

INSPECTION REPORT

WARREN HILLS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coalville, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119981

Headteacher: Mr David Lloyd

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th February 2003

Inspection number: 248070

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stamford Drive Coalville Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Snaith
Date of previous inspection:	5 th February 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Douglas Hayward 21234	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Special educational needs English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
Ms Jenny Mynett 9334	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Margaret Owen 20417	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Mrs Sylvia Gatehouse 26945	Team inspector	Foundation Stage History Music	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr Jon Houghton 21085	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Warren Hills Community Primary is a school for pupils aged 4 – 11 years, and is situated on the outskirts of Coalville in Leicestershire. It has experienced many changes and upheavals in the last two years. The number of pupils attending has dropped significantly, but is beginning to grow again. Almost all the pupils are white and speak English as their first language. The school serves an area of significant social disadvantage. For example, the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (37 per cent) is above the national average and is the highest in Leicestershire. An average number of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, but a much higher than average percentage of those (8 per cent) have statements of special educational need. Most of these are for learning and behavioural difficulties.

Children start in the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are four. Many of them have some pre-school experience, although the attainment of most on entry to school is well below that expected, especially in the development of their social and personal skills and their language skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Warren Hills is a happy school that parents like and pupils are proud of. It has many strengths and is very successful in helping pupils to achieve the best standards they can. The school does a great deal to develop respect and understanding. Very good leadership and management and high quality teaching play an important part in making sure that the school continues to improve. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very effective and provide very good leadership. The headteacher has introduced changes that have improved the school.
- It provides high standards of teaching. Teachers are very enthusiastic and make a good team. They work very hard to make their lessons interesting and enjoyable. They are deeply committed to their pupils and want them to do well.
- It provides a very good start to children's schooling in the reception class.
- It places great importance on making sure that pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to their work. The school emphasises the importance of caring for others. Pupils say that, *'This school makes everyone feel welcome and all the teachers know every child'. Teachers are there for us'*.
- It uses a wide range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school to make subjects even more interesting.
- It forms very good links with parents and values the support they provide. Parents feel welcome in school.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science for infants and juniors.
- The school's financial position.
- The way in which the school makes the best use of teaching time.
- The use of information and communication technology in other subjects.
- Procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' attendance.

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 last inspected in 2001, when there were judged to be serious weaknesses in the quality of leadership and management, and low standards attained by pupils by the time they were eleven years of age. There are no longer serious weaknesses. Since the last inspection there have been many improvements. Pupils say that it is a much better school than it was. Parents are now very positive about the school, whereas in 2001 there were many criticisms, for example about pupils' behaviour, leadership and management and the quality of information they received. Although pupils' standards in national tests have been low for the last two years, they are improving slowly, and pupils are working hard and making progress. All the issues in the previous report have been addressed. The school is setting higher targets for pupils to achieve and it is in a much stronger position to improve than it was two years ago. The school has received significant help and support from two local Beacon schools, which have helped to raise standards and levels of expertise.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E
 very low E
 *

Although the school's results in national tests for eleven-year-olds appear low in comparison with those in other schools in England, they do not tell the whole story. For example, many pupils enter school with attainment that is well below expectations for their age, especially in language and social skills. They make good progress and lots of them achieve the best standards that they can. The school now has higher expectations of what pupils can do, and targets for eleven-year-olds this year are much higher than before. During the inspection standards in English, mathematics and science were below average for seven-year-olds, but many have made good progress since they started school and know much more than they did. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, geography, physical education and religious education are as expected for infants, but standards in history and music are higher than expected. Standards in English are below average for eleven-year-olds. Although they make good progress in their reading and writing, many have a very limited vocabulary and find it difficult to use a range of language to express themselves. Standards in mathematics and science are in line with national expectations this year and are much better than last year. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, geography, music, physical education and religious education are as expected for juniors. Standards in history and music are higher than expected. A lack of evidence meant it was not possible to make a judgement on standards in design and technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils like their school. They are interested in their lessons and get on with their work very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and assemblies and during lunchtimes and playtimes. They are polite and friendly to adults. They say that there is no bullying in school now. Parents correctly think that behaviour in school is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils get on well together and respect their teachers. They have a growing number of opportunities to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council or the 'Green Gang'. They carry out their duties very well and are a credit to the school. They enjoy being given responsibility and say that, ' <i>You feel important and more a part of the school</i> '.
Attendance	Below average for primary schools. A significant number of pupils regularly miss school and this affects their progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

During the inspection 46 lessons were observed. Teaching was at least good in just over 80 per cent of lessons and very good and, in one case, excellent, in 40 per cent of lessons. This is very high quality teaching and helps pupils to make good progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely good and pupils have high regard for their teachers. They say that, *'Teachers are kind and helpful. If you are struggling with your work they won't tell you the answer but will give you lots of help to show you how to do it'*. Lessons are well planned at just the right level to challenge pupils. This means that they find lessons interesting, concentrate very well and do their best. Teachers are very good at making pupils believe that they can succeed. Work for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned. They receive lots of help from teachers and assistants and their work is at just the right level for them to make progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Children in the reception class enjoy a stimulating range of activities and have a very good start to school. Computers are being used more and more effectively throughout the school to help pupils learn. The school provides a very good range of activities for pupils to enjoy at lunchtimes and after school. It welcomes many visitors to make the curriculum exciting and interesting.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils make good progress in class and in small groups. Their work is carefully planned at just the right level to help them learn and make progress. Special help from teachers working individually and in small groups is very effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the very few pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school has a very strong ethos where everyone is valued and which helps to develop respect and understanding. Older pupils say that, <i>'Children make good friends and help one another'</i> . <i>The buddy system helps us to keep an eye on the infants'</i> . Trips to places of interest and many fascinating visitors to school help pupils to learn about their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strength of the school's work. It is a caring school. Staff like and value pupils and do a lot to raise their self-esteem. Pupils enjoy receiving achievement awards in assembly for their work and behaviour and say that, <i>'You feel really pleased with yourself'</i> .

The school values parents' help and support. It provides good information for them. Parents say that they are welcome and that the school listens to their ideas and opinions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a strong team and provide very good leadership and management. They have worked very hard to improve pupils' learning. The headteacher has earned the trust and respect of staff and parents. The deputy headteacher sets a very good example as a class teacher. Subject co-ordination in many areas is strong.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many new appointments have been made and governors are becoming more involved than they used to be in monitoring standards and the way that the school is run. They are not planning and monitoring as well as they should how the school spends its budget.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has done a great deal in the last two years to look at how it can improve the quality of education it provides.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget and all available funds very well to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Parents and pupils say that the school is a much brighter and more welcoming place than it used to be.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-one parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection started and fifty-nine returned their questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that the school does a good job. • They think that teaching is good, that the school is well led and managed and that it provides good information for them. • They feel that the school provides a wide range of activities and that it helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questionnaires show that parents have no significant concerns. • One parent felt that cars should not be allowed to enter as children are leaving school.

The inspection team fully supports parents' positive views. An inspector looked at the traffic situation in the school grounds at the end of the day on two occasions. The team feels that there is a possible risk to pupils' safety from cars entering and leaving the grounds at these times.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school is subject to particular circumstances that have an impact on its results in national tests for seven and eleven-year-old pupils and on the progress they make. The 2002 tests and assessments for infant and junior pupils showed that the percentage in Year 2 attaining the expected level¹ was very low in reading, writing and mathematics and well below average in science. The percentage of junior pupils attaining Level 4 was well below average in English, mathematics and science.
2. These apparently low results might, at first glance, suggest that pupils are simply *'not doing well'*. However, that judgement completely ignores the many factors that influence the pupils' work and results, and that have an adverse effect on them. For example, the school is ranked first on an index of multiple deprivation. It has the highest percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in Leicestershire (37 per cent). Last year 25 per cent of the pupils either left the school or joined it for the first time. In a recent dental check carried out by the local health authority over a third of pupils were found to be dentally unfit. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need (8 per cent) is well above the national average.
3. It is important, therefore, to place the pupils' results in national tests in context. Children start in the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Most start school with levels of knowledge that are well below those expected nationally and with an unsettled home background. Their levels of language are extremely low, so that many simply do not have the necessary vocabulary to be able to combine words into extended sentences. Their ability to work and co-operate with each other is limited and while they are developing their ability to concentrate and stay on task, they often work individually. It is especially noticeable that boys in the reception class have a much more aggressive approach and a shorter attention span than girls.
4. Despite these disadvantages, pupils benefit from caring, supportive teachers and helpers and well-planned lessons, and activities and make good progress in the reception class. Although only a few will attain the Early Learning Goals,² the progress all children make, especially considering their low attainment on entry, is significant.
5. The results of the tests and assessments for infants in 2002 show that pupils did not attain high results in reading at Level 2 or Level 3. In fact, results in reading, writing and mathematics have all shown a downward trend since 2000. This shows how lacking in rigour the school's approach has been in the past towards measuring the progress pupils make as they move through school. It is also confirmation that, until two years ago, the school's lack of focused support for pupils with special educational needs meant that many were not identified quickly or provided with appropriate support. This was noted in the school's previous report, which identified serious weaknesses in leadership and management that, *'lacked clear direction to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum planning and very little analysis of test results to form strategies for raising standards'*.
6. The appointment of a new headteacher has had a major impact on the drive to raise standards. However, in a school where standards have been low over a long period of time, the impact of changes that are introduced will take time to affect pupils' results in national tests. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that, on a day to day basis,

¹ Levels – at the end of the infants, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Eleven-year-old pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Those pupils who attain Level 3 at the age of seven and Level 5 at the age of eleven are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

² Early Learning Goals – these are targets for children by the end of the reception year. They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

standards are improving. For instance, the range of work that pupils are covering, the full implementation of National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the school's emphasis on problem solving activities in mathematics and science, and new moves to develop pupils' literacy skills through other subjects.

