

INSPECTION REPORT

ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hereford

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116884

Headteacher: Mr P.E.J.Williams

Reporting inspector: Dr J.N.Thorp
6327

Dates of inspection: 30 September – 3 October 2002

Inspection number: 247712

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School Venns Lane Hereford
Postcode:	HR1 1DT
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J.Haswell
Date of previous inspection:	September 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
6327	Dr J.N.Thorp	Registered inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; Music; Physical education	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19418	Mrs A Birch	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17456	Mrs A.Smithers	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum; Mathematics; Geography; History	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
2433	Mr I.Bennett	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Equal opportunities; English as an additional language; English; Design and technology; Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School is located to the north east of the centre of Hereford. While the school serves its immediate local community, a significant number of pupils travel from some distance away. The school is broadly average in size, with 200 pupils on roll organised into seven classes. Children are admitted into the school during the year of their fifth birthday. Although there are variations in their attainment on entry, it is generally above average. A very small number of pupils come from minority groups, two of whom speak English as an additional language, which as a proportion is well below average. 20% of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is broadly average. Around seven percent of pupils are registered as entitled to a free school meal and this is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Francis Xavier's is an improving school. The headteacher and staff have created a caring environment in which pupils feel secure and fully supported. The attention given to inclusion is good. Teaching is now good and pupils respond positively; these factors are contributing effectively to the improvements in standards of attainment. However, the school is not yet sufficiently demanding of pupils and so there is still room for improvement in ensuring that they all achieve as much as they can. The headteacher has not yet ensured that there is a shared commitment to improvement and consistency across the school. However, the strengths of the school now outweigh any weaknesses and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- ? The school's commitment to inclusion is good, ensuring respect, tolerance and equal opportunities for all pupils; the implementation of arrangements made is particularly effective in Year 2.
- ? Standards in reading and in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school
- ? The quality of teaching is good, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6 and this has a positive impact on learning
- ? Pupils have positive attitudes to school, most are keen and try hard; relationships throughout the school are good
- ? Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, ensuring these pupils make good progress

What could be improved

- ? Leadership in providing clear direction and guidance towards a more consistent whole-school approach to improvement and its more rapid achievement
- ? The contribution of subject co-ordinators to the management of the curriculum
- ? The frequency and range of opportunities provided for pupils to work with the computers
- ? Assessment systems for tracking pupils' progress and the use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning
- ? Opportunities for pupils to acquire and use appropriate skills to enable them to learn independently

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in September 2000. There has been satisfactory overall improvement since then, although in some respects change has been slow. There is a clearer emphasis on pupils' high achievement. Better teaching has contributed to improved standards in mathematics and science, with more pupils achieving the higher level 5 in these subjects in statutory tests in 2002. The curriculum is broad and better balanced. Although pupils' skills in ICT have improved, there is still some way to go to ensure that they have sufficient opportunities to work with the computers in all subjects. Leadership and management are improving, with the new governing body much better informed of developments in school. Subject co-ordinators also have clearer responsibilities for curriculum management, but in subjects other than literacy and numeracy their role in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. The headteacher is not yet sufficiently effective in ensuring that improvement moves at an appropriate pace, or in achieving consistency across the school. More effective procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour have ensured that bullying is no longer a problem; staff are much more aware of child protection procedures. Pupils' written reports now provide a clearer indication of their attainment and progress, and parents also receive regular information about the curriculum.

STANDARDS

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

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

This table shows that results in statutory tests for eleven year olds in 2002 were much better than the previous year, particularly in mathematics and science. In all three subjects there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in the tests. Targets set are appropriately challenging and in 2002 pupils were very close to achieving them. Inspection findings indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average throughout the school. Although satisfactory, there is room for improvement in the pace at which pupils make progress. Standards of pupils' reading are particularly good. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected, although pupils have too few opportunities to work with the computers. In all other subjects in which a judgement could be made, standards are in line with those expected of pupils their age. Children enter the school with better than average prior attainment. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, with good opportunities to extend their literacy and numeracy skills. Higher attaining children are already working appropriately on the first stages of the National Curriculum, but overall the majority could do better.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about what they do. They concentrate well in lessons. Pupils can work together constructively and they collaborate well. Extra-curricular activities are well supported.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite to each other, their teachers and other adults. Previous concerns about oppressive behaviour have been successfully addressed.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and other adults. They play well together in the playground. All pupils are fully included in the life and work of the school. There are too few opportunities for them to work independently or to show initiative.
Attendance	Good, and above the national average. Pupils generally arrive punctually and, where there are delays because of transport difficulties, parents are good at notifying the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is generally good and has significantly improved since the last inspection. It is now having a major impact on improving the rate at which pupils make progress. Teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6 is often particularly good. The teaching of English and mathematics throughout the school is consistently good, ensuring that the skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Teachers clearly communicate to their pupils what they are going to do and learn and how this builds on what they have already learned. Lessons are well organised and interesting, and address all pupils' learning needs well. The teaching of ICT is not yet as effective and teachers generally provide too few opportunities for their pupils to work with the computers in all subjects. The arrangements teachers make to ensure that all pupils are effectively included are good and particularly successful in Year 2. The teaching of older pupils in ability groups at times contributes positively to the effectiveness of their learning and the progress they make. Overall, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum is broad and now more balanced, although there is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. It lacks sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn how to be independent; there is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' research skills both in the library and using computers. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the co-ordinator and support staff. Their individual educational plans are of high quality. Targets set are updated regularly.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The way the school plans to promote pupils' social and moral development is good. There are missed opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development through other subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring environment in which pupils feel secure. Its approach to inclusion is good. Assessment procedures are appropriately developed in English and mathematics, but they are less effective in other subjects. Teachers generally make insufficient use of assessment information to inform their planning. There is a need to address the safety of pupils entering and leaving the school site.

Most parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. A significant minority expressed a number of concerns about the school, some but not all of which are justified.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, but the overall pace in raising standards has been too slow. The headteacher has not yet provided sufficiently clear direction and guidance to ensure consistency across the whole school. Most subject co-ordinators are not yet contributing fully to the management and development of the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The new governing body is much more involved than at the time of the last inspection. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. Their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is good, but they are not yet fully involved in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures have improved and there is a greater awareness of pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy, but assessment information is not yet informing teachers' planning sufficiently clearly in all other subjects. Monitoring the quality of teaching has begun in some subjects, but it is not yet sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages its available resources well. Funds designated for particular purposes are used effectively to support development, as in the provision of a computer suite. Procedures

	to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the goods and services are satisfactory.
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The school is appropriately staffed to meet the demands of the curriculum. Recently-appointed staff have brought valuable expertise, although some need more guidance and support to enable them to contribute fully to managing the curriculum. Resources for learning are good, including an attractive and well-resourced library, and overall accommodation is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? The school's ethos and the importance given to family values, which ensure that children are confident and socially well-adjusted ? The good relationships among children – they like coming to school ? Behaviour is good; children are polite ? The increased information available to parents about the curriculum ? Pupils have individual targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? The support given to more able pupils ? Classes in the juniors are too large ? The consistency in quantity and quality of homework ? Information about how well their children are getting on ? The relationship between parents and the school ? The leadership and management of the school ? The range of extra-curricular activities

Parents' comments at the meeting before the inspection were mainly positive and inspectors agree that these views are justified. Inspectors found that some of the concerns expressed by parents in their responses to the questionnaire were no longer justified. There is now greater support given to higher-attaining pupils, which is reflected both in the improved quality of teaching and the increased proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in statutory assessment. Information provided in written reports to parents has also been improved. Inspectors found that the range of extra-curricular activities was similar to that found in other primary schools. Inspectors do agree that the leadership and management of the school could be better, thus ensuring that the changes already begun proceed rather more quickly. There is some inconsistency in use of homework, but in most classes it is now good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Results of standardised tests in reading taken by seven-year-olds have generally been well above the national average over the past four years. Results in writing and mathematics have not been as good, but generally standards have been in line with the national average. Comparisons with results achieved by pupils in similar schools, however, are less favourable. In all, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average in 2001. They did not improve in 2002. Teachers' assessment of science indicates that standards have been consistently above average.

2 Results of tests in English, mathematics and science taken by eleven-year-olds have fluctuated over the past four years. At times in English they have been well above average, although in 2001 they were in line with the national average. Results in mathematics and science in 2001 were below the national average. Results in all three subjects were well below the average for similar schools. Results in 2002 were much better, especially in mathematics and science. In all three subjects a considerably higher proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in the tests. Targets for achievement in English and mathematics are appropriately challenging as the school is rightly working hard to increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in the tests. They were almost achieved in 2002.

3 Inspection findings confirm the improving picture shown by the most recent test results in Key Stage 2. Standards in English, mathematics and science are good overall. An increasing number of eleven-year-olds attain high standards in these subjects. The previous inspection found that the progress made by pupils was often inconsistent, with many older pupils underachieving, particularly the more able. This weakness is successfully being addressed; the improved quality of teaching and learning is now ensuring that pupils generally make steady progress as they go through the school and that all pupils, including the more able, are more effectively challenged and stretched. Although progress in making this improvement has been slow, in most lessons the majority of pupils now achieve as well as they should. The most recent test results show that the performance of boys and girls is similar in science, but that boys do better than girls in mathematics, and girls do better than boys in English. The school has not identified any reasons for these differences; the inspection revealed no significant differences between the level of work of boys and girls.

4 By the time they leave the school, pupils have developed good skills in literacy. Many are enthusiastic readers who have a good knowledge of books and authors, and can express their preferences for particular types of literature. The majority write well in a variety of forms and contexts, including stories, letters and instructions. Written work is not always presented as well as it might be, but spelling is appropriate and pupils can use a range of punctuation accurately. However, pupils' good literacy skills are not always evident in their work in other subjects, where too much involves the completion of worksheets, which limits pupils' opportunities to write for themselves. In these subjects, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their own research skills and to use them independently to find information in the library, on CD-ROMs or on the Internet.

