part in relay-races or developing hockey skills, but they do not always identify what skills are to be improved and how. Teachers make use of pupil demonstrations to praise their efforts but they do not use them effectively to show pupils how they can improve their performance.
143. Currently, there is no co-ordinator for the subject to monitor planning and teaching. There is an adequate range of resources. The subject, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities for boys and girls, makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

144. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils reach the levels of attainment expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils are provided with a sound range of opportunities and the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Consequently, pupils make steady progress and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development.
145. Teachers plan regular lessons and topic weeks that effectively cover the knowledge and understanding required within the agreed syllabus. As a result, they develop an understanding of the ways people care for others and knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. Teachers lead good quality discussions that develop pupils' self-awareness. In the infant classes, the very good relationships within the classroom helps pupils gain a clear understanding of the benefits of friendship. Teachers, through links to stories used in Circle Time, help pupils to identify some of the qualities of a good friend. This was well illustrated when a higher-attaining pupil wrote, 'I want someone who likes swimming so that I can swim with them. I want someone who likes me'. Many pupils develop these ideas by carefully considering smiling back when someone smiles at them, listening to other peoples' views or not being so bossy as ways for them to become a better friend. Pupils with special educational needs are given sufficient support so that they make sound progress. They make better progress in lessons where classroom assistants are able to provide additional support. They help by consolidating the work of the teacher through continued discussions and in choosing appropriate words to describe their feelings.
146. Older pupils in the junior classes further develop their understanding of the qualities needed to be a friend and to show commitment. The reading of an Old Testament story thoughtfully develops the pupils' understanding of the characteristics that helped Ruth remain loyal to her mother-in-law, Naomi. By working co-operatively, pupils successfully discuss ideas such as respect, friendship and caring as they produce 'word-chains' to illustrate their ideas. The teacher's careful handling of the Bible and the quiet way in which the story is read highlights its importance to Christians.
147. Pupils throughout the school develop a good knowledge of Christianity and a sound knowledge of other world faiths. As a result of very good relationships within the classroom

and the satisfactory teaching that is pitched at the right level for pupils of this age, pupils have good attitudes during lessons. They work hard and are happy to talk about their work. They discuss the different religions they have studied and display interest without prejudice. However, they are not always aware that other world religions are to be found within a multicultural Britain.

148. In the infant classes, pupils know how and why Christians celebrate Christmas and relate it to their own experiences. The effective use of artwork helps pupils to remember stories and symbols connected to both the Christian and Jewish faiths. They understand that the angels they drew as part of the Christmas story are messengers of God and that God is the creator of the world. Pupils know that eight-branched candlesticks are used at the festival of Hannukah and that the Torah scroll and Seder plate are important objects to the Jewish people. Their well-produced paintings and models of these artefacts, which are carefully displayed are an effective reminder of pupils' previous work and help develop their knowledge and understanding of some of the festivals celebrate and symbols used in Judaism.
149. In the junior classes pupils continue to develop their knowledge of Christianity. In Years 3 and 4, pupils develop their knowledge of the church's year. They listen and watch with great interest as the vicar from their local church shows them the different stoles he wears during the year. This consolidates pupils' knowledge of festivals such as Advent, Epiphany and Ascension Day as well as developing an appreciation for the design and care taken in embroidering the stoles, which are very special to their visitor. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of the beliefs of Christians and the significance of the Bible and festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They also have a sound understanding of other world religions, including Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. For example, they know that Muslims worship one god, Allah, while Hindus have many gods, including Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
150. Pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills because teachers provide opportunities for pupils to record their thoughts and feelings. For example, a pupil wrote sensitively about her visit to the local church: 'In the church you have to be quiet because it is a religious place and it is where God lives'. At present little use is made of information and communication technology to present pupils' work or as a method of researching other religions.
151. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a new scheme of work based on Herefordshire's Agreed Syllabus for the subject. This clearly sets out what pupils are to learn. The co-ordinator recognises the need to use the expectations of the syllabus in assessing pupils' progress. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, which it supplements through a local loan service and makes very good use of its links with its church to support pupils' learning.