7. Most pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, although by the end of the infants many will not have attained Level 2. But many pupils will have **achieved** a great deal. That is, they are working as hard as they can and reaching the best level of work that it is possible for them to do. In each class about 20 per cent of pupils have major special educational needs, which make it unlikely that they will attain the nationally expected level, despite the school's hard work with them. This means that, at best, only 80 per cent of pupils will attain Level 2, which is already below the national average in reading, writing mathematics and science.
8. There has been a much stronger focus on developing pupils' skills in basic subjects as well as those of parents. For example, the school is hosting a very successful and well-attended Family Literacy Project, where parents can learn with their children. The school places considerable emphasis on pupils learning letter sounds at an early stage, or looking at pictures for clues to the meaning of words. In fact, many make good progress in developing early reading skills, but they have a very limited awareness of literature in general and their own range of vocabulary is extremely limited. Consequently they find it difficult to tell a story in their own words and do not have the necessary range of vocabulary to suggest alternatives. For example, in a science lesson in Year 1, pupils were asked to describe a piece of baked salt dough. Only one pupil could suggest the word '*solid*' and, while one or two thought of the word '*hard*', most were not able to think of any suitable description. In mathematics, pupils have little experience of practical mathematics at home and are unused to handling money, for example to go shopping. They find it difficult to think in abstract terms about numbers and most depend heavily on having counters or coins in front of them that they can use as concrete examples.
9. Pupils' progress continues well in the junior classes and it is anticipated that test results for pupils in Year 6 this year will be just below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. While these improved forecasts have much to do with the ability of pupils currently in Year 6, they are also a result of better targeting of support for pupils and an increased awareness of the levels at which pupils are working.
10. Although pupils' attainment is not high, their rate of progress is good considering the many disadvantages that they face, especially in the development of their spoken and written language. For example, in a good literacy lesson, looking at how to build suspense at the beginning of a story, no pupil could tell the teacher what a '*bundle*' was when faced with the opening, '*I suddenly stopped as I saw a bundle lying on the pavement*'. The school works hard to try to compensate for pupils' low levels of vocabulary. For example, there are many displays around the school that contain text to stimulate pupils. There is a deliberate attempt to concentrate on the investigative and experimental aspects of mathematics and science, so that lessons focus on providing opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate. The school has developed a debating society for pupils to develop speaking skills. There is a genuine acceptance of pupils' answers in lessons, with teachers working very hard to persuade them to contribute. There are occasions when drama features in pupils' work, although at present these are not sufficiently well planned for.
11. The school has many classes that have relatively small numbers of pupils. This has happened as a result of falling numbers, rather than having been managed deliberately. Nevertheless, during the inspection it was noted that small numbers had a positive impact on the way classes were organised and on the way in which pupils learned. Small class sizes meant that the many adults working alongside pupils were able to give them almost

individual attention. The frequency with which pupils were asked questions meant that they had to be involved in discussion, consequently developing their speaking skills.

12. The school is very good at providing opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Ninety-eight per cent of parents in their questionnaires felt that their children make good progress. In the opinion of the inspection team there are hardly any pupils who could be regarded as gifted. However, the school is very good at recognising individual talents and provides many opportunities to develop them, for example through its extensive range of extra-curricular activities, through sporting fixtures and through a wide range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school. During the inspection there was no evidence that girls and boys were working differently or attaining results significantly higher or lower than each other.
13. The school has become much better at identifying pupils who need support. It has become increasingly proficient at using assessment information to help plan work that revises areas that pupils are unsure of and to plan lessons that cater for the wide range of abilities in each class. The use of assessment to guide planning is relatively recent in school since the current headteacher arrived. The deputy headteacher has worked extremely hard to introduce new systems which are proving to be very effective. This information helps teachers to be increasingly specific about the levels of difficulty at which pupils are working and the speed at which they can make progress.
14. There is only one pupil with English as an additional language whose progress is in line with that of other pupils in the class. The school is very good at identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs, a significant number of whom have statements of special educational need. Pupils' individual education plans are carefully considered and have well focused targets, covering a wide range of needs that are regularly reviewed. The school uses outside agencies well, for example the school psychological service, and speech and language specialists. Pupils benefit from in-class support from learning assistants and from skilled specialist teaching support individually or in very small groups. In these groups there is a very good range of activities designed to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There is also time built in to concentrate on any other areas of weakness, for example pupils' poor speech patterns or the development of their spoken vocabulary.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are good overall. They have been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and display very positive attitudes to their learning and after school activities. There is a good working atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils settle quickly to the tasks set for them and concentrate well. They listen well to instructions and to each other and are keen to respond to questions. Parents feel the school promotes very positive attitudes. They feel that teachers encourage pupils to work hard and achieve their best. Pupils have very positive views about their school and were particularly enthusiastic about the clubs and after school activities, *'They are great fun and we get to do new things'*.
16. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires commented on the good behaviour of pupils. Although there are a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour, adults deal effectively with them. Two pupils were excluded last year for a fixed period. Pupils are well aware of the school and class rules, which they have helped to devise, and respond enthusiastically to the school's reward system. Pupils are very friendly and polite, happy to talk about what they are doing and very willing to show their work to visitors. During discussions pupils

reported that the school was a safe and secure place with no oppressive behaviour or bullying.

17. Relationships in the school are very good and have a positive impact on learning. The school works hard to promote tolerance and kindness, and ensures that pupils feel included. Older pupils are very caring and look after the younger ones during lunch and break times. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into school activities. Pupils were observed collaborating well in small groups during a science investigation. They took turns and helped each other, which ensured that they all understood what was happening.
18. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are good. They are encouraged to appreciate each other through the 'special person' activity. This helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem, and promotes value and respect for each other. The last inspection visit identified the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their initiative. The school still identifies this as an area for further development. Some pupils have written and performed their own puppet shows, whilst older pupils have helped to create a web-site and produce newsletters. Pupils willingly undertake roles of responsibility around the school. They take turns to act as class monitors, whilst older pupils in Year 6 have wider responsibilities. The school council provides pupils with a forum in which to raise issues or make suggestions. Pupils are enthusiastic about their role and feel that it gives them a voice and an opportunity to become involved in the decision-making processes of the school.
19. The level of attendance in the school is unsatisfactory and well below the national average. Poor attendance and punctuality were identified as causes for concern during the last inspection. The low attendance rate continues to be due to parents taking their children on holiday in term time, or in some instances allowing them to miss school for insignificant reasons or condoning truancy. The lack of attendance on a regular basis by many of these pupils is having a significant impact upon their education and standards of attainment. Although some registers are not being completed correctly, the effective use of the morning registration period provides an orderly start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. During the inspection 46 lessons were observed and teaching was never less than satisfactory. Teaching was at least good in 39 lessons (85 per cent) and very good, and on one occasion excellent, in 18 lessons (39 per cent). This is very high quality teaching which exceeds the current national figures for the quality of teaching.³
21. Teaching during this inspection was significantly better than two years ago. Then, teaching was good in 33 per cent of lessons and very good in 27 per cent and there have been hardly any staff changes. Improvements are due to the following factors: improved staff morale and self belief; improved subject knowledge gained through training, such as that for information technology; much more clearly defined expectations of the standards that pupils should be attaining; the introduction of sharper assessment systems; and much better monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators.
22. Lessons are invariably well planned with appropriate levels of work for different groups of pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic and positive. Lessons start briskly with no time wasted. Teachers recap well on what pupils have previously learned, involving them straight away in the lesson to capture their interest. Their subject knowledge is good and

³ The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

this helps them to lead discussions confidently. A good range of open and closed questions enables them to judge quickly whether pupils have remembered information, for example *'Who can tell me?'* and *'Do you remember how to..?'* Questions are addressed to the class as a whole and to individuals, so that all pupils are actively involved.

23. One of the best aspects of teaching is the rapport between teachers and pupils. Teachers display a keen sense of humour, are extremely positive in their approach and show great enthusiasm for pupils' work and effort. There is a real emphasis on including all pupils in every aspect of the lesson. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to 'have a go' at answering questions. They emphasise that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. All pupils know that their efforts will be valued and appreciated and this encourages them to speak in front of the rest of the class. Teachers use praise very well as part of this process of raising pupils' self esteem. Comments such as, *'That's lovely! I like that'*, confirm in the pupils' minds the worth of their work. In an infant class the teacher very effectively showed surprise and delight at the pupils' answers by saying, *'Really! I thought that was too hard for anyone to work out!'*
24. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Although their attainment might be low in national terms teachers always expect the best. They use questioning very well in different parts of the lesson to find out how well pupils understand what they are doing. For example, in a good science lesson the teacher asked questions repeatedly to try to get pupils to offer ideas and to use scientific language, for example *'Is it?'*, *'Does it?'* and *'What happens when you try to bend it?'* During the course of the lesson teachers are good at intervening at just the right moment to make pupils think again about what they are doing, for example *'Why have you chosen that colour?'*, *'What do you particularly like about it?'* Plenary sessions are usually good and offer further opportunities to question groups of pupils or the whole class about their work, for example, in a very good science lesson on changes in materials, *'If we did this would we get the sand back?'* and, *'Who knows what has happened to those air bubbles?'*, *'What's the name of the gas?'*
25. Teachers expect good behaviour in lessons and use a range of effective strategies to get it. A quiet word to a pupil not concentrating is usually enough. Teachers do not confront the few pupils who are sometimes reluctant to comply. Clever strategies usually have the desired effect. For example, in an infant class pupils were still handling coins after the teacher had told them to put them down. *'Show me those fingers so I know you are not holding any coins'*, resulted in all pupils waving their hands in the air and a successful end to the activity.
26. Usually learning support assistants play a very positive part in managing behaviour in the classroom. They sit close to pupils who might have difficulty concentrating, constantly chatting to them and ensuring that they take part in question and answer sessions. They usually work very well with small groups of pupils, helping them to grasp new ideas. When they are well deployed they are extremely effective in helping pupils to make progress and to behave well. They are not always as usefully engaged in all lessons. Sometimes they offer too many ideas, so that the pupils do not always think up the answers themselves. They are not always aware of how they can best prompt discussion in order to extend pupils' vocabulary (**see paragraphs 95, 96, 98**).
27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in classes and withdrawal groups is of the same high standard that all pupils enjoy and helps them to make good progress. Work is planned at just the right level for them to consolidate and move forward. It is well matched to targets in pupils' individual education plans. Additional teaching help for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. Work for these pupils is stimulating and they enjoy the individual support they receive. Targets are appropriate,

varied and limited in number. Changes of activity during these sessions keep pupils interested and motivated.