5 Pupils' numeracy skills are generally good throughout the school. Through Key Stage 1 pupils gain a good understanding of number and extend their knowledge of simple number bonds effectively. They are reasonably quick to solve simple problems. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a good grasp of the four operations in number and can apply these to solve a variety of problems. They have good understanding of place value and an

appropriate recall of number facts; they understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages, and can convert fractions into decimals using three places.

6 In science, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of an appropriate range of topics through Key Stage 1, on which they are able to build effectively through Key Stage 2. In their early work on electricity, for example, younger pupils understand what is required to complete a circuit, and by the time they leave the school they can draw a variety of circuits using appropriate symbols. They know that some materials conduct electricity and that some are insulators. In forces, younger pupils recognise pushing and pulling as forces, while older ones can measure these in appropriate units using a force meter. As pupils move through the school they acquire a satisfactory understanding of scientific investigation, and older ones show that when they have the opportunity they can organise an investigation and use scientific equipment effectively and co-operatively.

7 The standard of pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with that expected at the ages of seven and eleven. Many pupils have developed good skills with the computer at home, but in school pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their skills or work with the computers in all subjects. In all other subjects standards are broadly in line with those expected.

8 Children enter the school with levels of knowledge, understanding and skill that are above average in all areas of learning. Most attain the Early Learning Goals set for children at the end of the Foundation Stage¹ and many are already working at appropriate levels in the early stages of the National Curriculum. This represents satisfactory progress.

9 Pupils with special educational needs who have learning difficulties make good progress towards the appropriate targets set for them in their individual education plans because they receive good support. There are two pupils with English as an additional language and they are making good progress in English acquisition.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. Almost without exception they enjoy coming to school. Their high levels of concentration show that they are interested in their lessons. This was particularly evident in a mathematics lesson in the reception class, for example, and in science and literacy lessons in other year groups. Pupils are generally well motivated to carry out the tasks set for them by their teachers. However, teachers generally do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. Pupils are keen to answer their teachers' questions. At times, when guided carefully by the teacher, the answers showed great honesty. A great number of pupils enjoy participating in the activities held after school, even when transport is difficult for the ones that live at some distance. For example, on one evening there were four teams of girls and boys playing football. As a result of such enthusiastic participation both the netball and football teams are successful in their leagues. There is very valuable training in computer keyboard skills held after school, but this has to be restricted to ten pupils at a time, due to its popularity.

11 The behaviour of pupils is good, although there are a few incidents that require careful teacher management. Right from the start in the reception class children are clear about the way to behave, because teachers make their expectations clear. As result these youngest children in the school are able to sit quietly when listening to their teacher, respond well as

¹ The Foundation Stage covers the period from a child's entry to school through to the end of the reception year.

they listen to her and grow in confidence as a result. Pupils are polite to each other, their teachers and other adults. There have been some concerns about bullying and oppressive behaviour in the past, but these have been successfully addressed since the last inspection because the headteacher and staff are more attentive to them and have implemented a number of schemes to deal with them. One example is that the dinner ladies have received good behaviour-management training, which has resulted in much-improved control of pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes. In addition, the relevant policies have been comprehensively revised and all parents now have copies of them. There were no pupil exclusions in the last reporting year.

12 Pupils are keen to achieve rewards such as stamps, house points and stickers. The highest accolade is to show their good work to the headteacher. Pupils know the sanctions for bad behaviour.

13 Pupils form good relationships with one another and with adults. They have good relationships with their teachers, whom they consider approachable if they feel threatened by other pupils. Pupils were seen to play well together in the playground. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and supported by the other pupils throughout the school. Pupils are beginning to understand their own feelings and the consequences of their actions on other pupils. This improvement is a result of a more consistent approach to the personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons since the last inspection. There are some opportunities for older pupils to look after younger ones. For example, the Year 6 pupils have a rota for being prefects at lunchtimes, when they enjoy the responsibility and are proud to wear their identifiable red caps in the playground. Overall, however, insufficient opportunities are provided like these which contribute to pupils' personal development.

14 Attendance levels are good, being above the national average. Registration is taken promptly and efficiently; registers are marked consistently. The school monitors the attendance levels regularly each term. Pupils are punctual, but when there are delays due to transport difficulties the parents are good at notifying the school. Even though authorised absences are below the national average, a small number of parents still take holidays in term time. This is due mainly to the number of parents who belong to the armed forces. The school is very active in providing pupils with projects and homework to carry out while absent from school. As a result of this the disruption to the pupils' education is kept to a minimum.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 The overall quality of teaching is good. Very nearly all the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better; in around 6 out of 10 lessons teaching was good and at times very good or excellent. There were two unsatisfactory lessons. This indicates that teaching has improved since the last inspection, as there is now a significantly higher proportion of good and very good teaching. This is contributing positively to the improved quality of pupils' learning. There is still some variation in the quality of teaching overall however. It is particularly strong in Years 2, 5 and 6, where its effectiveness is ensuring that pupils make good progress. In most lessons the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good.

16 The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good; it is carefully planned with a clear emphasis on promoting these basic skills. Teachers build on the good base that children have on entry to school, and their learning in these areas is good. At times at this stage there is an overemphasis on teaching the whole class, which does not always ensure that all children are appropriately stretched or challenged. As a result, their learning during their group tasks is not always effective. Generally there is insufficient detailed assessment of what children know, understand and can do to underpin planning for their further development and as a result their

skills are not always as effectively extended as they might be. Teaching to promote their physical development is unsatisfactory, because generally children have too few opportunities to learn through practical activity, and the outdoor area is used ineffectively to promote their learning. Teachers provide only limited opportunities for children to work independently and to make choices, and this inhibits their personal development. However, teachers at this stage are very caring and manage the children well. Good use is made of support staff.

17 In Key Stages 1 and 2 lessons are generally carefully planned with clear learning objectives. In the best lessons these objectives are clearly explained to pupils at the outset; they help to focus teaching, and the tasks set are well planned to ensure that they are successfully met. This was evident in a science lesson with Year 5 in which they were continuing their work on sound. The early discussion was good, with the teacher checking pupils' understanding of what they had done in the previous lesson with some quick-fire questions. The clear statement of the learning objective for this lesson enabled pupils to understand how it was to build on their earlier learning. This was most effective because pupils were then quickly able to use this knowledge and work out for themselves how they were going to set up an investigation into which materials would best absorb sound.

18 Teachers in some classes are getting better at challenging their more-able pupils. This improved approach has contributed positively to the increased numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels in statutory assessments, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. At times in others, however, insufficient account is taken of what pupils already know or understand, or their level of skill, and their further progress is hindered because they have to start work where everyone else does. Sometimes extension tasks are set to stretch them, but in some lessons too much time has been wasted on things these pupils can already do easily. Teachers are good at posing questions to encourage thinking and stimulate response. This enables them to evaluate pupils' understanding, and to ensure that all pupils are participating fully. In too many lessons, however, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to follow things up for themselves or to work independently.

19 In most lessons pupils are well managed and there is an appropriately strong emphasis on praise and encouragement, which are motivating and contribute to good learning. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations and communicate these clearly to their pupils. This is most frequently the case in Years 2, 5 and 6. Where these expectations are clearly understood, pupils respond well. They are encouraged to demonstrate what they know or can do, and individuals' responses are used skilfully to enhance learning for others in the group or class. This approach was particularly successful in a physical education lesson with Year 4 pupils, where the teacher made good use of what individuals did to point out the good features of their movement or shape to the whole class. Similarly, in a physical education lesson with a Year 2 class the teacher constantly made evaluative comments on pupils' work to enable them to improve what they were doing. In both these lessons teachers' warm response to their pupils' efforts was clearly motivating and contributing to the effort made to improve.

20 Most lessons have an appropriate structure, although there are times when introductions are too long and pupils need to be involved more quickly. Review sessions in some lessons, in particular in literacy and numeracy, are often effectively used to review and consolidate pupils' learning. Many lessons are taught with good pace; this results in pupils achieving well. In other lessons, however, too much time is spent providing instructions and tasks are too prescriptive, so that pupils have too little opportunity to make decisions for themselves or to work independently. Support staff are usually well deployed and have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

21 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The additional support provided for them is good. Withdrawal or support work is very carefully planned and focused on the targets in pupils' individual education plans. The school's approach to inclusion ensures that teachers and support staff are able to meet all pupils' learning needs. The implementation of this approach in Year 2 is very good.

22 In most classes homework is used well to support pupils' learning, particularly in Key Stage 2. Work is set to extend and consolidate their skills in a variety of subjects. Sometimes pupils undertake independent research work. All pupils take home a good range of books and read regularly, either to their parents or independently. This has a significant impact on their progress.

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

23 The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are now broadly satisfactory throughout the school. There has been some improvement in provision since the last inspection, although generally improvement has not been fast enough. In some classes there is still insufficient challenge for some groups and not enough attention is given to ensuring that pupils build on their skills progressively in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.

24 The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, the reception class, takes account of the required areas of learning for children of this age and is satisfactory. It puts a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. It lacks sufficient opportunities for children to learn how to be independent, explore their environment and use their imagination. This is compounded as pupils move through the school. Otherwise, overall curriculum provision throughout the school is broad, balanced and relevant, and meets statutory requirements. It provides a satisfactory basis for the next stage in all the pupils' education.

25 There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning. Sports teams are frequently successful when they play against other schools. Both boys and girls play football. Teachers ensure that learning opportunities are enhanced by visits to museums and other places of interest. Older pupils participate in residential visits and have opportunities to pursue adventurous activities such as abseiling and orienteering. Visiting musicians offer pupils the opportunity to play musical instruments such as the clarinet and the drums.

26 The school has adapted its policies and schemes of work, making appropriate use of national guidance. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented effectively, leading to some improvement for all pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good, although they are not yet used well across the curriculum. There is a well-resourced library, but pupils are not taught library and information-retrieval skills effectively and this inhibits their ability to work independently.