28. The quality of teachers' marking is variable and does not consistently monitor the developmental comments that teachers make verbally to pupils about how they could improve their work. Some teachers write extremely useful jottings in pupils' books to show how they measure and record progress. These are very useful to parents, showing significant moments when, for example, their children write unaided for the first time. The best written comments convey real enthusiasm, while also noting what needs to be done next. The least effective are just a word or brief comment that does little to motivate pupils or enable them to see where improvements can be made. The co-ordinator intends to review and update the school's marking policy to ensure greater consistency in providing all pupils with constructive indications of the next step they need to take to improve their work.
29. The school's arrangements for setting homework are generally supported by the great majority of parents who returned their questionnaires and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting. Parents say that homework is regularly marked and that they have a clear idea of what is expected in pupils' homework. They feel that teachers read their comments in the pupils' homework diaries and they respond to them. Inspectors feel that the amount and frequency of homework are appropriate and support the work that pupils do in school.

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

30. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities are good and statutory requirements are met. This is in line with judgements made in the previous inspection. The school provides a good range of stimulating learning opportunities within lessons and outside the school day. However, teaching time is significantly less than that recommended for junior pupils. The limited time allocated to different subjects results in a lack of balance in some year groups. Swimming and water safety have a high priority in the curriculum. Unfortunately, the school's generous provision for weekly swimming lessons throughout the year for seven to ten-year-olds results in insufficient time for mathematics in some classes. The amount of time given to geography is also low in some year groups. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus and the school complies with statutory requirements for a daily act of worship.
31. One of the strengths of the curriculum is the inclusion of all children and the very good provision for the large number with special educational needs. Those children who are withdrawn from classes for extra support for their learning are carefully monitored and cover, at a suitable level, the same topics as the rest of their age group. Children with special educational needs are identified in the reception class. They get good support from a variety of extra staff and, as a result, make good progress in their work. Parents and children are involved in drawing up individual education plans with clear targets for improvement. These are often directed at improving language and literacy skills but may also reflect mathematics or behaviour. These targets and plans are reviewed regularly and outside agencies are involved as necessary.
32. The national strategies for raising standards in literacy and numeracy are now well established throughout the school and both are delivered effectively. Planning is good and there are well-organised sessions in most classes each day. There is a good match of work to the needs of different children, so that lessons are suitably challenging for all. The mental arithmetic starter session is usually good and children are encouraged to explain their own strategies for solving problems. The use of subject specific vocabulary is also encouraged to try to extend many pupils' under developed speaking skills.

Occasionally computer programs and information technology are used when children study other subjects, but opportunities for this are not always apparent in planning and they are often under used.

33. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the curriculum significantly. Clubs for sporting activities are well attended and children enjoy using puppets, playing various board games, and singing in the choir. An appreciation of the environment is promoted through the work of the 'Green Gang' and extra activities are available when children go on residential visits. Children also benefit when interesting visitors attend morning assembly or speak to them in their classrooms. Ethnic diversity is celebrated through visits to places of worship, for example a mosque in Leicester, and through dance and cooking. All the school took part in the Chinese New Year celebrations, tasting Chinese food and seeing the magnificent dragon's head at close quarters.
34. There are good opportunities for personal, social and health education and some activities are designed to focus on a particular aspect. Classes use circle time when, for example, issues of relationships and behaviour are discussed. Governors have agreed a policy on sex, health and drugs education. The school is deeply committed to using puppetry as a means of enabling a few pupils with challenging behaviour to express themselves.
35. There are very good links with other schools in the 'neighbourhood cluster' and staff and children exchange visits before older children transfer to the secondary school. Older pupils work on 'bridging projects', which are completed at the next school. Children also make regular visits to King Edward's College for swimming lessons. A new nursery is due to open on the school site later this year and this will facilitate pre-school links.
36. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to improve and is now good overall. Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development are effectively promoted through religious education lessons and the daily acts of worship. One assembly promoted a real sense of awe and wonder, as pupils reflected on how things grow. They develop a good knowledge of Christianity and other major world religions, and celebrate other festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. In other areas of the curriculum pupils are encouraged to value relationships and human achievement, and to explore feelings and the views of others. In history they have good opportunities to reflect on life as it was. Science provides good opportunities, especially for infants, to wonder at how materials change.
37. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. Good standards of behaviour are expected in and around the school, together with a respect for others. Pupils help devise the class rules which emphasise good behaviour and personal responsibility. Photographs of pupils around the school cleverly illustrate the school's mission statements and encourage them to take ownership of them. The school celebrates pupils' successes in achievement assemblies and the 'special person' process in class. Pupils have a keen awareness of moral and environmental issues, which are particularly well promoted, for example through the debating society and the 'Green Gang'. Regular fund-raising initiatives encourage pupils to have a better understanding of those less fortunate than themselves.
38. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school encourages pupils of different ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs or those from different ethnic backgrounds, to mix and work together. Older pupils act as 'buddies', looking after the younger ones at lunchtime, and in Year 6 pupils undertake a residential visit. This helps to raise confidence and self-esteem, particularly of those who

have never been away from home before. The very good range of extra-curricular activities, such as the many sports clubs, the choir and the puppet theatre, help to develop pupils' sense of co-operation as well as their skills and abilities. Pupils welcome these opportunities and spoke positively about the range of clubs offered.

39. Pupils' cultural development is effectively promoted in lessons, and through various visits and visitors. Visits to museums and places of interest help support subject areas whilst musicians and authors, have helped to enrich the curriculum. Pupils have the chance to learn to play the recorder or other musical instrument and the choir performs locally. Pupils consider the work of famous artists and try to reproduce their style, and the work of different composers is recognised in assemblies each week. Although the school has few pupils from other countries, multi cultural awareness is being effectively developed through links with an inner city school in Leicester.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Warren Hills is a very caring and supportive school with very effective pastoral systems in place to meet the needs of all pupils. The school's provision for pupils' health, welfare and guidance is very good and makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. Parents spoke very highly of the school. They find the teachers very caring and supportive - '*They listen*' - and feel that any issues or concerns are resolved quickly.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very effective and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and the orderly atmosphere in the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the reward strategy. They are eager to accumulate credit points on their success card and these successes are celebrated with certificates during the achievement assemblies. Parents feel that this works well and encourages pupils to work hard and behave well. Procedures to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour or bullying are well developed and explored through the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils feel that the school is '*a happy and safe place*'. They know who to go to if anything happens and are confident that any problems will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
42. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory as they are inconsistently implemented. Most parents call in promptly to inform the school when their children are away ill; otherwise the school contacts parents at home to check on absences. However, this is not followed up in all cases. Parents are informed about their responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and promptly and the school encourages parents not to take their children on holiday during term time. However many do. A number of incentives are in place to promote better attendance but these are not significantly improving the attendance figures. A number of teachers are not completing the registers in accordance with statutory requirements. The school has appropriate links with the educational welfare officer who attends regularly and follows up cases as required.
43. The school has very good systems in place for child protection and ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. The headteacher is the member of staff with designated responsibilities for child protection issues. He is well aware of the processes involved and ensures that other members of staff are kept fully informed of the guidelines and procedures relating to child protection. Well-established systems are in place to meet the medical needs of pupils or to take care of any who fall ill during the day. A sufficient number of staff are qualified to provide first aid treatment. The school has good links with the various support agencies and these specialists attend as necessary.

44. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and effective procedures are in place to address issues of safety and the security of pupils. There is a very good Internet safety policy in place that is signed and returned by all parents. At the meeting with parents before the inspection a concern was raised about the safety of pupils entering and leaving the school gates whilst parents were picking their children up by car or when cars were driving into the car park. During the inspection one of the team observed the start and end of the school day and noticed cars arriving and departing when parents and children were trying to leave. The inspection team therefore agrees with the parents who raised this concern that there is a potential health and safety risk with children and cars trying to negotiate the same space. The school is aware of this and is looking at a number of ways to resolve the problem.
45. Pupils receive support in all areas of the curriculum but most especially in literacy and numeracy. During the inspection, pupils were observed being supported very effectively and discreetly in lessons in class and in small groups by assistants and teachers, to enable them to achieve success in accordance with their ability. Pupils with special educational needs, and others who are troubled or upset for any reason, are very well guided by all staff who take their pastoral duties very seriously.
46. The school has made considerable improvements since the time of the last inspection, when procedures for monitoring academic performance were judged to be unsatisfactory. The assessment co-ordinator has put in place a wide range of very good and entirely appropriate procedures. These include tests undertaken by children at the beginning and end of the reception year, statutory assessment tasks at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the optional tasks in Years 3, 4 and 5. Running alongside these are other formal systems which, taken together, provide teachers with a useful bank of computerised information detailing every pupil's attainment and progress over time, as well as forecasting likely performance in the years ahead.
47. The information clearly indicates how well individual pupils are doing, in addition to how year groups are performing as a whole. Challenging but achievable targets are derived from this information for individual pupils and for year groups. The co-ordinator has organised valuable in-service training for all staff to ensure that they understand how to make use of these new systems. Consequently all staff are making very effective use of them and information is regularly updated.
48. Monitoring pupils' personal development is presently managed on an informal basis. The school places a heavy emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and believes wholeheartedly in providing support for all its pupils where and when it is necessary. Pupils who make good progress in their personal development are recognised promptly by any member of staff using written procedures indicating their successes. Information about pupils' academic and personal development is reported regularly to parents at open evenings and in the annual written reports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is a strength. The school provides parents with many opportunities to be involved with its work and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Information for parents is good. Pupils have helped create the school's web-site and attractive termly newsletters. Comprehensive information regarding the school is provided in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements with regard to the information in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Information on the effectiveness of its special educational needs policy, its disability policy and attendance figures are missing from the prospectus.

50. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school in their pre-inspection questionnaires and at the meeting held for them before the inspection. They reported that they are very comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns and issues and feel that these are dealt with sensitively and promptly. They value the open door policy and the way they are kept fully informed about how their children are progressing. Parents feel that their children's annual reports are informative and appreciate the opportunity to respond. A number of parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework given, although there was no agreement about it being too little or too much. However, the inspection team considers the amount of homework given to be appropriate.
51. The school seeks to promote ways in which parents can make an effective contribution to their children's learning, for example through questionnaires. The family literacy scheme works well and is giving parents an insight into what their children are learning as well as enhancing their own literacy and computer skills. The occasional workshop or courses such as 'Helping with Homework' are reinforcing the importance of the partnership between home and school.
52. The school warmly encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning by helping out in the school. A small number of parents are able to volunteer on a regular basis, whilst many more come in for special activity days or help out on visits. Parents are also involved in some of the extra curricular activities. They are invited to attend consultation meetings or school events such as achievement assemblies, musical evenings or Christmas plays. These events are always well attended. The friends association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents who successfully organise and run a number of fund-raising and social events each year, which helps to generate valuable extra funds for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and management. They work together in a close and very effective partnership. At the time of the last inspection the leadership provided by the headteacher and governing body was unsatisfactory and one of the main reasons why the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The current headteacher took up post in September 2001 and, with the deputy headteacher, has led the school's transformation into one that is both effective and caring. Their passionate commitment to the success of the school has made their leadership a real driving force for change that has united all involved in the school.
54. The school successfully achieved the Investors in People Award in December 2002. This provided a structured and demanding approach that fully involved everyone in achieving the school's aspirations. This united sense of involvement and purpose has been an important feature in the school's considerable improvement.
55. The leadership provided by the governing body is much stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Governors are committed to the success of the school. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's achievements and challenges that have been developed through frequent visits during the school day. Individual governors record the purpose of their visit and their observations and these form a valuable record. They have responded to specific concerns by undertaking targeted visits to assess and report on specific situations. The headteacher and the chair of governors meet at least weekly to discuss developments. Governors support the school in many practical ways and this was reflected in the large number of visits during the period of the inspection. The governing body is anxious to improve the effectiveness of its role and governors have undertaken training.

56. While the governing body's knowledge of the school is good, and informal communication systems are effective, the quality of written communication is not comprehensive enough to provide them with the information they now need. The headteacher's written reports are very short. They contain limited information about academic standards, budget issues and the school's progress towards achieving its development targets. This has been a deliberate and sensible policy by the headteacher to introduce new governors slowly to the large amount of written information they have to assimilate. However, governors rely heavily on the headteacher for information and written reports between governors' committees and the full governing body have a lack of rigour and structure. Consequently, governors are not properly briefed and prepared for meetings and their ability to contribute effectively to discussions is reduced.
57. Before the current headteacher's appointment there had never been a school development plan. Consequently initiatives were unplanned and often unexplained. The current school development plan has clearly identifiable links with the action plan drawn up after the last inspection. The start and completion dates, named personnel and resource levels are clearly identified for projects. However, while success criteria are given, they are sometimes insufficiently precise and not easily measurable.
58. The management of special educational needs is very good. Changes in personnel have enabled staff to clearly identify responsibilities and procedures. Regular meetings ensure that everyone is kept informed and all staff know their responsibilities. The local education authority has provided a great deal of invaluable advice in setting up and evaluating new systems, which are proving to be very successful.
59. Subject co-ordination is very good or good in most subjects and areas, and at least sound in all of them. Co-ordinators' own development-planning targets are realistic and relevant. The school development plan clearly identifies the priority and level of support for each area on a term by term basis. This gives structure and impetus to co-ordination that increases the effectiveness of the subject leaders. The work being done by individual co-ordinators also links effectively with whole school developments in areas like special educational needs and assessment.
60. Financial planning is unsatisfactory. The governing body agreed a deficit budget with the local education authority of just under £52,000 and the school finally set it at just over £55,000. However, the deficit is currently on target to be just under £80,000 by the end of the financial year. Although the school is anticipating about £20,000 of additional funds, it is still running a budget in which its ongoing basic commitments significantly exceed its revenue income. This situation has primarily arisen because the school has maintained single age classes, some as small as 15 pupils, giving rise to high staffing costs.
61. The headteacher and governing body recognise the problem, but they have not yet developed a strategy for resolving it, and next year it will almost certainly be compounded by the need to incorporate debt reduction into its budget. The successful management of this issue is essential to the school's ability to maintain the rate of improvement that it has achieved over the last 18 months.
62. There are, however, a number of improvements to other aspects of financial planning and management. A significant number of pupils have had their special educational needs reviewed. This has resulted in better support for them and more local education authority resources being used, which reduces the demand on the school's own budget. The school has also successfully bid for over £200,000 worth of grants. Most of these will come into effect next year and will significantly improve the school's capacity to further improve the quality of provision in the long-term. However, these are specific grants that will not help directly to alleviate the school's main revenue budget problems because they have to be used for specific purposes and cannot be used to keep class sizes small.

63. When the headteacher took over the school the quality of budget monitoring was unsatisfactory and therefore the quality of financial information available to the headteacher and governing body was incomplete. This has now been successfully resolved. Accurate and up to date reports are regularly available and the headteacher personally authorises all payments.
64. The school benefits from a large number of teachers and this has resulted in small, average class sizes. The school has an above average and rising number of pupils with statements of special educational needs and consequently a very large number of classroom support assistants. There are clear job descriptions and staff benefit from a programme of regular appraisals. Staff show a high level of commitment and enthusiasm to the school and have benefited from improved training opportunities. However, the role of the senior manager has not significantly lightened the workload of the senior management team. Classroom assistants are generally well deployed and are used effectively. The recent increase in numbers has raised training and organisational issues that the school understands it has to address in order to deploy them most effectively.
65. The school has generous accommodation levels for the number of pupils as a consequence of a falling roll. The headteacher has, with the support of the local education authority, improved the quality of the accommodation and the use made of it. The buildings have been completely redecorated, carpeted and lit so that there is a strong feeling of purpose and care. Parents and pupils commented on the improvements to the look of the school, saying that it is much more welcoming. It is extremely clean and well cared for by the caretaker and cleaners. A new networked computer suite has been installed and quickly helped to improve pupils' skills. New fencing and roof windows have improved security on the site and the incidence of vandalism has been reduced. Pupils have been involved in maintaining pride in the building and site through high quality displays of their work and through the 'Green Gang' environmental club.
66. The level and quality of learning resources are good for the four-year-olds, information technology, history and music. They are satisfactory in all other subjects, except English, for which there are insufficient books. Resources are well organised and cared for with pupils given appropriate levels of access to them. The quality and range of learning resources are enriched through strong links with a number of outside agencies that support the school in a wide variety of ways. Budget constraints limit the potential for further development of learning resources.
67. Because the school:
- has made significant improvement since the last inspection;
 - provides a good and improving education;
 - provides good, and often very good teaching;
 - has made effective use of the resources it already has;
 - needs to further raise academic standards;
 - has a significant revenue budget deficit;

it provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. **In order to consolidate and build on the improvements that have been made and continue the good work that has already been done since the previous inspection the governors, headteacher and staff should:**

raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:

- continuing to analyse information from statutory and non-statutory tests and assessments to identify weaknesses in pupils' skills and knowledge;
- following the best examples in teachers' plans of ensuring that lessons contain focused activities to develop the range of pupils' language;
- ensuring that support assistants receive appropriate training to help them focus on extending pupils' vocabulary;
- planning increased opportunities for drama and role play activities across the curriculum;

(paragraphs 10, 13-14, 21, 26, 46-47, 64, 85, 95-96, 98, 107, 112, 122 of the main report)

review the governors' management responsibilities by:

- ensuring that a strategy is developed, in conjunction with the local education authority, to address the current budget shortfall and the long term financial future of the school;
- ensuring that the school prospectus and annual report to parents meet statutory requirements;
- ensuring that the quality of information they provide is sufficiently detailed to be able to take informed decisions;

(paragraphs 49, 56, 60-62 of the main report)

review the use of information and communication technology:

- to ensure that full use is made of the potential of computer programs and other forms of technology in other subjects;

(paragraphs 32, 103, 113, 122, 132, 140 of the main report)

review the school's arrangements for monitoring and recording pupils' attendance by:

- ensuring that teachers complete attendance registers in line with national requirements;
- regularly monitoring the effectiveness of incentives to promote better attendance;
- liaising regularly with the education welfare officer to identify pupils with consistently poor attendance;

(paragraph 42 of the main report)

review the amount of lesson time available to ensure:

- that it is increased in line with current recommendations;
- that provision for swimming is reviewed to ensure pupils receive a balanced curriculum;

(paragraph 30 of the main report)

The following minor point for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan:

review the quality of teachers' marking to ensure:

- that greater consistency is achieved between teachers in marking pupils' work;
- that it offers advice about how work can be improved and how pupils can raise their attainment still further;