27 Planning provides a satisfactory framework, showing what pupils will learn throughout their years in school and in particular year groups. The time allocated for some subjects is inconsistent across the school. While it is broadly satisfactory overall, there are some weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology, because the computers in the new ICT suite and in the classrooms are not used sufficiently efficiently or effectively. There is insufficient time provided for developing pupils' skills in design and technology. In some other subjects, such as history and geography, pupils successfully acquire the necessary knowledge, but they do not always develop appropriate skills and

understanding. This is due to an inconsistent approach to teaching the subject-specific skills, including researching and interpreting data.

28 Everyone is made to feel welcome and fully included in all the school's activities; staff put a lot of effort into maintaining a caring ethos. School resources and access to the curriculum are distributed equitably. Pupils are valued for themselves. Pupils with disabilities are well integrated into the life of the school; they are fully included in all aspects and are catered for well.

29 There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the support staff. Their individual educational plans are of high quality; they are well written, relevant and easy to understand. They are regularly monitored by class teachers and the co-ordinator, and targets are updated according to need. The co-ordinator works closely with class teachers to ensure that pupils get the most appropriate support.

30 The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Sex education is taught effectively and pupils are made aware of the uses and dangers of drugs. Health education is taught as part of the science and physical-education curriculum; for example, the importance of exercise and what constitutes a healthy diet. Younger pupils are taught road safety and for older pupils life skills are enhanced by a visit to Crucial Crew. Issues related to family life are discussed, such as bereavement and divorce. The practice of providing a time when pupils can discuss issues is inconsistent across the school, however, and happens more in some classes than others.

31 Links with the local community are sound. There is a range of visitors to school, including people from the local church. Farmers bring animals such as lambs and sheep dogs. The police, dentists and firemen talk about their work.

32 Relationships with partner institutions are good. Most local nurseries and playgroups pass on records of children's achievements. There are good links with the local secondary schools, which support the transfer of pupils' effectively. Both Year 5 and Year 6 visit schools. This provides Year 5 pupils with a good opportunity to consider their options before they have to make a decision early in Year 6. Resources are exchanged. Advanced-skills teachers from the secondary school have supported the school effectively to improve the provision in science and English. A day for talented musicians was held at a local Beacon school, which contributes positively to music provision in the school.

33 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound overall. The provision for pupils' moral and social education is good, and provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There has been an improvement in the provision for moral education since the last inspection; the good provision for social education has been maintained. There are useful opportunities provided to explore the values of others through stories. Pupils' own ideas are valued when they talk about things that are important to them. Assemblies are Christian-based and enable pupils to recognise God as a higher being. However, opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development during lessons are not always taken.

34 Pupils are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong. Honesty, fairness and a respect for the truth all feature in discussions between adults and pupils. All classes have discussed rules to make their learning environment a good place for all and this contributes positively to pupils' learning. Behaviour is dealt with effectively, although not always consistently. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility by carrying out a range of jobs around the school, such as the prefects in the playground who are there to help

other pupils. Pupils work regularly in friendship groups and there is a house system throughout the school that pupils identify with. Pupils are caring and helpful to those who have special educational needs. These all contribute towards the effectiveness of pupils' social development.

35 Pupils are taught about their own traditions and customs as well as some from around the world. Educational visits to historical sites, like those to Hereford Cathedral and museums which specialise in Victorian and Tudor times, effectively broaden pupils' perspectives. The visit by an African children's choir and a drummer who plays music from around the world has enhanced the music curriculum. Connections with the local church provide pupils with the opportunity to experience a day as a monk and learn a little of what life is like in a monastery in Peru. The Chinese New Year is celebrated with the help of parents who are familiar with the country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 The school's provision for child protection and pupils' welfare is satisfactory. The child-protection procedures comply fully with the local area requirements. All teachers, including the newly recruited staff, have been given comprehensive information relating to these procedures. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A number of staff have been trained in first-aid procedures and the named first-aider makes stringent risk assessments for school visits to the swimming baths and other educational trips. Clear rules for pupils and parents for responsible computer and Internet use are in place and agreed.

37 Pupils learn effectively about the misuse of drugs, through a local project in conjunction with the police. Sex education and health education are taught appropriately in accordance with the Roman Catholic diocese and other regulations. Personal and social education is still taught inconsistently across the school, but when it is included in lessons it is of great benefit to the pupils, as they become aware of how they relate to their peers and the impact their actions have on others. This was evident in the circle-time² sessions held with Year 1 and Year 5 pupils. The absence of an appropriate barrier means that pupils have direct access to the car park, where meals delivery vehicles and taxis have daily access, and from there onto a busy road. This is a health-and-safety concern. The school is in the initial stages of considering the most effective way of ensuring pupils' safety in this area.

38 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The good attendance levels are a testament to the regular reminders to parents. There are minimal problems with punctuality, but when pupils do arrive late, as was seen in a mathematics lesson that had already begun, the integration of the pupil into the lesson was good. Overall, there are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is still some lack of consistency in implementation across the school. There are now fewer instances of oppressive behaviour because staff minimise opportunities for them to occur; they provide more pupil support and have clear intervention procedures.

39 Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory overall and have been improved since the last inspection. Assessment is good for English and mathematics, enabling teachers to track pupils' progress effectively and to set individual targets for further development. Trends in the results of statutory assessment are now carefully analysed. In other subjects, however, assessment is

² Circle time – is an opportunity for the whole class to discuss and reflect on a range of issues, often relating to pupils' personal and social development.

underdeveloped and so co-ordinators have an insufficiently clear understanding of pupils' progress in their subjects. This also means that assessment information is not yet having a significant impact on teachers' short-term planning, so some activities and tasks are not always accurately matched to pupils' specific learning needs. There are, however, regularly updated records of pupils' personal achievements and newly implemented procedures for monitoring and supporting their development. The methods employed for monitoring progress and development for pupils with special educational needs are good, well managed by the co-ordinator and carried out thoroughly in conjunction with all teachers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40 Most parents have a very positive view of the school. Parents say that their children are keen to go to school. In response to the parents' questionnaire the majority indicate that their children like school, the school helps their children to become mature and responsible, behaviour is good, especially on school trips, and the school expects their children to work hard and do their best. However, some parents expressed a concern that more-able pupils did not always have the same level of support as those with special educational needs. A significant minority of parents aired some concerns in the questionnaire. Some still feel that they are not well informed about their children's progress, do not feel comfortable in approaching the school with a problem, and consider that the school does not work closely with them and that it is not well managed and led. A larger number of parents think there is a lack of interesting extra-curricular activities. Inspectors agree with parents positive comments about the school. While this report also contains evidence of the team's agreement with parents about some areas of concern, it also indicates that recent developments in the school have resulted in significant improvements in others.

41 Of the parents interviewed during the inspection one referred to incidents of poor behaviour and inaction by the staff that had occurred previously. The school is aware of difficulties in the past but is taking positive steps to reduce them. Other parents that referred to more recent events were happy with the many improvements since the last inspection. Examples are the establishment of a regular and effective homework scheme that parents feel they can support well and the availability of more information for parents on their children's progress. These are having a significant impact on pupils' learning and the progress they are now making.

42 The governing body takes its role very seriously and is striving to improve relationships with the parents. The newly-appointed priest is forging closer links with the school and parish as he regularly administers communion to the pupils, inviting parents whenever possible, and enthusiastically developing his role as governor responsible for pastoral care. The links with the secondary school are good and the pupils feel confident when transferring to it.

43 Links with parents are now good. An improvement since the last inspection is that the school now notifies parents of the curriculum topics their children will work on each term. This contributes positively to improving progress, benefiting pupils' learning because parents can actively support their children with their work. There are now a greater number of parents who help in school and contribute positively to a range of activities. One parent brought in a hedgehog from an animal rescue centre, for example, and this enhanced pupils' learning, which had started with stories about such animals. The children enjoyed the visit. The parent governor recognises the hard work that the school has carried out to achieve the improvements since the last inspection. Parents who were helping during the inspection week had been made to feel welcome by the staff and feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or suggestions. As a result of the extra support given by parents, pupils responded well to the individual tuition they received in sewing in a design and

technology lesson. In a history lesson pupils listened with interest to grandparents recounting stories of their youth. Some of the support staff consider that the headteacher listens to them and supports their suggestions more readily than previously.

44 The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. The quality of the information they receive is satisfactory now, and is continuing to improve. For example, the school prospectus is comprehensive, as is the pre-school information for parents, including the behaviour policy. A weekly newsletter keeps parents fully informed about the life of the school. The homework scheme is now informative, homework is consistently given across the school and is very well received by parents. This is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning and progress. The annual reports on pupils' progress have been improved since the last inspection, as they now clearly describe what the pupils do well, although they do not always indicate how they could develop further. The school is beginning to produce guidelines for parents to assist their children in writing, as this is an area where pupils need to develop their skills.

45 The contribution of parents to their children's learning is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In particular, parents have welcomed the newly-introduced homework scheme. A large number of parents actively encourage their children to use the services of the local library to carry out research for projects and for reading. This has had a beneficial impact on their children's learning. There are good lines of communication and support for parents of pupils with special educational needs so that they can help their children to progress. There is similar good support for the very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language, contributing to the very good progress these pupils make. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is actively employed in raising funds for school resources. Through an enterprising initiative materials and books can be obtained for the teachers and other staff by employing a match-funding arrangement between the school, local businesses and PTA funds. Examples can be found in classrooms as well as in the playground, like the shaded seating areas, which have been provided by the PTA, in conjunction with a local company.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 The overall leadership and management of the school remain unsatisfactory at present. While the pace of change has resulted in significant development since the previous and fairly recent inspection, the headteacher is not yet ensuring that there is a consistent and coherent approach to school improvement, particularly in raising standards. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance and taking effective action have improved considerably in the last two years but are not yet managed effectively. Resources are deployed effectively in support of targeted priorities, and development planning has improved. The governing body's effectiveness in fulfilling its responsibilities is satisfactory and improving.

47 The headteacher has been in post for some time and has successfully developed and maintained a caring ethos within the school. There had been little staff turnover before the previous inspection. This has now changed and several new staff have been appointed, including a new deputy headteacher. The changes in staff and an increased focus on monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance have meant that the school's fortunes have been reversed; standards are now improving again. The school is developing a clearer sense of purpose; its aims now include a statement about improving pupil performance, but it is still not given a high enough priority. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they are received into a welcoming, safe and attractive environment for learning where they work productively and play together in harmony.

48 The school management team, which includes the deputy headteacher and the head of each key stage, meets weekly and is becoming effective in monitoring progress on school priorities and taking action in areas of weakness. These meetings focus on issues arising from their monitoring of teaching and the curriculum, and their tracking of pupils' progress towards curriculum objectives in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. However, it is not yet sufficiently clear how the management team affects the quality of teaching and learning or how their assessments of teachers through observation and work sampling are influencing professional development within the school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good and effective leadership. She works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils get the best support available and she supports teachers and learning-support staff well. She has a clear view of the next steps in managing the provision and understands the value of good assessment procedures in helping pupils to improve. However, she is not a part of the school management team.

49 Subject co-ordinators have been given more key responsibilities for raising standards as a result of management developments in the school. They have been encouraged to observe other teachers, review their planning and sample pupils' work to guide developments in their subjects. They are enthusiastic and have taken up the challenge well, although some have not yet been given sufficient support and training in this aspect of their role. As a result, although observation of teachers leads to a written report identifying areas for further development, co-ordinators are neither providing guidance on how to improve, nor setting targets for development. While some co-ordinators provide effective curriculum leadership, others are either new to the post or have not yet taken up full responsibility as they have only just been appointed to the school. A newly appointed teacher, for example, in only her second year of teaching, has not yet received sufficient training and guidance about the role of co-ordinator in preparation for taking up such a responsibility in the second half of the Autumn Term. The work of previous co-ordinators for English and mathematics, diligently continued by the new post holders in developing the curriculum and providing guidance, has contributed much to recent improvements in pupils' standards. The school's capacity for and commitment to making further improvements are now good.

50 The governing body has also undergone considerable changes in composition since the previous inspection. There have been seven new appointments. The new Chair of Governors has held the post for less than a year, as has the Chair of the Finance Committee. The governing body has taken full account of the criticisms in the previous inspection and has undertaken extensive training with the local authority Governor Support Team. As a result of this training, a programme of regular school visits and the analysis of information and monitoring reports provided by the headteacher, governors are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are aware of the school's standards and have directed resources to improvements in key areas; for example, to improve literacy and to develop ICT throughout the school. A School Improvement Plan is developed each year according to a format designed by the local authority, and effectively informs further development. The governors recognise that they need to take a more prominent role in this process and are currently developing ways of having more involvement in the management of the school.

51 Governors are informed of developments in the school in a number of ways; for example, through headteacher reports. The committees of the governing body have been established and are beginning to develop ways of working that will allow for a greater understanding of and involvement in areas of the school's work. Governor visits are currently being made to observe teachers at work. Individual governors have been allocated subject areas so that they can develop knowledge and understanding of the standards achieved by pupils and the requirements for the development of their subject in the school. They support the school well and are now enquiring more closely about progress on school development

priorities. They are aware of the criticisms of the school made by some parents and are currently following this up, talking to parents and, with the headteacher, are clarifying how parental complaints are dealt with by the school. The governors' annual report is satisfactory.

52 The Finance Committee receives a regular budget, so that spending is closely monitored and under-spends at the end of each year are small. The finance secretary is efficient in managing the budget, budget controls are clear and effective, and the last auditor's report identified no concerns about financial management. Specific funds are used for their intended purpose. Governors are now reviewing spending decisions informally through their visits; for example, the technical support for the new ICT suite and the effective use of ICT hardware and software to raise standards, although their monitoring of spending decisions is not yet a systematic part of their management. Systems are in place for ensuring that value for money is achieved when purchasing. Overall, the school's commitment to best-value principles is not yet fully developed, but the newly appointed Chair of the Finance Committee is committed to its implementation and is very knowledgeable and skilled in this area.

53 The school's administrative staff and the site manager provide good support for the headteacher and staff. The school is open and welcoming to visitors and parents, and information and communication technology is used effectively in the school's management and dissemination of information. The school's overall provision is satisfactory and there are some good features; for example, teaching, that are leading to good achievements in some areas. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

54 The headteacher has introduced a performance-management programme, but it is not yet appropriately linked to the school's improvement strategy. Professional development plans for staff take account of their individual needs and of school priorities, but are not yet effectively linked to the outcomes from the classroom observations by subject co-ordinators. Newly-appointed staff are supported by senior managers, but not enough is done to support them in developing their curriculum responsibilities and understanding and implementing school policies.

55 Teaching staff have an appropriate range of qualifications and experience to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum. Learning support-assistants are effective in their work.

56 The accommodation is good. Almost all classrooms are of an appropriate size for the number of pupils. There are specialist teaching areas for ICT and for pupils with special educational needs. There is adequate storage space and a good-sized hall. The attractive displays celebrating pupils' achievements successfully, raise their self-esteem and contribute to the positive learning atmosphere in the school. The school site is clean, tidy and well maintained by a hardworking staff. The playgrounds and fields are spacious and well used. The governing body is exploring the option of creating a Governor's Fund to which parents and friends of the school would be invited to contribute, allowing governors to bid for further finance to support building projects to enhance the facilities at the school.

57 Overall resources are satisfactory to support the implementation of the National Curriculum. Recently the school has made significant purchases to support improvements in literacy. Resources are used effectively, and the library is well stocked and is a pleasant and inviting place to sit and read.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58 The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to build on their recent achievements in improving the school. To improve further the standard of pupils' attainment and the quality of education provided by the school, they should:

1 improve the effectiveness of leadership in the school by:

- (a) ensuring that the headteacher monitors, analyses and evaluates the work of the school and communicates a clear vision for its future development to governors, staff and parents
- (b) establishing a shared understanding of approaches to teaching and learning to ensure coherence and consistency across the whole school
- (c) developing further effective teamwork amongst all staff, co-ordinating the work of the teaching team and setting targets for improvement

Paragraphs: 46-49; 54; 101

2 develop the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they can more fully support the headteacher in curriculum management, by:

- (a) ensuring that all co-ordinators monitor teachers' medium- and shorter-term planning
- (b) devising strategies to enable them to monitor and support teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible
- (c) extending their responsibilities for co-ordinating assessment in their subjects and tracking pupils' progress
- (d) extending their opportunities to scrutinise pupils' work across the school
- (e) providing opportunities for them to lead and manage the reviewing and development of their subjects

Paragraphs: 48-49; 105; 112; 119; 123; 129; 140

3 ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to use the computers to develop their skills in ICT and support their learning in all subjects by:

- (a) providing more time for them to work with the computers, both in the computer suite and in the classrooms
- (b) making sure that teachers' planning identifies opportunities for pupils to use the full range of information-technology skills in all subjects
- (c) providing more time for the ICT co-ordinator to work alongside teachers to support and improve their confidence and competence in using the computers in all subjects

Paragraphs: 7; 27; 78; 83; 111; 124; 128

4 ensure that assessment information is used to inform planning for teaching and maximise pupils' learning by:

- (a) analysing assessment information to identify areas of learning in which pupils' understanding is less secure

- (b) using this knowledge about what pupils know, understand and can do to inform planning for different groups in the class and to provide pupils with specific activities to meet their individual learning needs
- (c) monitoring teachers' planning and their lessons to ensure that all pupils' learning needs are consistently met
- (d) developing teachers' marking strategies to provide a clear indication to pupils of ways in which they might improve or develop their written work, and improving the quality of teachers' handwriting as an example to pupils in their books

Paragraphs: 18; 23; 39; 83; 90; 100

5 teach pupils the skills of learning and provide opportunities for them to learn independently by:

- (a) providing more opportunities for them to learn through practical activity and structured play in the reception class and allow them more opportunities to choose activities or initiate learning
- (b) introducing a wider range of organisational arrangements in the classrooms and adopting a variety of teaching strategies to enable pupils to learn in different ways
- (c) teaching skills of research, including effective use of the library and computer suite
- (d) providing more opportunities for pupils to learn independently

Paragraphs: 16; 20; 24; 60-61; 69

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	20	18	2	0	0
Percentage	2	15	42	37	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		200
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		41

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

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
	2001	10	14	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	23	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (91)	96 (97)	92 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (97)	96 (94)	96 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	22	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	25	19	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (81)	63 (71)	93 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	25	22	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (81)	73 (71)	93 (84)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Note: Details of the separate performance of boys and girls are not included in this table since there were fewer than 10 boys in the cohort.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	196
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 – 02
	£
Total income	433 525
Total expenditure	439 821
Expenditure per pupil	2 104
Balance brought forward from previous year	30 508
Balance carried forward to next year	24 212

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	200
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	23	5	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	55	34	5	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	30	8	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	53	9	0	6
The teaching is good.	55	36	3	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	47	11	9	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	36	8	11	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	40	5	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	26	45	13	13	3
The school is well led and managed.	26	43	8	17	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	36	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	40	17	15	2

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

59 Children enter school during the year of their fifth birthday. Younger children initially attend for morning and lunchtime sessions only, for the first half term. These arrangements ensure children quickly settle into school. Currently there are 28 children in the Reception Year.

60 Children's attainment on entry to the school is above average in all areas of learning. The majority have good communication skills; they can talk about a wide range of things which interest them. They have good interpersonal skills, and are happy playing with groups of friends and confident with adults. Many, but not all, have had appropriate pre-school experiences, attending playgroups and nurseries. All children make satisfactory progress, but the majority are not making progress as quickly as they could. They attain the Early Learning Goals set for children of this age in all areas of learning and the more able are appropriately working within the National Curriculum programmes of study. However, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to make choices for themselves or to learn through practical activity or play.