(paragraph 28 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

46

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	17	21	7	0	0	0
Percentage	2	37	46	15	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	158
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	58
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
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	1
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	10
	Girls	7	8	8
	Total	14	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (78)	60 (72)	72 (78)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	15	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (83)	64 (78)	68 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	18	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	5	10
	Girls	11	9	13
	Total	17	14	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (52)	47 (52)	77 (70)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	4
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (52)	47 (52)	47 (59)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	156	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	234

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 / 2002
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	£
Total income	476,913
Total expenditure	497,152
Expenditure per pupil	3,167
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,869**

**** See paragraphs 60 - 61**

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 37%

Number of questionnaires sent out	158
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	76	22	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	42	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	68	30	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	38	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	17	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	32	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	31	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	29	2	0	0

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

69. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they become five. There are very good arrangements for their induction including meetings, home visits and an inviting 'Welcome to Warren Hills School' pack. These successfully lay the foundation for the very good relationships that were observed every day during the inspection between staff, parents and children. Children arrive happily at school ready to begin their activities, whilst staff value the daily opportunity for informal contact with parents to exchange information.
70. Since the time of the last inspection there have been many significant improvements in the provision for children of this age. Most important, and the one that has the biggest impact upon children's learning, is the current high quality of teaching. Teaching is now good overall, and there are many occasions when teaching includes very good features. There is very close liaison between the co-ordinator and her extremely capable and committed staff. Together they provide a warm, welcoming, happy atmosphere and stimulating environment. Their planning, assessment and target-setting procedures are very good.
71. Children's attainment on entry is well below average in all areas. It is especially low in personal, social and emotional development, and in communication, language and literacy skills. Observations during the inspection confirm baseline and teacher assessments. Children are in this class for one year, during which they make good progress in all areas, and most notably in physical and creative development. However by the end of the year many children, including those with special educational needs, are not yet reaching the Early Learning Goals, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. This, in turn, hinders the children's development of knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. In view of the children's severe needs the co-ordinator and her staff rightly regard this area as of paramount importance. They use every opportunity during the day to encourage children to become independent in everyday routines such as dressing and undressing, tidying up, and washing hands. They devise attractive incentives to reward children who reach their targets. For example, one child says proudly, *'I've got a sticker. I fastened my coat three times by myself'*. Most children are becoming more aware of belonging to a group, and are beginning to observe the courtesies of listening to others and of working alongside each other. They are beginning to understand the need to take turns, but are not yet collaborating in pairs or groups. For example, when playing with a large train set, large constructional apparatus or using a computer, children play side by side, rather than helping each other, sharing ideas or working together.
73. All staff make a very good contribution to children's personal, social and emotional development. They know the children very well and show genuine interest in their activities, talking and questioning appropriately to encourage and stimulate conversation. Children with special educational needs receive consistently good support that lets them experience all activities both inside and outside the classrooms. Although children make good progress due to the high quality of care and teaching, many have only reached the

initial Stepping Stones⁴ in their development and have a long way to go before reaching the Early Learning Goals.

Communication language and literacy

74. Children begin school with very low levels of attainment in this area. Teaching takes full account of this and all staff regard this as a high priority. There is a daily timetabled literacy lesson and literacy is threaded through all activities encountered by all children, including those with special educational needs. The quality of teaching is good overall, but very good features include a deep understanding of children's individual needs, an acute awareness of their concentration spans, and the use of lively methods (including the teacher's spontaneous singing of made-up jingles) to motivate interest. The staff work very hard to encourage all aspects of literacy throughout the day, during all activities. Nevertheless, only a few children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area in spite of making good progress.
75. Children have many far-reaching opportunities to develop their ability to listen during the day. Their attention is captured in the daily literacy lessons by the use of interesting resources, such as Chinese food and clothes. Some children develop their speaking skills with rising levels of confidence because teaching includes stimulating comments and questions to encourage conversation and discussion. A very good feature of teaching is the way in which reticent children are deliberately but sensitively drawn into conversations, showing that their contribution really counts. Children enjoy listening and talking to visitors, especially when there are interesting and exciting items and activities involved such as squashing berries on to a real fruit tree.
76. There are very good opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. For example, at the beginning of the day children choose to work in the writing area using whiteboards and pens to draw and write a range of letters such as 'a' and 's'. Many are at the copy-writing stage. With the teacher's support, some are beginning to identify other sounds and letters such as 't' and 'f'. Children with special educational needs receive very good support enabling them to write some letters of their names correctly and in the right order.
77. Every child has the chance to choose a book when they begin school and this is included in their 'welcome pack'. They enjoy the regular story-times and most listen attentively until the end of the story. Children particularly enjoy reading Big Books with adults on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups. They are beginning to recognise letters in their names, and some are beginning to take books home regularly to share with their parents. Most children handle books carefully, turning the pages correctly as they look at pictures from left to right. Some enjoy copying their teacher using a Big Book: they hold it up to face an imaginary audience, 'reading' the story out loud and turning the pages correctly. For example, '*What's happening here?*' asked one child of another as he held up a Big Book.

Mathematical development

78. Children begin school with very low levels of attainment in mathematical development. The quality of teaching is good overall, but very good features include involving mathematical ideas and vocabulary across other areas such as registration, playtimes and art, and the use of stimulating resources and exciting games to capture interest. Children make good progress because of good teaching coupled with good support from other staff. However, very few children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.

⁴ Stepping Stones – these are intended to help teachers plan stages of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to learn during the Foundation Stage in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

79. Very good planning includes a wide range of interesting practical mathematical activities that are fun and enjoyable for all children, including those with special educational needs. For example, following a discussion about Chinese New Year, children enjoyed using chopsticks to pick up and count small plastic animals and sort them into sets. They use real potatoes to explore the mathematical concept of mass and balance, using the vocabulary 'heavier', 'lighter', 'more than' and 'less than' confidently when in discussion with their teacher. Some children work with the teacher using real coins, recognising 2p, 5p 10p and sorting them according to value. They are beginning to understand the differences between two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Using potato prints, children make patterns of squares, circles and triangles: they are beginning to recognise the shapes and count the number of sides of triangles accurately. However, children's low levels in communication skills hamper their explanations of mathematical ideas. For instance, they find it difficult to explain the differences between squares and triangles.
80. The nursery nurse and classroom assistant play an important part as they help children to understand their tasks and to use the resources properly. All staff consciously use skilful questioning in a deliberate effort to encourage children's language development. For example, the teacher asked, *'How many more will I need?'* when counting Chinese money envelopes up to 10 and introduced good strategies such as, *'I'm going to keep that number in my head,'* when counting on from one number to another.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Most children enter school with very limited knowledge and understanding of their world. They make good progress because during the year they receive a wide range of interesting and relevant experiences. The teacher and her staff organise a rich and varied series of activities to delight the children and stimulate their curiosity in the world around them. These include playground and class-based events as well as outings into the locality and further afield. In spite of good teaching and progress, children's limited language skills restrict the work in this area of learning, and attainment at the end of the reception year is below the expected level.
82. Very good use is made of exciting visits and visitors to widen the children's often very narrow experiences. For instance, they were fascinated by a talk about trees and fruit. Autumn and winter walks are organised to enable children to notice the features in their surroundings and to notice the differences as the seasons change. Further afield they visited a mining museum and travelled to Birmingham to see the pantomime, 'Aladdin'. This sparked off much exciting work back in the classroom, including the construction of an 'Aladdin's Cave' in the home play area. At present children have limited use of information and design technology. The teacher is quick to seize appropriate opportunities as they arise. For instance, after a fall of snow children enjoyed looking at their footprints and the patterns they made as they danced like a Chinese dragon across the ground.

Physical development

83. Children have access to a securely fenced outdoor area which is used very well to develop their control and co-ordination skills. They enjoy riding a range of wheeled toys, climbing and playing with small apparatus such as balls, hoops and ropes, and are becoming more skilful in using the space sensibly. All children have regular access to the school hall where they experience climbing, balancing and jumping using large-scale apparatus such as wall-frames, ladders and benches. Children are confident, and enjoy their activities enthusiastically. Most wait patiently and watch carefully before beginning their turn. A few are careless about the needs of others, but some help put away the apparatus with due care, working together carrying mats and benches safely under close

supervision. In these aspects of their physical development about half the children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

84. Adults provide many good opportunities for the development of finer motor control, such as handling pens and pencils, scissors and paintbrushes. They show increasing control using them appropriately, although some have difficulty in co-ordinating their movements, for example when using scissors, or a dustpan and brush to sweep up sand. Many still find it difficult to form simple letter shapes and numbers correctly. In spite of the good opportunities provided regularly, only a few are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Creative development

85. The provision for creative development is good. The teaching of basic techniques is very well planned. Skills such as cutting are regularly demonstrated by staff so children have good and safe models to follow. Children are involved in a wide range of activities such as painting, drawing, cutting and sticking, weaving and making collage pictures using material and papers. After their Autumn Walk, they made individual collage pictures of owls complete with feathers, and paint squirrels with bushy tails or badgers with clearly depicted black and white stripes. Children have good opportunities to enjoy playing percussion instruments as they develop an understanding of pulse, and how sound is best produced by striking or shaking a range of good instruments such as wooden two-tone blocks, triangles, tambours, tambourines and drums. A particularly successful feature in pupils' creative development is the provision of 'Aladdin's cave' for imaginative play, or dressing up as a Chinese dragon and prowling about the school hall while listening to a recording of Chinese music. However, there are few occasions for children to sing, and opportunities are missed to make links with literacy through rhymes and songs. Apart from this area the majority of children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they move into Year 1.
86. The quality of leadership is exemplary, and there is a very strong spirit of teamwork in the Foundation Stage. Support staff make a very good contribution to the children's learning, most particularly those areas which are identified as priorities. Many children, including those with special educational needs, have been through difficult times in their lives but are fortunate in finding themselves in this caring and friendly environment. Most children behave well but some find it very hard to concentrate for the required time, fidget with items on display and at times appear frustrated and distracted. They are reassured by staff, and are very well nurtured by the programme of emotional and social support that has been sensitively established to meet their needs.