61 Overall, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is sound. There is a clear emphasis on whole-class teaching. The national guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy is followed, and children acquire the knowledge they need to read, write and undertake calculations. A significant number of the tasks are insufficiently practical and occupy rather than fully engage children in their learning and this is the main reason why they do not always make as much progress as they could. Children are curious about the world, but their natural curiosity is not fully harnessed because the learning activities do not sufficiently engage their senses and interest levels and they are insufficiently challenging. Regular assessment is undertaken by observing how successfully children undertake a task, but it does not effectively address how well children are developing skills and understanding, and it is not used effectively to plan the next step the children need to achieve. The learning environment does not appeal to children's natural desire to learn by using their senses. There is a lack of interactive displays in the classroom to engage children's interest and curiosity and the outdoor area is under-used as an environment for learning where children can undertake activities within each of the areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

62 Children successfully achieve the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development, but many could do better. Relationships are generally good and children play and work well together. They know the difference between right and wrong behaviour and, as they are keen to please, do as they are asked. Most children follow the school's routines well; they put up their hand before answering questions and line up quietly to go outside for example. Due to the lack of opportunity children do not take sufficient responsibility for getting things out and putting them away. They do not decide how much fruit they wish to eat; overall they become too dependent on adults.

63 The quality of teaching is sound. The teacher is very caring and looks after the children's personal needs and welfare appropriately, and relationships are good. Nevertheless there is not enough attention given to planning activities which help to develop children's ability to work independently or to find things out for themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

64 In communication, language and literacy, children attain the Early Learning Goals and many attain levels in the early stages of the National Curriculum. At this early stage of the term more-able children can write a simple sentence using a capital letter and full stop correctly. They are aware of the need to space words so they can be read. By the end of the year the majority know the letters and the sounds which they represent and can use this knowledge to spell simple words. They are beginning to understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end, and the good direct teaching gives them opportunities to practise this concept by sequencing events in pictures. They read simple words and phrases and enjoy books. They have good communication skills and can pose and respond to questions.

65 The quality of teaching is good. Children enjoy the question-and-answer session with the puppet. They are systematically taught phonics and given opportunities to write for different purposes. There are clear expectations that the more-able children produce work of a good standard. Support staff regularly assess whether children can do the task and the teacher keeps good records. However, these are not always sufficiently analytical and do not identify which aspects children are not able to do; for example, whether they respond to questions with single words or longer phrases, so that this information can be used to help children achieve more in the following sessions. The timetable devotes significantly more time to the teaching of literacy than some of the other areas of learning. Whereas this is appropriate for some children, and all of them as the year progresses, currently some children are listening passively for too long. Children are expected to write their names, but those who cannot yet do so are not given sufficient guidance to help them form the letters correctly. The reading area is not sufficiently inviting because books are not bright, exciting and well displayed; it does not attract children to spend time there.

Mathematical development.

66 By the end of the reception class children have a good knowledge of number, shape and space. Almost all of the children count to twenty, and some beyond. They attain the Early Learning Goals and make satisfactory progress. They sing number rhymes with enjoyment, such as *One, two, buckle my shoe* and all join in the actions and so practise the numbers to ten. Children know the names of shapes such as circle, square and rectangle, and can compare sizes, correctly stating which is larger or smaller. They recognise these shapes when they are part of an illustration; for example, a train, and also when the shape is part of the classroom; and know that a door is a rectangle. The more able are able to say that a circle has no corners.

67 The quality of teaching is good. Children are provided with opportunities to develop and extend their factual knowledge through clear explanations. Planning takes account of the national guidance. Assessment observations are undertaken regularly and good records are kept. There are regular opportunities for children to consolidate their knowledge through the formal recording of practical activities. There is insufficient attention to ensuring that children always form numbers correctly. Challenging practical activities in which children have to think for themselves and solve problems are not planned, and so they are not extended.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68 The majority of children enter school with good general knowledge and attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, but many could do better. They show an interest in their surroundings. They talk about their families and know events that happened in their own lives in the past. They can name the body parts, and the majority know the position and name of the eyebrow. They are beginning to make deductions. For example, one boy commented, *"It is my birthday tomorrow"*, but this was met with the reply, *"No, it is not! I have not got an invitation"* (to the party). They look through coloured paper and make comparisons with what they see and how the colour of the paper makes the classroom and natural objects change colour too. They make optical illusions by drawing an apple on one side of the paper and a tree on the other, and are fascinated by what happens when they spin it around so that the apple appears to be on the tree. They visit places of local interest. They are beginning to understand the beliefs of the Catholic faith through stories about the their saints.

69 The quality of teaching is sound. Effective story telling enhances children's learning, as when the teacher told the story of Saint Theresa for example, enabling them to begin to appreciate the importance of beliefs. Appropriate use is made of available national guidance and some resources are used well to promote children's learning. Factual information is taught well; for example, that children should stop, look and listen before crossing the road. Insufficient attention is given to problem solving, however, and children do not have enough opportunities to initiate activities they would like to investigate for themselves. Assessment is not used effectively to plan how the skills children will need for the next stage of their education will gradually be acquired. There is insufficient emphasis on teaching the skills of information and communication technology.

Physical development

70 Almost all children have good manipulative skills. They build with construction kits. They are able to mould malleable materials with good control, as they did while making figures to show their knowledge of the names of parts of the body. Outside they move with confidence and show an awareness of the space around them, not bumping into other children while moving. They use a range of large equipment well, and can scoot and pedal. The majority hold their pencil correctly, but some do not. The importance of this is not emphasised enough, so these children continue with this habit as they move through the school.

71 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, as expectations and resourcing in this area are insufficiently well developed. A range of activities is planned in the classroom, hall and outdoors to support children's physical development, but they are limited. Assessment observations are undertaken and good records are kept but not used to inform further planning. The outdoor area is unexciting and most of the equipment is too small for the size of the children. Scooters are popular and extend children's co-ordination, but most of the tricycles and cars are too small, and so children cannot pedal comfortably. There are insufficient resources to allow two or more children to play together. When children are given other equipment there is insufficient choice; for example, all play with a beanbag and a quoit. Adults supervise the activities instead of participating in child-initiated games. Indoors the organisation of the classroom does not make it easy for children to use large spaces to build interesting models with bricks and construction kits. Sometimes children are given the opportunity to cut with scissors, but too frequently they are presented with shapes that have been cut out by adults and so they do not make sufficient progress developing these and other important skills.

Creative development

72 Some children attain the Early Learning Goals quickly since they enter school with above-average skills. They make satisfactory progress but are not given enough opportunities to use their imagination. They enjoy painting while listening to music. They sing simple songs from memory and a few children have the opportunity to play untuned percussion instruments. They engage effectively in role-play in the home base when they have the opportunity.

73 The timetable indicates that children engage in creative activities during most afternoon sessions. However, planning shows that this description covers a wide range of tasks, many of which do not require children to use their imagination or the skills of exploration. The role-play area is not exciting and the dolls are dirty. Staff do not participate in child-initiated imaginative roles which would enable them to demonstrate language. Where paint and other creative media are used, children do not have sufficient choice to try things out for themselves.

ENGLISH

74 Standards in English are good throughout the school.

75 Although standards in Key Stage 1 have been better than average in reading and writing over time, there was a decline in 2001. While standards in Key Stage 2 were below the average for schools in similar contexts, there was a marked improvement in 2002 when the performance target was met and an increased proportion of pupils achieved the higher level 5.

76 In the lessons observed and the pupils' work analysed during the inspection standards are now good for pupils in Years 2 and 6. A significant number of pupils are working above the expected level for their age in all aspects of English. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do the two pupils with English as an additional language. Class teachers, ably assisted by the co-ordinator for special educational needs, monitor each of these pupils' progress and the termly assessments made. An advisory teacher supports pupils with English as an additional language effectively.

77 Standards of pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening are good throughout the school; standards of reading are particularly good. Most pupils make satisfactory progress. The majority of pupils in the school are interested and motivated in all they do. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good.

78 Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to reading. Their achievements are at least satisfactory and many pupils achieve well in Year 6. They talk openly about their favourite authors and books. Particular authors pupils enjoy are Tolkien, J. K. Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson. Most pupils have well developed reading habits at both home and school, and the support given to them at home is a positive factor in raising standards. Most pupils are able to locate books in the school library quickly, using the very clear and appropriate prompts available to them, but few pupils were observed using the library for research. Many pupils belong to the public library in Hereford, although not all are regular visitors. Teachers do not encourage pupils sufficiently in lessons to develop their learning skills; for example, to use computers and the school library to research topics further. The use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of literacy is not yet well developed.

79 By the age of seven, the majority of pupils are reading at the expected level and many are able to use strategies for decoding words. One higher-attaining pupil was able to read fluently and with excellent skill, painting a picture for the listener as she read. By the age of

11, pupils confidently explain their likes and dislikes, and discuss at a literal level how different authors develop characters themes and plots. One more-able Year 6 pupil explained how watching the video after she had read the book was a disappointment as she *'had already got the pictures in my head.'* A group of Year 5 pupils was working with the co-ordinator for special educational needs who was reading the opening to *The Iron Man*. One of them talked about the poetic structure of the text and related this to the fact that Ted Hughes was also a poet. Most pupils are aware of conventions such as alphabetical order, contents, index and glossary, and know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. However, few pupils have opportunities for independent study with books, CD-ROMs and websites. The school is very well resourced with big books and this helps the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

80 Over the last two years, developing pupils' writing skills has been a focus of the school improvement plan. Standards of writing seen during the inspection are at the expected level for pupils at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. A consistent approach to medium-term planning at both key stages has now been established. All teachers have completed training relating to the National Literacy Strategy and are now carrying out the strategy effectively. As a result they put more emphasis on teaching and developing basic skills. The co-ordinator has introduced strategies that have helped pupils to progress well in writing this year.

81 The work completed in literacy lessons enables pupils to understand different styles and functions of writing such as describing, reporting, narrating and persuading. In some classes this is supported well through the work done in other subject areas. In a history lesson with Year 4, for example, pupils were encouraged to write a newspaper article in pairs, building on notes they had taken when a visitor had come to talk to them about her experiences as an evacuee during the Second World War. Younger pupils in the school are showing significant signs of improvement in their writing.

82 In Year 6, pupils were studying *Macbeth* and demonstrated very good understanding of the nature and conventions of the play. In one very good lesson they were studying the scene when Banquo's ghost confronts Macbeth. The pupils were able, assisted by very good prompting by the teacher, to identify the character traits and demonstrated an extremely good grasp of related vocabulary – *'power-hungry, ambitious, ruthless'*. One group of pupils then acted out the scene, with one of them having the role of director. The group worked together very well, exploring the meaning of the scene and refining their performance until the final production was exemplary.

83 At times pupils use the computers to enhance the presentation of written work, but as yet not enough is done by staff to help pupils review and refine their work. Pupils do not make appropriate use of computers to redraft or edit their written work. Teachers' marking is too often judgmental rather than supportive and does not help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. The co-ordinator has identified these issues and has plans to address them.

84 Overall, standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils of all ages talk freely and confidently. Most willingly take part in class discussion and are keen to share their ideas and views. Questioning in most classes involves all pupils, and teachers value their contributions and use both correct and incorrect answers skilfully to reinforce teaching points. This positive ethos enables pupils of all ages and abilities to offer suggestions without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. This is a significant factor in fostering the good attitudes that pupils have to English. Pupils take parts in school productions, enhancing their speaking and listening skills further.

85 Teaching is mainly good, with some very good and excellent features, particularly in Year 6; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. In the better lessons, teachers explain to pupils exactly what is expected. Pupils rise to the challenge, especially when lessons are well paced and both teacher and pupils highlight new learning at the end of the session. In the less effective lessons, activities are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities because worksheets and books used do not provide sufficient challenge and limit independence and originality.

86 Planning is good and there is a well organised planning system to ensure that pupils get full and appropriate coverage of the National Literacy Strategy. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to identify and disseminate the good and effective teaching strategies that teachers have developed to ensure that teachers new to the school can learn from their experienced colleagues.

87 The English co-ordinator provides strong leadership. Although not long in her role, she has been at the school for some time and has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards; the literacy action plan is a good working document. Literacy teaching is effectively monitored and pupils' test results are now analysed and targets set for class groups as well as individual pupils. The co-ordinator observes the teaching of all staff, and her notes are shared with them. Although records of observations indicate weaknesses observed in teaching, as yet they are not providing sufficient guidance to the teacher on how they can improve. The school knows where pupils are in terms of National Curriculum levels and where they should be at the end of each year. Progress towards end-of-year targets is to be regularly reviewed and adjustments are to be made to curriculum plans, teaching methods and support structures where necessary. Local educational advisory staff have effectively guided the implementation of the Literacy Hour with the new co-ordinator.

88 The school is well resourced for English. The school library is an attractive place to work. There is a good variety of fiction and non-fiction books as well as reference books for pupils to use. There are plenty of group readers and big books. The quality of these resources contributes positively to the progress pupils make in reading and the standards they achieve.

MATHEMATICS

89 Inspection findings show that currently attainment is above average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is due to an improvement in teaching, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6. The achievement of pupils between the ages of five and eleven is satisfactory and pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the intervention of the member of staff responsible for managing their needs, and the very good support given to pupils to enable them to be included in all aspects of the curriculum. This was particularly effective in Year 2.

90 Results are improving because teachers are gradually making more use of the assessment data available to them, but currently this development is not happening quickly enough. This year test papers have been analysed to find out what is being taught well and what areas of the curriculum need to be improved. This provides good information for planning future lessons. Recently, a system that tracks pupils' progress through the school and against their expected achievement has been put in place. It is planned to use this information to target individual pupils and their needs. At times higher and lower attaining pupils are allowed to work with pupils in other classes, which is a good strategy enabling teachers to meet their specific learning needs more effectively. It is giving the lower attainers

more confidence and has already improved their skills, while higher-attaining pupils are effectively challenged when working with older pupils.

91 Where teaching is very good all pupils are challenged at levels appropriate for their needs. For example, in a lesson with Year 2, higher-attaining pupils used a tape measure and compared the size of parts of their own and a friend's body, measuring to the nearest centimetre. Then they calculated the difference. Pupils not ready for this activity used non-standard measures, finding the number of plastic teddy bears that will sit on a metre stick. In a lesson with Year 5, pupils were challenged to find target numbers using specific criteria; for example, halving and adding or subtracting. Through this they gradually improve their numerical skills and the more able try hard to think of more-complex ways of achieving the target number. Year 6 higher attainers understand the progression of decimal numbers and their fraction equivalence. They know place value to thousandths and that millimetres can be converted to metres by the use of a decimal point. The majority of Year 6 can quickly and mentally convert mixed numbers to fractions and reverse the operation.

92 Pupils make steady progress through the school. They are keen to answer questions during oral sessions. Year 1 pupils' enjoy counting with one, two and five-pence coins. They are more confident using one-pence coins, as they have not yet learned to count in twos and fives. Year 3 pupils recognise number patterns and bonds to 20, and respond orally, but they are not as quick and as confident as they should be. They record number patterns to one hundred. Year 4 pupils can measure right angles accurately, know the names of regular polygons and recognise whether they are regular or irregular in shape. Higher-attaining pupils are already anticipating work on symmetry.

93 Currently, the quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good, particularly in Years 2, 5, and 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers normally plan and organise their lessons with a clear focus on the intended learning outcomes, so pupils have clear targets on which to focus their efforts. Oral sessions have a brisk pace and pupils concentrate well in order to keep abreast of the questions. Direct teaching is good; teachers' explanations are clear and they ensure that there is a clear structure to pupils' learning. Where there are weaknesses in teaching it is frequently in the tasks given to pupils following the direct teaching. Sometimes insufficient time is allocated, so pupils do not have the opportunity to consolidate their understanding. Also, at times the tasks are insufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils because teachers have not used assessment information effectively. In lessons pupils are rarely given tasks which require them to use their initiative or to manage aspects of their own learning for themselves. Homework is used well throughout the school and relates to work undertaken during lessons. In a lesson with Year 2, for example, pupils were asked to measure objects around the home with the help of a member of the family.

94 Time is allocated to each aspect of the subject, although there is a greater emphasis on number and algebra; data handling is not given enough time. Information and communication technology is not used frequently to support this aspect or other aspects of the subject. There is some evidence of pupils using mathematical calculations in other subjects, particularly science and geography. It is not used effectively across all subjects of the curriculum.

95 The co-ordinator has just taken up a post in the school and so has not yet had an impact on the provision. Before her appointment, monitoring of teaching and learning took place, but it was insufficiently rigorous and did not have an impact on standards. It did not provide the school with information to enable it to improve. Currently there are examples of very good teaching in mathematics, but opportunities to disseminate its effectiveness are missed. Pupils' work has been scrutinised by staff, but this has not yet brought about an

improvement in marking, which at times is unsatisfactory where it does not tell pupils how to improve or how well they are achieving in relation to specific learning. Pupils are aware that they do not have to do the best they are capable of and many do not take sufficient pride in the presentation of their recorded work. The new co-ordinator has plans to introduce a marking policy to ensure greater consistency of expectation across the school.

SCIENCE

96 Seven-year-olds attain expected standards in science, and results of statutory tests taken by eleven-year-olds indicate that overall standards are average when compared to those in all schools nationally, and average in comparison to those in similar schools. However, results in 2002 indicate a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, showing that the school has been more successful in challenging and extending its more-able pupils. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. This inspection found that standards in science are good by the time pupils leave the school and that pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, particularly through Years 5 and 6.

97 Standards achieved by seven-year-olds are satisfactory. In their work on electricity, for example, pupils in Year 2 show that they understand and can make simple circuits. As they studied the use of electricity in the home they showed an awareness of the dangers, and understand how to use electricity safely. In their work on forces they demonstrate an understanding of pushing and pulling as forces, and recognise these in a number of different operations. In studying living things, pupils have a good understanding of the parts of a plant.

98 By the age of eleven, pupils display good knowledge of the topics they study and the progress they have made in developing their understanding. In electricity, for example, they can draw circuits using appropriate symbols. They understand which materials are good conductors and which good insulators. In their work on light they recognise which materials are transparent, opaque or translucent. In extending their work on living things, pupils at this stage understand photosynthesis. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding of scientific enquiry and show they are able to carry out investigations with due regard to fair testing. They understand separation and filtration, for example, and show they can conduct an investigation to discover how different sugars dissolve, recording their findings graphically. In other topics, such as forces, they show they can make appropriate measurement in Newtons, using a force meter.

99 While pupils have a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop their skills of investigation through Key Stage 2, such opportunities are more limited in Key Stage 1. The result of this is that, while pupils acquire an appropriate knowledge of the science topics they study, their development of the skills of investigation is less consistent across the school.

100 The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is usually good and on occasions it is very good; the quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. In the good lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and detailed planning shows clear learning objectives. Teachers ensure that resources are always well organised; they use time effectively, ensuring that their lessons proceed at a good pace. The tasks are planned to support and challenge all pupils, often with teachers' questioning well structured and appropriate to the different abilities of pupils in the class. This was clearly illustrated in a very good lesson with Year 5 pupils, in which the teacher effectively prepared them for an investigation of the sound-absorbing properties of different materials. His focused questions enabled pupils to think through the process of investigation well and ensured that they were able to plan the investigation. Pupils demonstrated particularly positive attitudes towards their work and co-operated very effectively as they conducted their

investigations outside. Generally pupils respond well to science lessons, answer questions enthusiastically and, when given the opportunity, work together well. This has a positive impact on their learning. However, they do not always give sufficient care to the presentation of their work. Teachers' marking recognises where pupils have made an effort, but there is generally too little indication of how they can improve or extend their work.

101 Although relatively inexperienced, the co-ordinator has made a good start to managing the development in science. He has made a thorough audit of resources to support the effective teaching of the curriculum. His own subject knowledge enables him to support colleagues, although he is not yet monitoring planning to identify where such support might be needed. As yet he has not monitored the quality of teaching and this is restricting the opportunities for the sharing of the most effective practice across the school. National guidelines are used effectively to support teachers' planning, however, and this has served to increase teachers' confidence. The co-ordinator identified the need to raise the profile of science across the school and has been successful in doing so. He has a clear view of further development in the subject, including the development of a consistent approach to assessment and recording across the school to enable him to track pupils' progress more effectively. He has the understanding and enthusiasm to enable him to manage such development rather more speedily.