ENGLISH

87. Standards in English are below average for seven and eleven-year-olds; however, many pupils make good progress, achieve well and standards are rising. Low standards in English was one of the reasons for identifying serious weakness in the last inspection and the school has made it one of its central development targets.
88. There is considerable school and inspection evidence that standards are rising and that pupils are making progress at an improved rate. This improvement was not reflected in the junior pupils' assessments last year, but standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are now only just below national expectations. The pattern of pupil progress is inconsistent, especially for older pupils. This is because the improved quality of education provided has not been in place throughout most of their time at the school.
89. For seven-year-old pupils, standards in reading and writing have been well below national averages for each of the last four years. There has been some year-on-year variation; for instance, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels for writing in 2000 was higher than in previous years. However, there is significant variation in the potential of different cohorts of pupils. Most pupils still have very low levels of literacy when they start in Year 1 and the vocabulary for many children is limited. When speaking, most of them give one-word answers and rarely use sentences, even when encouraged. In Year 1, pupils struggled to quickly name some playground equipment that they had made as models, or regularly used equipment such as 'sticky tape' and scissors. They frequently attract the attention of adults and peers by touching them or putting their face in front of them. Communication between pupils is limited and they rely heavily on the examples provided by adults. While some pupils can express meaning in writing, many rely on adult help to write anything beyond their own name. Letter formation is slow and not always properly formed. Reading skills are also well below average when they start in Year 1, but are better developed than writing. Pupils have an understanding of rhyme. They use phonic strategies and picture clues in their reading as well as a growing sight vocabulary. A few pupils are now achieving Level 2 in Year 1. This is a significant improvement on past standards.
90. Although many seven-year-old pupils are attaining significantly below average, they have made good progress and achieve well. Most pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of, and a growing knowledge and confidence in, language rules and usage. Many pupils responded in full sentences to questions posed by the teacher. In one lesson, pupils were correcting mistakes in the teacher's modelled writing. A pupil with special educational needs excitedly pointed out that, "*The capital 'M' hasn't got a full stop in front of it*". Other pupils confidently talked about the appropriateness and impact of question marks and exclamation marks. In their writing, pupils can produce recounts of events and simple narrative stories but a lack of vocabulary and language experience limits the standard of more creative writing, for example poetry. Very few pupils regularly use a cursive script. Spelling is generally good for simple and phonetically consistent words. However, irregular words and those that follow more complex rules are frequently incorrect.
91. In Year 6, standards are still below average in speaking, listening, reading and writing, but only just below average. Pupils listen well in assemblies and lessons as well as increasingly attentively to each other. They become much more confident about speaking in a variety of situations such as to visitors, the whole class and in formal debates. However, by Year 6 they still have a relatively limited vocabulary, particularly with regard to words that convey more subtle meaning, for example 'sinister' and 'haughtily'. Many also find it difficult to order their thoughts and language to provide explanations for words like 'evaporation' and their confidence quickly becomes undermined.

92. By Year 6 most pupils are reading a variety of texts confidently and accurately. They use a range of approaches to read unfamiliar words, for example their knowledge of letter sounds and using clues from the context of the story to make informed guesses. The books and texts they are reading are matched well to their technical reading abilities, but many of them do not appreciate inferential language or the meaning of many of the words that they can read.
93. Handwriting is generally neat and well formed, although many pupils are still not using a cursive script. Spelling is good and benefits from very structured teaching approach with daily spelling tasks for pupils in Year 6. However, their language experience and knowledge again limit their written work. As with seven-year-olds, they can produce good recounts and simply structured writing such as instructions, reports and recounts. More creative writing is generally poorer. Those pupils who do have a richer language knowledge produce writing with a greater sense of audience.
94. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they behave very well in lessons. While the concentration span for younger pupils is generally quite short, when the pace of lessons is good they stay on task well. By Year 2 they actively and enthusiastically contribute to oral sessions and settle quickly to written work. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6 they have a very businesslike approach. They use routines at the start of the day and literacy lessons to good effect, for example their daily reading and spelling tasks. While there are opportunities to link learning at home to work in school, its impact is limited. Library books cannot be taken home, due to high losses, although their main reading books are. Reading diaries for some are completed regularly but for many they are not and homework is not always returned. The attitudes and on-task behaviour of pupils with special educational needs varies from excellent to unsatisfactory and is dependent on the effectiveness of the classroom assistant and the length and appropriateness of the task. A few pupils have very challenging behaviour that limits their progress, but the impact on the rest of the class is very limited due to effective handling by teachers and support staff.
95. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan well and make full use of the National Literacy Strategy materials and structure. They have taken full advantage of training opportunities and utilised all the Strategy support programmes. Lesson planning has clear objectives and in the best lessons the teachers make these clear to pupils at the start of the lesson and refer back to them during it. Lessons in Year 2 and Year 6 had a lively pace, with questioning that was sharp and focused to keep pupils' minds actively engaged on the task. Given the low language levels of most pupils, the development of vocabulary, and understanding of its use does not always receive enough greater priority in some lesson planning. Classroom displays are very effective in supporting English. Pupils' work is well displayed and stimulating displays in other subjects also support the development of vocabulary.
96. In almost all lessons observed there were classroom assistants deployed and in some lessons several were used. The way they were deployed varied, as did their effectiveness. In some whole-class teaching the assistants simply managed the behaviour and concentration of pupils with special educational needs ensuring they did not distract the rest of the class. In other lessons they unobtrusively questioned and prompted pupils so that they could learn and contribute appropriately to the lesson. At its best, good communication between the classroom assistant and pupils maximised that contribution. When pupils were working on activities, the assistants provided effective support often linking questioning to targets identified on pupils' individual education plans.
97. Many literacy lessons are 70 minutes long rather than the more traditional hour. When the pace was brisk, with a regular change of focus, this extra time was effectively used. On a number of occasions, however, time was not well used, particularly when pupils

spent long periods on the carpet, with too much repetition. For some pupils with special educational needs it was particularly demanding.

98. Literacy is developed satisfactorily through other curriculum subjects. In many lessons, teachers recognise the need to develop specialist vocabulary and give appropriate attention to this. Teachers' expectations with regard to recording of work do not always take full account of pupils' poor writing skills. Given the pupils' low level of language skills, insufficient attention is sometimes paid to the development of extending pupils' language in other subjects. Increasingly effective use is made of information technology since the computer suite has opened.
99. Subject co-ordination is good. Teachers' training needs have been identified and largely satisfied. Planning is monitored regularly and teaching is observed and feedback given. Very good use is made of standardised assessments and the data they generate. It is used to accurately track pupils' progress as well as to provide individual pupil targets and monitor progress towards the school's targets.
100. There is an inviting new library that provides a place to work and read books and gives pupils a valuable experience and understanding of traditional library organisation. The quality and condition of the books is good but the quantity is insufficient, despite recently having been supplemented by the local authority library service. The range of reading books is good for infants but less so for juniors. There is a good range of big books for shared class reading and a number of tapes. In not all lessons were there sufficient copies of books for guided reading.

MATHEMATICS

101. During the inspection standards for seven-year-olds were below average and standards for eleven-year-olds were just in line with the national average. The range of ability in most classes is wide. The proportion of children with statements of special educational need is greater than would be expected in most schools and this has an impact on pupils' results in national tests. Throughout the school, staff and children are working hard to raise standards and most children are achieving as well as they are able. The ability of many pupils in Year 6 is higher than last year. Consequently, the targets the school has set for the 2003 national tests are much higher than they have been before. The National Numeracy Strategy is now used successfully throughout the school and this is also having a positive impact on infant and junior pupils' attainment.
102. By the age of seven, most children have a sound knowledge of the place value of numbers to 100 and know their number bonds to 20. In mental mathematics they can solve simple addition and subtraction problems and explain how they arrived at an answer. They are familiar with multiplication by two and by five and can use a number line in their work. They know how to collect data and draw simple block graphs and can make a good estimate before measuring the length of a line. More able children can find three different ways of making 96p and £1.24 using coins to help them, and can pay for a drink with £1 and work out the change. Lower attaining pupils can find two ways of making smaller amounts, up to 26p. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that contain targets for improvement in numeracy and have help to work towards their specific targets.
103. By the age of eleven, many pupils use mathematical vocabulary well and they can explain which strategies they have used when solving problems. They are familiar with multiplication tables up to ten and can multiply large numbers using the grid method with partitioning. Some are unsure of the process of division. Their mental calculations are generally good and they can use techniques such as rounding up or down and doubling and halving numbers. Most understand the place value of large numbers and decimal

fractions. All pupils use small whiteboards efficiently to record their calculations and know they should check an answer with their original estimate. Those who have special educational needs receive appropriate support, are included well in lessons and make good progress. Although there is some evidence of pupils using information and communication it is not used as extensively as it could be, for example in data handling.

104. Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, and in 80 per cent of the lessons teaching was good or better. Staff have undertaken relevant training in mathematics and their teaching plans are carefully monitored. Teachers identify what is to be learned and pupils know what is expected of them. At the start of each lesson they teach mental mathematics at a brisk pace, encouraging children to contribute, and praising their efforts. This is followed by work when children usually sit in groups according to ability and the tasks are carefully designed to match their needs. Additional adults often provide good support for those with special educational needs. When the class gathers together again for the plenary, the teacher checks how well pupils of all abilities have remembered and understood their work.
105. As answers are often shown on whiteboards, teachers can quickly check on a pupil's understanding in the lesson. However, this means that there is less work recorded in exercise books than there was previously. When the teachers mark work, helpful comments are often included to show what pupils need to do to improve. Exercise books also include targets at the front as a reminder of what needs to be done next. Often these relate to learning specific multiplication tables. Many older pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge, because of less well planned, focused and monitored teaching in the past.
106. Pupils in all year groups are well behaved, and find their work interesting. The number of extra adults available ensures that anyone who needs support receives it. Pupils usually work well together and use resources carefully. They often help each other when they do not know the answer to a problem.
107. Some improvements are relatively new. The assessment arrangements in the school are now very good and all test results are carefully analysed. This information is used to group children, track their progress, and to set individual targets for improvement. Children in Year 4 are using the new computer suite for mathematics trials with data handling programs. The new subject co-ordinator and other senior managers now monitor numeracy lessons regularly in a determined effort to raise standards still further.