ART AND DESIGN

102 The school's provision for art is satisfactory and covers all requirements of the National Curriculum. Staff are enthusiastic about the subject and make good use of opportunities to use art to support other subjects. The quality of provision and the enthusiasm of the staff are having a positive impact on standards in the school. Pupils enjoy their work in art and, in those lessons where they are taught well, achieve high standards. The quality and range of work on display around the school, both in classrooms and in shared areas, are satisfactory. All pupils have sketchbooks, and work in them demonstrates that pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with media and styles.

103 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and from these and an analysis of work on display around the school standards at the end of each key stage overall are judged to be satisfactory, although there is little three-dimensional art evident. There are displays of work based on the work of other artists such as Van Gogh and Andy Warhol, where pupils demonstrated good use of watercolours and observational drawing. In the two lessons observed pupils demonstrated a clear enthusiasm for the subject. In Year 1 pupils were using mirrors to observe their faces and then using a range of media to produce portraits. They experimented with the media and could explain why certain media were better for certain features of portraits; for example, that pastels were better for drawing and colouring the face, while pencil crayon was better for hair. In the Year 6 lesson pupils were exploring locomotion. The teacher had prepared a Power Point presentation using the photographs taken by Edward Muffbridge from which the pupils produced 'stick men' drawings showing the stages of locomotion that were then collected together as a 'flick book'. Although the pupils were enthused by the task, the range of resources made available to them inhibited the success of the lesson. There is evidence that digital media are now being used, although this is a recent development and the use of information technology in raising standards in the subject is not well established.

104 The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was at least satisfactory, and good in one lesson. The range of media provided for pupils in one lesson led to good learning, while in the other the lack of choice offered pupils in the resources they could use meant that learning was inhibited. Discussion with pupils showed that they are very

enthusiastic about art and design, and could all recall lessons that they had enjoyed. Most could talk about the work of artists.

105 There have been improvements in the standards achieved by pupils and in the provision for the subject since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory at present, but steps are being taken to improve them. A newly-appointed member of staff will take on the role of co-ordinator from November 2003. At present she is establishing herself in the school and the headteacher is carrying responsibility for the subject in the meantime. The teacher who will be co-ordinator shows a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject and a great enthusiasm for its promotion in the school. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision, particularly imbalances in the curriculum, and understands the need for a clear action plan to address them. Pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning are not yet monitored through observation of lessons or sampling pupils' work. Art plays a significant part in the teaching of other subjects, particularly history.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106 By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils achieve standards expected nationally in design technology. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress, but it is good where support assistants guide them.

107 Pupils acquire skills in measuring, cutting, shaping and joining when making products as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed and produced puppets, measuring and cutting out material to stick to templates provided. Pupils evaluate their work effectively as it develops, considering the needs of their intended users; for example, when designing chairs for different purposes.

108 Teachers encourage pupils to develop these skills. In one project to design sandwiches pupils in Year 3 had visited a local supermarket and evaluated some commercial products against key criteria. They were then preparing to design sandwiches for parents to judge. Pupils in Year 4 designed and constructed model seats which they then evaluated. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the limitations of their designs and what needed to be done to improve the product. As a result pupils are developing an awareness of the needs of their intended users and suggest improvements that take these into account. In Year 2 pupils were designing and making puppets using a variety of materials. They showed they could follow instructions well and were skilled in measuring, cutting and joining. Some examples seen were of good quality and of which pupils are justly proud. In the lesson observed the teacher gave appropriate attention to the health-and-safety issues involved with using needles. There were then five parent helpers working with groups of pupils to ensure that there was no risk.

109 From discussion with pupils it is evident that they enjoy design and technology. They work productively and safely in group tasks and relate well to each other so that ideas are valued and exchanged freely as their work develops. Pupils apply their numeracy to measure and estimate, and they write for a range of purposes and audiences throughout their projects; for example, when making simple books to illustrate stories they have written.

110 Insufficient teaching was observed during the inspection to support a judgement of quality, but that seen was satisfactory. Lesson plans indicate that clear objectives are set and teachers use resources efficiently.

111 The curriculum is broad and balanced, but there is still much to do to ensure that it is coherently covered. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is under-developed. Pupils

are not yet using computers to aid the design process sufficiently. Their work is not yet assessed periodically in relation to national standards to help guide their progress in the subject.

112 There have been improvements in pupils' attainment and in the school's planning for provision since the last inspection. The role of co-ordinator is currently held by the headteacher. A newly appointed member of staff will assume responsibility for the subject once she has established herself in the school. She has a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject and recognises the need to ensure that it is given a higher focus in the school than it currently enjoys. Curriculum plans are based on a national scheme, and the co-ordinator in waiting recognises the need to monitor and evaluate its impact through teacher observation and the sampling of work. Resources for the subject are adequate.

GEOGRAPHY

113 Although it was possible to observe only one lesson of geography during the inspection, discussions with teachers and pupils and analysis of pupils' work and teachers' plans indicate that standards in line with those expected nationally of pupils by the age of seven and eleven.

114 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Year 1 pupils draw the route from home to school and identify landmarks, such as the post box, on the way. They look at the types of transport that are used for different journeys. They learn the subject-specific vocabulary for natural phenomena at the seaside, so they can label the rocks, the cliff and the river. Year 2 pupils study an island habitat and think about the types of transport which may be used. They consider the population make-up of the island and the types of homes they would live in and so begin to grasp the concept of human resources. They become familiar with local features of their town and use a Venn diagram to contrast and compare it with a seaside town. They are beginning to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the local environment through the travels of Barnaby Bear as he goes on holiday with members of the school to places further afield.

115 While pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 overall, they do not always do as well as they could because at times the curriculum is fragmented and subject-specific skills are insufficiently clearly identified and organised so that pupils gradually build them up over time. Year 3 pupils can translate a picture of an area into a plan using building blocks, and find the practical task very enjoyable. Year 4 gain an insight into how people affect the environment by looking at the litter in the school grounds. They pose questions, which they hope to answer from the fieldwork they undertake. Year 5 pupils study contrasting localities and compare their area, population and main employers. Year 6 pupils learn about the rain cycle. They study the formation of rivers and how the course may change over hundreds of years. They find out the meaning to the subject-specific vocabulary, so they know that a delta is formed when a river sheds a large amount of sediment at its mouth. They know the names of the major rivers of the British Isles and a little about the rivers and mountains of the world.

116 It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. The work in pupils' books is not presented to a sufficiently high standard and marking does not provide guidance on how pupils can improve their work. In some year groups photocopied sheets are used too frequently. Homework is used well and much of the detailed recorded work is carried out at home.

117 The curriculum is enhanced by educational visits. Year 6 pupils are challenged by the orienteering while on residential trips; for example, while Year 5 pupils enjoy their day in Gloucester. The younger pupils walk in the local environment.

118 The co-ordinator has just taken over the post and no judgement can be made about her role in the development of the subject. As yet monitoring has been insufficiently rigorous to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards of attainment. There is insufficient regular assessment to help teachers plan further learning activities for their pupils.

HISTORY

119 Standards are in line with national expectations by the time pupils are seven. The school makes a sound start in laying the foundations for these younger pupils to understand the passing of time. They develop a good sense of chronology and begin to understand historical perspectives, especially through timelines and stories of famous people. Between the ages of five and seven, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Year 1 pupils can identify toys used by children of different ages and place them in chronological order. Year 2 pupils develop an awareness of how things were in the past by studying clothes people wear at the seaside and see how they have changed over time.

120 By the age of eleven, pupils achieve standards which are in line with national expectations. Progress between the ages of seven and eleven is satisfactory. There is evidence of research being used throughout the key stage, with some effective work undertaken as homework. However, the school has not yet identified how pupils will develop these and other historical skills, like using secondary sources, interpreting information and presenting their findings over time. Year 6 pupils study the Victorian period. They find it interesting to learn about the differences between the lifestyles of rich and poor children, and can contrast them with their own, as well as conditions in schools in the past and now. The music of the sixties and the lives of the Beatles and Bob Dylan fascinate them. Through studying the changes in Britain since the First World War they are aware of major changes that have occurred which continue to affect their own lives, like the introduction of the health service in 1948; for example, and the importance of the 1944 Education Act. In Year 5 pupils undertake a good quantity of work within a variety of topics. Within this class there is good evidence of pupils developing the subject-specific skills. They look at pictures of the Aztecs and draw conclusions from the evidence. They enjoy the adventures of famous explorers such as Vasco de Gama and Christopher Columbus, learning that in 1492 he set sail and on his journey discovered the West Indies. There is sometimes a good link made with their work in other subjects, like geography.

121 The quality of teaching is good overall. Strengths include very good use of resources. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, swimming costumes from a range of eras had been borrowed from a local museum and pupils were able to see for themselves the different styles and materials. They looked at pictures and deduced important differences in what people wore and how they behaved when they went to the seaside. Good guidance is given on the expectations of the work to be undertaken. For example, in Year 5 the teacher gave pupils a printed sheet showing them how they were to proceed in undertaking research into an aspect of Ancient Greece that particularly interested them. This enabled one girl to decide to write a play, while others were interested in finding out more about the life of Archimedes. Practical examples are used to clarify particular teaching points and the Year 4 class teacher brought in an example of the typical quantity and type of food that a family would get with their ration book during the Second World War. Questioning and discussion techniques are used successfully as pupils have good communication skills. Weaknesses in teaching relate to the quality of the marking, which is mostly for correctness and does not indicate how pupils can improve. Also, although gradually diminishing over time, there is still a significant use of

photocopied sheets, which detracts from pupils' ability to write for a range of purposes and audiences across the curriculum.

122 The subject is greatly enhanced by educational visits, which bring it to life. Year 1 pupils visit a windmill and see how flour was made in days gone by. Year 4 pupils visit a Tudor hall and, while there, dress in the costumes of the rich and the poor and learn a dance typical of the time. Year 5 pupils combine history and geography on a trip to a waterways museum and dress up as narrow-boat people and learn about the use of canals for transporting goods around Britain. Ten- and eleven-year-olds use the town to find out more about local history. The whole school enjoys the competitive edge of the pancake races and had great fun at the party to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Year 5 pupils entertain the school with a drama entitled 'Harry Potter meets the Greeks' and Year 6 complete their time in school with a production of 'All Our Yesterdays'.

123 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored pupils' work and made constructive suggestions to colleagues on how to improve provision in relation to the national guidance. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. She is less secure when measuring standards, and assessment is under-developed, as are the monitoring and development of teaching. Resources are improving and are good overall. Information and communication technology is still not used sufficiently.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124 By the age of seven at the end of Key Stage 1 and by time they leave the school at the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is average. They are making satisfactory progress in developing their skills in this subject as they move through the school, although they have insufficient opportunities to work with the computers in other subjects. While there have been some developments since the last inspection, these have not yet had a full impact in raising standards or supporting pupils' day-to-day learning, and overall improvement has generally been too slow.

125 Although there were few opportunities to observe them working with the computers during the inspection, discussions with pupils and observations of them using the computers indicate the range of their skills. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop basic keyboard skills and are able to manipulate the mouse appropriately as they work with a range of programs. As they work with a word-processing program some pupils change the font and text size, can store what they do in a folder and print their work. By Year 2 pupils can input data into a data-handling program, select an appropriate graphical format, create a graph and print it. Pupils at this stage also begin to develop their understanding of control technology, and are able to provide a sequence of instructions as they program the *Roamer*, for example.

126 Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their word-processing skills appropriately. They can vary the fonts that they use, change the size and colour of print, and highlight and manipulate text; for example, to delete any unwanted text or errors in their work. They learn to insert and open boxes of which they are able to change the size and add borders of different sizes and colour. Older pupils can use the computer to display data in various ways; for example, in graphs. These older pupils assemble text and symbols using word-processing software to help them communicate ideas and explore information. At times the use of ICT to present their work is good. By Year 6 they edit text, inserting pictures or clipart illustrations; for example, as they did in their multimedia presentations to which they can add buttons to aid navigation. At this stage pupils also have a good understanding of how to use spreadsheets, entering data successfully to illustrate population density or wildlife sighted on the River Wye. Pupils have a good understanding of how to use CD ROMs and the Internet

to research information, which they are sometimes able use to support their learning in other subjects, like their research on China in geography, for example.

127 The majority of pupils approach the computers with confidence; when they are given the opportunity many are able to work independently with them and manage the various programs for themselves. A significant number of pupils acquire a range of skills at home, have a good knowledge of computers and talk confidently about how they have used them. The majority of pupils observed working with the computers, in both the computer suite and the classrooms, concentrated intensively, worked co-operatively and effectively with their partners and were usually engrossed in the tasks set.

128 There were few opportunities to observe either direct teaching in the computer suite or pupils working with the computers in the classrooms during the inspection. Where teaching was seen it was effective, with both teachers and classroom assistants able to manage and support pupils' learning. In a good lesson with Year 2 pupils, for example, the teacher provided clear support and guidance where needed for pupils inputting data into a data-handling program, which enabled them to build on their earlier work and create a graph successfully. Overall, however, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to work with the computers and this restricts the pace at which they can make progress. Although there are plans to increase usage, as yet pupils have too little opportunity to explore communication, using e-mail, for example, or to send a fax. Their experience of control is limited, as are opportunities to explore the use of a scanner or digital camera. Many pupils have acquired basic skills in using the Internet, but are given too few opportunities to extend their understanding and ability to use it effectively to search for information. Similarly, while pupils have the skills, CD ROMs are underused as sources of information across the curriculum. Overall teachers feel much more confident in their work in ICT than they were at the time of the last inspection and training has enhanced their own knowledge, understanding and skills. This has contributed to an improvement in the quality of pupils' learning and the extension of their skills. In some subjects teachers are using basic programs to support pupils' learning, in numeracy, for example, where older pupils work with a program successfully supporting their understanding of percentages. Generally, however, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to extend, develop or support their work using the computers, particularly as a tool for drafting and re-drafting their own writing.

129 Co-ordination of ICT is improving, although not yet fully effective in ensuring that teaching and learning improve at an appropriate rate. There has been considerable development since the previous inspection, particularly in extending resources and providing staff training. The co-ordinator's confidence and good subject knowledge have played a significant part in these developments. The monitoring of teaching and learning is still unsatisfactory, however, restricting the co-ordinator's understanding of further development needs; the lack of a consistent whole-school approach to assessment limits teachers' understanding of pupils' progress. The creation of a website has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of the school's communication of information for parents.

130 Resources have been considerably improved since the last inspection. A new computer suite, the purchase of additional computers for classrooms, all now networked, and a projector, which adds flexibility to arrangements for teaching and learning, are all having a positive effect on the development of pupils' skills. The suite, however, is small and this limits its effectiveness for whole-class teaching. Teachers are therefore dependent on the availability of classroom assistance to enable them to make use of it. At times the temperature in the room also prohibits its use. Consequently use of the computer suite is not yet fully effective or efficient and it remains underused.

MUSIC

131 Although it was not possible to observe many lessons in music during the inspection, the evidence available is sufficient to indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills as they move through the school and by the time they leave they achieve standards appropriate for their age. At times the standard of pupils' singing is above average, when they are all together in the hall for worship, for example. Standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection.

132 In the lessons seen pupils were enthusiastic and eager to participate in both singing and instrumental activities. They are able to sing songs from memory and enjoy joining in action songs. Singing is tuneful, and in their preparations for the voices in concert performance pupils show they can clearly articulate the words of the songs chosen. Older pupils sing songs in two parts, performing them with confidence and obvious enjoyment. Younger pupils are already able to demonstrate understanding of simple rhythm patterns, which they can explore and play on untuned percussion instruments. They can keep a steady pulse. While they play various rhythms with control, they find it easier to reproduce some more-difficult rhythms vocally. At this stage pupils begin to understand the need for a conductor when playing in a group and they have good opportunities to conduct others. Pupils can select instruments appropriately to reflect the rhythm in the lines of a poem and they show good control as they play them. They are beginning to understand dynamics and change of mood and some bring this to their playing. A number of pupils receive additional instrumental tuition on violin, woodwind, brass and drums.

133 The quality of teaching seen was consistently good. Detailed schemes of work support non-specialist teachers and ensure that pupils experience a fairly well-balanced programme of musical activities. The teachers' enthusiasm enables their pupils to make appropriate progress in developing their own musical skills, particularly in singing. They provide a good range of musical activities and move pupils through them with good pace, which sustains their interest and maintains involvement. In the lessons seen teachers showed that they were able to help pupils improve their singing effectively. Teachers' warm response to their pupils' efforts is clearly encouraging and motivating. Where teaching is best, teachers transmit an obvious enjoyment of music to their pupils, while indicating how their performances could be improved. This was particularly apparent where pupils were preparing for their involvement in a concert with pupils from a large number of other schools. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to listen and appraise music and at other times such as during collective worship, for example. Generally, however, there is insufficient emphasis on this aspect of the music curriculum.

134 Teachers manage their classes well in music lessons, communicating clear expectations; pupils respond well. This contributes positively to the progress they are making. A clear view of inclusion underpins practice in the school and enables teachers to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. This was very well illustrated in a lesson observed with Year 2 pupils which the teacher managed very well indeed. She clearly and calmly communicated what she expected and made sure that all her pupils were able to participate no matter what their particular needs.

135 The music co-ordinator is new to the school has had little time to gain an understanding of areas for development. An initial audit has provided some indication of resource needs, but as yet there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning to identify areas for improvement or where further support is needed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136 Pupils reach standards in physical education in line with those expected for their age by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection. At times pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers organise and manage them well and also help and encourage them to learn from each other. Pupils participate enthusiastically and energetically, and this also contributes positively to the progress they make. They acquire an appropriate range of skills from the activities organised for them, including dance, gymnastics, games and swimming, all of which successfully promote their physical development.

137 Pupils understand that the need to prepare before they begin to exercise, and are provided with good opportunities for an appropriate warm-up. In Year 1, for example, pupils effectively warmed up by copying their teacher's movement. In a lesson with Year 2, the teacher led the warm up, but also drew her pupils' attention to what was happening to their bodies, checking that they understood the purpose of what they were doing.

138 Pupils understand the vocabulary of movement used by their teacher, and they can interpret the tasks set and explore different ways of completing them. In a good lesson seen with Year 3 pupils they demonstrated their ability to respond to the tasks set with good variations of movement and balance, including various rolls, twists, stretches and turns. These pupils are gaining increasing control over their body movements and are developing the ability to manage their movement. The extent to which they have developed good bodily control is demonstrated in their ability to hold a balance. In response to a task set by the teacher in Year 4 class, pupils were imaginative and aware of how to use different body parts while maintaining good control of their movement as they moved between pieces of apparatus and explored ways to travel over or along it. Pupils in this lesson also showed they could work safely with the apparatus available. They worked very hard on the various pieces of apparatus, fully engaged and concentrating on the tasks set. Older pupils develop an ability to evaluate their own performance and to use this to improve their movement. This was well illustrated in a dance lesson with Year 5 pupils, where they worked effectively in pairs to develop their movement. Most pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

139 The teaching of physical education is good overall. Teachers provide a range of physical activities, although it was possible to observe only some of these during the inspection. Pupils quickly gain in confidence because they are taught well as they practise and develop their movements. Where teaching is particularly effective, teachers are able to intervene appropriately in what their pupils do to help them improve the quality of their movement. In Year 2, for example, the teacher made very good use of what individuals did to make appropriate evaluative comments to help all pupils improve and extend what they were doing. In this lesson the teacher responded very warmly to her pupils' efforts and this also motivated them to try even harder. Teachers pay appropriate attention to safe practice in their lessons and this has a positive effect on the pupils' confidence. The school provides good opportunities for older pupils to engage in a range of outdoor activities during a valuable annual residential visit.

140 Leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. As yet there has been little monitoring of teaching and learning, however, and this limits the co-ordinators' understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and where further support might be needed. The resources for gymnastics in the large school hall are good; there is a good range of moveable equipment for the pupils to work on. The range of small apparatus is also good.