SCIENCE

108. Standards for seven-year-old pupils are below average, although many, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. This judgement is lower than in the previous inspection, but is to do with the ability of the particular group of pupils in Year 2 and does not indicate inadequacies in subject coverage or teaching. Standards for eleven-year-old pupils are average and are higher than in the last inspection. This is a result of the school's work to emphasise the experimental aspects of science and to try to improve pupils' ability to discuss their work and how to set up their own investigations. The main weakness in the attainment of pupils of all ages is their limited ability to talk and write about what they have found out in their investigations. This, combined with their very limited understanding of the wider world, makes it very difficult for them to hypothesise about what might occur.
109. Pupils in Year 2 have covered a good range of work that builds well on progress made in Year 1. In Year 1 they learn about their different senses and practical work involves smelling and tasting. They are encouraged to talk about the textures of different

materials they touch, using appropriate language. In Year 2 they learn about 'pushes' and 'pulls'. By pushing two toy cars on different surfaces they measure the distance they travel and begin to understand the idea of resistance. There are good links with numeracy when they measure in centimetres the distance travelled, using a tape measure. They investigate electricity and learn how to use a battery, bulb and wires to light the bulb, writing, *'It worked because it made a circuit'*. They also study different man-made and natural materials to see if they can change their shape by 'stretching', 'twisting', 'bending' or 'squashing'.

110. Pupils continue to make progress in the junior classes and they slowly begin to develop the ability to describe their experiments, sometimes using specific language. In Year 3, pupils learn about magnetic force and how different ends of magnets attract and repel. *'When I put blue and red together it stuck firmly'*. In Year 4, as well as learning about the bones and muscles in human bodies they learn about temperature by touching warm objects, but decide correctly that, *'Touch isn't a very accurate way of measuring temperature'*. By Year 5 they learn about the classification of vertebrates and invertebrates and study different ways of seed dispersal. Their written explanation is accurate, but simply written. *'Expulsion is when you touch a plant and all of a sudden it goes ping and all the seeds spread everywhere'*. In Year 6 pupils learn about habitats and food chains as well as microbes and recycling. They also learn about shadows and reflection, although their limited ability in writing is sometimes evident in their accounts. *'We then blocked the light by putting a piece of plastic in the way. The light only shined onto the plastic which means its opaque which means its solid'*.
111. Many infant pupils have had little experience of investigating science before and find it very exciting and enjoyable. Sometimes they are hardly able to contain their excitement, for example when they have to plunge their hands into a bowl full of salt dough mixture that sticks to their hands! A few more timid pupils who are not used to 'hands on' experiences like these have to be encouraged to try. Often, because they have so few 'scientific' experiences, there is real awe and wonder as they see something happening before their eyes. Junior pupils are interested and involved in their lessons. They listen carefully to safety advice from teachers, work well together and treat resources with care. They really enjoy opportunities to be practically involved.
112. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. Their explanations are clear and they consistently 'push' pupils to think about what might happen and to use scientific language to describe it. They value what pupils say and they work hard to make sure that lesson introductions involve as many pupils as possible. Throughout the lesson the focus is on 'behaving like scientists'. Teachers support activities well when they go round to different groups asking questions to find out if pupils understand what is happening. Questions such as, *'Who knows what happened to those air bubbles?' in Year 6 to, 'Is it?', 'Does it?', 'What happened when you tried to bend it?' in Year 2* make pupils think carefully about what they see. In all lessons the emphasis teachers placed on trying to develop pupils' scientific vocabulary was very good.
113. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of how science can be improved and has already introduced some very good procedures. Careful analysis of pupils' national assessments has provided the school with ideas about particular areas of weakness. Good assessments have been introduced to monitor progress and encourage older pupils to assess their own understanding. Monitoring of lessons and planning enable the co-ordinator to ensure that the emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and investigative work is maintained. Good links are developing with numeracy, although the co-ordinator is aware that links with information and communication technology are presently underdeveloped, for example the use of data handling programs and sensing equipment.

ART AND DESIGN

114. Standards in art and design are as expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. The major criticism in that report was the lack of coverage for infants and juniors. In response, the school introduced a nationally agreed scheme of work, devised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. While this satisfies requirements in terms of coverage, the school feels that it lacks excitement and wishes to develop particular aspects of work still further, for example three-dimensional work, and sketching and printing techniques.
115. The appearance of the school is enhanced by colourful displays of art carried out in lessons and in a successful art club. The pupils and parents commented on the improved appearance of the school since the headteacher was appointed, including the colourful display of pupils' work. Art is also used effectively to complement other subjects, for example the striking display of Egyptian history and the detailed sketches of hats for a history topic.
116. Pupils have good opportunities to look at the work of famous artists such as Mondrian and Picasso and then model their own work on those styles. Pupils carefully look at chairs and stools and then make pencil sketches, some of which accurately convey three dimensions. Junior pupils use a variety of media to sketch different containers, for example pencils and pastels.
117. Too few lessons were observed to make a judgement on teaching overall. Pupils are proud of their work and in the lessons observed they listened carefully to instructions, considered advice from the teacher and other pupils and settled to work well. They use resources well and are genuinely impressed by others' work.
118. The subject co-ordinator only recently took responsibility and appreciates that more can be done to develop the subject. For example, the school has made very little use of specialists in the past to fire pupils' enthusiasm or to bring expertise to an underdeveloped aspect of art. Sketchbooks have recently been introduced but the paper is of low quality and they are not used as 'ideas books' for future projects. The school has a limited range of resources and there has been no major investment in art for some time.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards for infants or juniors and only one lesson was timetabled. At the time of the last inspection standards and curriculum provision were judged to be unsatisfactory. However, since then a great deal has been achieved to ensure that full coverage of the curriculum is provided.
120. There is now a curriculum plan that follows national schemes of work and the time allocation is in line with that recommended. This ensures the full range of opportunities is provided. Teachers' termly plans give a broad outline of the work to be covered during the half term. These are now being supplemented with more detailed term plans for each topic and individual plans for each lesson. They provide a thorough planning resource for all staff and are of particular value to those teachers who are less confident in teaching the subject.
121. Curriculum development has been well led by the co-ordinator who has very good subject knowledge. She has developed strong links with the local education authority adviser who has run several valuable technology days which have excited the pupils and also

provided good quality in-service training for staff. Planning is monitored and some lesson observations have been undertaken to try to make teaching more effective.

122. Good progress has been made in raising the profile of the subject and ensuring curriculum coverage and balance. However, the limited evidence available indicates that there are still some areas for development. These include the use of information and communication technology and improving the design element to give pupils a greater range of possibilities to consider. The very high quality models produced by the younger pupils indicate that adults have too closely supported them at the making stage. The subject makes a positive contribution to developing pupils' vocabulary. However, there is insufficient emphasis on written work, particularly evaluation, so that it takes account of pupils' literacy skills and supports their development.

GEOGRAPHY

123. Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection. After a scrutiny of children's work, displays and teaching plans, and discussions with children and the subject co-ordinator, standards are now judged to be those expected for seven and eleven year old pupils. This is the same judgement for infants as in the previous inspection and an improvement for juniors.
124. Younger pupils study the route they take each day from their homes to school. Their journeys are plotted on a huge map of the area that covers the classroom wall and the teacher uses this resource well to help children learn their address. Photographs and sketches of houses and other buildings in the neighbourhood are linked to the correct place on the map. By the age of seven, pupils are aware of the similarities and differences in locations such towns, countryside and seaside. They are able to write lists of places in each category and include holiday resorts such as Skegness. They complete orienteering exercises in the school grounds and make maps of the playground areas.
125. Older pupils study maps of the British Isles and enjoy quiz questions to check their knowledge of the capital cities, flags, and names and locations of rivers and mountains. In the successful lesson observed, pupils made good use of aerial photographs and compared and contrasted features in Coalville with those of Birmingham city centre and the countryside around Warwick Castle. They work together well in groups and follow the teacher's good example in using geographical vocabulary. They are enthusiastic and enjoy identifying railway tracks and other features.
126. By the time they are eleven, pupils have made an in depth study of the water cycle and the journey water makes from a reservoir, through drums and filters, to their taps at home. They also know how rainfall distribution influences agriculture and have identified the arid deserts on a world map. There are some weaknesses in their mapreading skills, and currently there is an insufficiently wide range of maps and symbols such as road maps and ordnance survey maps for them to use.
127. Subject co-ordination is sound. Assessments of pupils' progress in geography are satisfactory and the co-ordinator has recently been allocated time to monitor the subject, although the amount of time is limited.

HISTORY

128. Standards have risen since the last inspection. Seven and eleven-year-olds are reaching standards that are higher than those expected. This improvement is due to teachers' planning, good subject co-ordination, improved teaching and a high ratio of adult support in lessons.
129. Pupils in Year 2 study the life and times of Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. They use their developing writing skills to record how they would have felt during the Great Fire of London, *'I was woken up by people shouting Fire! Fire! I grabbed some clothes and ran downstairs'*. Older pupils enjoy studying the Ancient Egyptians, and are extremely interested in learning about all the processes attached to the mummification of bodies in those times. They study the lives of sailors at sea during Tudor times and record their observations, for example *'Ships were dirty and infested with mice'*. They are beginning to identify the sources they can use to gain historical knowledge, such as videos, books and visits.
130. By Year 6, pupils have consolidated their previous learning well and are beginning to learn the historical skills of research and verification through the use of first and second-hand evidence. For example, they interviewed a senior citizen who was an evacuee during World War II. They record his memories and gain a deep and meaningful understanding of life in those times. *'He milked the cows and turned the hay, and had the strap at school. A plane crashed at the top of the hill. He went home because he was homesick'*.
131. Teaching is good with some very good features. For instance, in Year 4 the teacher made very good use of a video-recording to stimulate interest in the process of mummification, and followed this up very well in class through a range of activities linking art and writing with history. A group of pupils used clay to model Egyptian figures, guided in their work by a suitably talented classroom assistant. In Year 2, the teacher played the part of a wounded soldier to stimulate questioning skills and bring to life the suffering of patients in those dreadful hospital conditions. Her pupils ask questions like, *'What was it like to have rats about and to eat that awful food?'* and *'Did you get clean bandages and sheets?'*
132. To help pupils realise what life long ago was really like teachers devise good activities. For example, in Year 2, pupils are shocked to visit a corner of the classroom that is transformed into a dirty hospital ward with lifelike rats and bloodied sheets. Teachers make good links with other areas of the curriculum such as literacy, art and geography but the use of information and communication technology is limited.
133. Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They show enthusiastic interest in their lessons, listen attentively and enjoy the exciting methods that their teachers use, such as dramatisation. Their behaviour is very good and their concentration intense because teachers lead discussions very well using very good questioning skills. Pupils enjoy visits that the school organised to enrich the history curriculum. For example, pupils visit places of interest such as Beaumanor Hall where they dress up as evacuees, and a local museum to find out about mining in Coalville in past times.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Only two lessons were observed. Judgements are made additionally on a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school as well as discussions with the subject co-ordinator. Standards are those expected for seven and eleven-year-olds and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Very few pupils have access to computers at home and almost all have learned their skills in school.

Their progress is all the more commendable in these circumstances. The recently opened computer suite has already had a marked impact on the range of work that pupils carry out. The judgement is the same as in the previous inspection.

135. Infant pupils use the mouse and keyboard controls well. They enter, save and retrieve work, usually with some help. One pupil wrote, *'I used a mouse to click and drag sentences into the correct sequence'*, when explaining his work in putting sentences into the correct sequence. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use data handling programs to construct graphs of cars and party food, answering questions about the most popular varieties. They learn about other applications of technology in household items, for example mobile phones, microwaves and cookers. When word processing, they can change letter colour and font to make their presentation more effective.
136. Junior pupils make good progress that builds well on their work as infants. In Year 3 they combine text and graphics, using different fonts and an art program to show different effects. In Year 4 they effectively use a word processor to write classroom rules and work hard to devise their own questions for a branching database program. By Year 5 they are able to use a program unaided that moves and resizes a picture, over which they insert text. In Year 6 they search the Internet for information, using a search engine, wrap text and copy pictures from the Internet that they import to a Word document.
137. The computer suite has made a big difference in terms of accessibility of computers and the range of work that pupils cover, although during the inspection single computers in classrooms were not seen in use and this is a missed opportunity to develop work that is started in the suite. The school covers all required aspects of the National Curriculum, although older pupils' work with sensing equipment is at a very early stage, for example their use of temperature probes linked to the computer.
138. In the two lessons observed teaching was very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a national training programme has lifted staff confidence. The assistance of a trained technician also has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned with suitably challenging work for pupils of different abilities. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and in both lessons intervened at just the right time to make very good teaching points that developed pupils' learning. Classes were very well managed and teachers had a very good rapport with pupils, encouraging them to ask for help if needed.
139. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They relish the opportunity to work in the suite and are very proud of the room and the new equipment. Pupils in Year 6 said that the suite was one of the biggest improvements in the school since they had started there. Pupils work very well, especially when they have a machine to themselves and can work at their own pace. When sharing a computer they do so sensibly.
140. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has secure personal subject knowledge and has taken good advice from the local authority to develop the subject in school. Recently introduced 'diaries' form an effective means of recording attainment and progress. The co-ordinator plans to extend the use of the suite through an after school club. Computer programs are not used extensively enough to support work in other subjects, but recent monitoring of planning and lessons and the purchase of new equipment and programs is intended to address this.

MUSIC

141. Standards at the ages of seven and eleven are above those expected in playing, composing and appraising music. In singing, standards vary. In larger gatherings such as assemblies singing is at the expected standard and the pupils' singing in choir practice

is good. This is due to specialist teaching and good levels of motivation from the pupils attending. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when there was no school choir, and standards in singing were judged to be unsatisfactory.

142. Younger pupils enjoy exploring sounds using a range of percussion instruments, which they name confidently. Pupils in Year 1 sort instruments into those which make long sounds such as triangles, and those which make short sounds such as a drum. By Year 2 pupils successfully use their knowledge and understanding of instruments by inserting suitable sounds into the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. For example, they play a series of rising notes on chime bars to indicate Jack climbing upwards. They design and follow their own graphic scores using pictures and grids very effectively.
143. By the age of eleven, pupils have listened to a range of music by composers such as Lennon and McCartney, Verdi and Bach. They are beginning to record their feelings about music such as Verdi's 'Dies Irae'. For example one pupil describes it as, '*angry, warlike, makes me think of people fighting*'. In Year 6 they follow conventional notation in a score including singing and playing instruments such as cymbals and chime bars. They have developed very good knowledge and understanding of note values including quavers and crotchets. They acknowledge rests accurately, and observe indications of dynamics such as *p* and *mf*. Their knowledge of other musical elements such as pitch, duration, and pulse is secure.
144. All pupils including those with special educational needs are fully included in music activities and make good progress. In Year 6 progress is accelerated due to very good specialist teaching. Because of this pupils make very good progress, and their performance indicates levels of knowledge and understanding not commonly found in primary schools. The quality of teaching varies but is never less than good. In Year 6 teaching is very good with some excellent features such as subject knowledge, planning and pace throughout the lesson which sustains all pupils' concentration and interest.
145. Pupils' attitudes towards music are good. They enjoy lessons, showing enthusiasm and interest. Pupils arrive promptly for the lunchtime choir practice, working assiduously as they rehearse a range of songs in preparation for a performance. In Year 6 pupils' attitudes are very good. They concentrate hard because they know what their objectives are, tasks are sufficiently demanding and the teacher has very high expectations. They show remarkable determination, effort and perseverance and willingly practise their various parts to reach perfection. Resources are plentiful and of good quality.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. Standards are as expected for seven-year-olds and higher than those expected for eleven-year-olds. At the time of the last inspection standards in the subject were above those expected for infant and junior pupils. Pupils continue to develop their skills and gain in confidence as they move through the school.
147. During the inspection games lessons were observed and swimming lessons took place for all children from the ages of seven to ten years. The school gives high priority to water safety and pupils have weekly swimming lessons throughout the year. By the time they leave the school most can swim 25 metres and many much further. Even when they are proficient swimmers, pupils continue to attend swimming each week and this is not necessarily the best use of their time.
148. Over the year the school teaches the full range of physical activity including dance and athletics. Additional adventurous activities such as canoeing are also available for older pupils when they go on an annual residential visit. The school provides a good range of extra curricular sporting activities and runs thriving football and netball teams

149. Pupils are aware of the need for warm up and cool down exercises at the beginning and end of each lesson. At the age of seven, pupils work well with a partner and demonstrate good co-ordination in their throwing and catching actions. By the age of eleven, pupils make up their own rules for small team games and have a good knowledge of different passes in netball. They are also aware of the circumstances in which each pass is most appropriate. All pupils take an active part in the lesson and real gains in skill are evident.
150. The quality of teaching was good overall. Lessons were well planned with a suitable degree of challenge and they proceeded at a brisk pace. Pupils were made aware of the learning objective for the lesson and skilful questioning by the teacher enhanced their understanding of what they needed to do. Teachers used praise and encouragement well and their relationships with pupils were very good. Assessment in the subject is mainly by observation at present but the enthusiastic new co-ordinator has more formal assessments prepared and pupils will have the opportunity to take part in their own assessment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment at the end of both key stages were in line with the requirements of the agreed syllabus. This position has been maintained.
152. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 but observations of assemblies, an analysis of pupils' work and displays around the school show that the local authority's syllabus is being followed with appropriate modification from national curriculum guidelines. Younger pupils know the Christmas story and understand who Jesus was. They know of his family and follow the theme of 'Belonging' and caring for others in the context of their own family.
153. In a very good lesson, junior pupils showed they know that Jesus was a historical figure and his stories were passed on by word of mouth for many years before they were recorded. They study paintings of the baby Jesus, including one by Titian and realise that artists painted what they thought he looked like, based on his inner qualities. They explore this difficult concept by trying to describe their friends by their qualities rather than appearance. With skilful questioning, their teacher helps them to build up a character study of Jesus.
154. Older pupils study the life and teaching of Muhammed and the Five Pillars of Islam. They are interested in the journey millions of Muslims pilgrims make to Mecca and enjoyed dressing in the white robes Muslims wear to show that all people are equal. Pupils respond well to their teacher's questions and display a good knowledge and respect for other people's beliefs.
155. Teaching was good overall and teachers introduced elements of spirituality in a sensitive way. Older pupils also visit a mosque in Leicester as part of their study of other world religions and they walk together to a nearby church. Visits to places of worship enable them to gain a deeper awareness of how 'special' these places are to believers.
156. Morning assemblies at the school are interesting and enjoyable. Stimulating and thought provoking visitors help to develop pupils' understanding of the spiritual aspects of life in their world. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and to the school's ethos.